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Book Analysis #1
Leadership in Urban Ministries
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Subversive Witness

The Sankofa is a trip where you see many historical places that relate to the ancestors of Africans. A few of these places are the Baptist Church, Edmund Bridge, and Selma. There is a link between privilege and power. When you have privilege, you are able to do what others cannot do, not because of willpower or might, but because of that hierarchy. Privilege puts you first, on top of the pyramid, and in front of everything. In many places of the world, including Germany and Rwanda, you must acknowledge the history of that land. However, in the United States, there are too many coverups with our history of slavery, lynching, and segregation. It is not acknowledged like these other countries. There must be truth and repentance about evil in order to begin unity. Christ tells us to come to Him seeking repentance, but that cannot happen without acknowledging why. In order to bring unity, we must have a community. On the other hand, the community is rooted in common memory. We experience this with God because we remember his promises and those promises help prompt the present. In the same way, this should be done to people. The people must share a common memory to prevent what has happened in the past from the present. Privilege can come in many forms, and is also stackable. Whites have had the privilege for quite some time, and it is not going to stop overnight because there are levels and generations to this access. We have people in power, or leaders, that might get away with this privilege also.

There are two types of leaders. Great leaders are the ones who are able to lead their people and make them be better, without defiling another group. The development argument is that there is also a spiritual way to lead. Spiritual leaders help others to live their lives after Jesus. However, bad leaders use their power and manipulation to essentially kill another group. In this situation, it would be like Hitler and the Nazi. Hitler convinced his people that their group was inferior, better, and in order to maintain that, others would have to be killed. The same can be said about Pharaoh. Chapter 2, page 23 says “He responds by legally requiring the entire nation to participate in an ethnic infanticide. Pharaoh’s fear drives him to sin, and his individual sin becomes institutionalized and inscribed into law”. If this situation happened then, there is a possibility that it is still happening today. Pharaoh had the capability to take a matter that was personal to him, due to anger, and bring it out towards his people and the people he was against. We as Christians, must stand for what is right and just. And with Christianity, the good news also comes with a high cost. You can lose your privilege, your option of staying silent.

From this book I can gather that if you or the church in itself remains silent over circumstances that require effort and attention, it is injustice to not only the people but to the very essence of the Gospel. Another important aspect to consider is the importance of lamenting. The author’s purpose for writing this is to educate readers about the many layers of privilege and power, and how it connects to the Bible. As Christians, we must withstand the power of dark forces, which also includes the war against privilege. I think this book will have many understand how everything between racial injustice, government powers, individuals who take or do not take action, are all connected. Not only that, but that as children of God we must stand for the oppressed and make a change where change is necessary.

Dominique Dubois Gillard, Foreword by Mark Labberton, "Subversive Witness" Scripture's Call To Leverage Privilege, 2021, 191 page