

Interview and Cite Visit

New Mount Zion Baptist Church

Harlem, New York

Rev. Dr. Carl L Washington Jr. Senior Pastor

Vincent C Golston

Professor Jose Montes

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I have to say this was a fun project to do to go outside of my church and visit and interview this pastor. Ever since I met him, he was very down-to-earth and open to sharing his story and the gospel of Jesus Christ. He reminds me that church is not just in the four walls of the church, but its outside of the church wants matters. The church has grown in numbers because of his leadership skills and his honesty with the community. Before he came to Harlem, New York the crime rate was high, and homelessness was an issue also. But even with the bad rep, he stood took on this challenge. But because he knew God sent him there, he knew that he would win because he had Christ on his side.

Rev. Dr. Carl L Washington Jr. He is the Senior Pastor at the New Mount Zion Baptist Church in Harlem New York. He is also the President of the Empire Baptist Convention of New York and He is the Dean of the National Baptist Congress of Christian Education. He is a proud Husband, Father, and grandfather. His church was just made 100 years old, and he has been the shepherd for over 20 years. The location of this church is an urban setting. It's a very diverse neighborhood, but they have a shepherd to help lead the people. As soon as I got in the church people made me feel welcome and the worship team was incredible what caught my attention was that the pastor had his minister staff lead the service and I liked that and that should be how you lead a team.

Pastor Washington was telling me about his struggle at the beginning of his ministry and trying to help with repairs in the building. Pastor Washington gave back his salary to help the needs of the church. Pastor Washington is very involved in his community by doing outdoor community outreach twice a year. And loves to help young people to go to college and help the get scholarship. Pastor Washington is also involved with the mayor and governor in making sure they meet the needs of the people. Pastor Washington told me not to keep too many people

around me everyone can go with me on this journey. Some folks are just here in your life just for a season but to keep God close in my life and He will give you direction and wisdom. Pastor Washington taught me that you must be aware of how you conduct yourself as a shepherd because everyone is watching you with a microscope. Even though he has a busy schedule Pastor Washington stay connected with his people if they call, he is always there. He told me that you must stay in prayer night and day. He also goes to the local hospital and prays for the people and gives them hope for tomorrow.

My time with pastor Washington was great he told me stories about where he grew up in Baltimore and being a star athlete, he could have gone pro, but God called him to do ministry and he never regret it. And loves being the Pastor of New Mount Zion Baptist Church. Pastor Washington had a great role model in his father who was also a Pastor in Baltimore Maryland he said that his father was a great influence in his life, and he has shown how to navigate being a pastor and leader. Pastor Washington told me urban ministry is not just the ghetto community it is a community as a whole and you have to help the people who don't have a voice. He said when he wakes up in the morning people turn to him before they call politicians.

Pastor Washington said that he is not a politician, but he is an advocate for the people that he serves in the community. Pastor Washington gives me a scripture that he leads by when he is serving the community Proverbs 31:8-9 " Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy." And then he gave me James 1:27 " Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world" (NIV).

He said that to me to tell me as a Pastor it's our duty to help our community and that the Bible tells us to give back to our community. We want to look fancy in our suits but, want us to roll up ourselves and get dirty and help people who are in need. Pastor has a program in his church that can help families who are in of food and shelter. They have a budget that people give to help others who are in need. So, when someone comes with a need they don't have to scrap for the money, they already have it in an account. That is a good leader is prepared before the need is there. But he said he had to learn that from experience in his past. Pastor Washington also told me that he uses to help his members who didn't have money to pay their rent he would give the money out of his pocket to help others who are in need or give some of his salaries to help some who were about to lose their house. He has a passion to help others and be a voice for those who don't. He has also helped invest in the youth in getting them into college. Under his leadership, they also have a fund to help children to go to school and pay for their books. He said he wants the next generation to have better than he had.

Pastor Washington also helps with many other projects in the community with people who were battling AIDS/HIV he helps bring awareness to the community on how to be safe. But also, he helps encourage people who were positive and stood by their side when others turned their back on them. Pastor Washington was the beacon of life to these people who were on the edge of giving up. He also helps them afford their medication by getting donations from church members and himself leading a hand in any type of way he could.

Pastor Washington's leadership in the church was incredible he led with excellence. But he told me the journey wasn't always easy, he had to lose some people to gain the leaders he has now. He told me that when you are on my team you are going to work, and some people talk a good game, but their activities don't add up. When you serve Jesus it's not an easy job, but it's rewarding at the end of the story. I have seen kids go to college and get married and have kids and they have gotten good jobs because the church made an investment in their future. We must spend more time with our young people and get involved in their life and see what's going on in their heads and hearts. He told me that he does outside events to bring the old and young together and he does college fairs for the students to give them opportunities for their future. If we don't get involved, then the gang members or the dope deals get to our kids and they are in a body box at the age of 16 or worse.

I had to ask the question what your church's urban theology is for your church he told me 2 Timothy 1:7 is the scripture his dad gave him "For God did not give us a Spirit of fear but power, love, and of sound mind" He said I never let that go from my heart and I continue to go and be bold and make a difference to a broken world and feed them the love of Christ. I ask what theme and principles guide your church's urban theology. His themes are evangelism, missions, prayer, imagination, revelation, and education. His scripture reference is 2 Timothy 4:5, Matthew 25:25-40, and 1 Chronicle 28:9, Luke 11: 1-4, Romans 16:26, 2 Timothy 2:15. He makes his leaders go out and evangelism and reach the people who are homeless and speak to the young man that on the corner sell dope and speak to the young woman who is giving her body away to earn a buck. Pastor Washington calls his leader to serve like Christ and don't focus on their title or position their worry about the task to win souls for Jesus Christ and give that Agape Love like Christ did for us.

Pastor Washington speaks the gospel of Jesus Christ, and he doesn't water it down he makes it plain so everyone can understand him. And make it plain that we all fall short, and we all are sinners, but Jesus died for our sins and that if we confess with our mouths and heart we can be born again. He makes people feel welcome in the church and he won't let anybody bully or make them feel less than. If he sees a need with you, he will go out of his way to make sure you have it. Pastor Washington preaches all over the United States teaching and lecturing, strengthening the faith of people. He has a genuine love for the work of ministry and has the ability to translate the message of Christian growth and biblical development to congregations, no matter the size. Dr. Washington has written two books Divine Directives for the dysfunctional church and the other book is called A Christian View of the blended family.

Pastor Washington is an advocate for his community he leans up with the political leader to help his community improve. And to make sure his people get equal care no matter what neighborhood they are in. He doesn't do these things for recognition, but he does it from the heart and the spirit of Christ. We must remember to put hats on as a servant of Jesus and let Him direct our path. Pastor Washington is always encouraging the youth to trust God and follow Jesus' example. The urban community needs us to rise together and stand united to end gun violence because too many people are dying senselessly, and it can be stopped if the whole religious community comes together as one and Pastor Washington is trying to work on that next. So, what is urban we all are we have a community, and we have to come together as pastors and leaders and bridge the gap so we can all live at peace with each other. I leave you with this 2 Corinthians 13:11 " Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage

one another, be of one mind, and live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.”