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### **Racial Autobiography**

In 2007, when I was a seven year-old boy, my second grade teacher in Brooklyn Avenue School gave the class a lesson about Martin Luther King, Jr., whom we learned was a very prominent civil rights leader of this age, went to the Ebenezer Baptist Church in his birth town of Atlanta, gave the famous “I Have a Dream” speech at Washington DC in 1963, and was assassinated in Memphis in 1968 by James Earl Ray. I remember this being one of the earliest memories of race in my young life.

My family and I are fortunate to have not had any negative experiences associated with our racial identity, and between freshman year and junior year of high school, I had begun to become racially conscious, because in that described period the realization had started to seep in that I was of one culture and most of the people around were of other cultures. I learned the most about race and diversity in the period of life that spans between my junior year of high school in 2015 and the end of my first year of attending Nassau Community College in 2018, even though in reality I was more conscious of different races, ethnic backgrounds, and cultures since high school. Since junior year of high school, at the age of sixteen, I became increasingly aware of the existence of different races, ethnicities, and cultures, because I would see them in my class.

There is nothing much that concerns me about my racial past, because in my family, I have not had any problems with any of my family members concerning race, living in an amply diverse community without any racial problems whatsoever. The people who not only encourage, but

also inspire me about my racial past are my mother, my father, my grandparents, my uncles, my aunts, and my older cousins, and how they faithfully persevered for many decades in establishing the stable, content lifestyles that they have today. In a period that spans from 1985 to 2002, much of my family migrated here from both Argentina and the Dominican Republic here to the United States of America, scattered in the metropolitan New York City area.

The reason why I “do” racial justice is because ultimately, my telos is to serve the Lord my God with all my heart, with all my soul, and with all my mind. The purpose of racial justice to me is to carry out the lifestyle that Christ Jesus intended for His people, to love our neighbor as ourselves, and to treat others with the same, impartial dignity. Jesus Christ did not make any exception of people, for He is “not a respecter of persons.” The God that we serve, the one true God of heaven and earth, is impartial, which means for us that all peoples ought to be treated the same, because before Him we are all the same. The purpose of racial justice for me is to have a continual sense of genuine awareness, relationships, and commitment to the cause of abiding in the Word of the Lord and living up to what the founding documents have claimed in their saying that “all men [humanity] are created equal,” albeit not based on race, ethnicity, or status, as those documents seem to substantially imply, but based on the way that God created us: in His image, according to His likeness. There are many immigrant, minority families in the United States of America who still have to strive with all of their beings just to get paid digits less than what a CEO of a large corporation or even an entertainer earns annually. Immigrant families, my family included, that come to the United States of America have had to strive for many, many years with all of their beings just to get paid digits less than what a CEO of a large corporation or even an entertainer earns annually. With this being said, one way to fight racism is to support small,

minority family businesses, such as Latin businesses, Korean businesses, or black businesses; every dollar that is received does not just go to their cash registers, but it goes to their mother's groceries, goes to their child's first bicycle, their father's new minivan, towards their uncle's hospital bill. Furthermore, not only can racism be fought with financial support, but with further emotional support as well as spiritual support. This includes, but limited to, taking the time to listen and understand what this nation means to them not just from a master perspective, but from the perspective of these families who have moved to the United States in the past. My parents, who are also immigrants, initially had to work really hard to get to more stable positions that they are in today. Having read the story of Fannie Lou Hamer, all who truly believe in the righteousness of the Lord in all of its forms, including racial justice, ought to be as motivated to be as courageous as Fannie Lou Hamer was when she dedicated her life to standing up for truth and equity. For the God that we serve is the God Who shall judge the earth with righteousness, and the peoples with His truth, faithfulness, & equity (Psalm 96:13; 98:9)!