

Title: **God in the Ghetto**  
Subtitle: **A Prophetic Word Revisited**

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## Thesis statement

“God in the Ghetto” is a clarion call to Christians white and black to dismantle the unholy matrimony of Christianity with racism. It summons the Black church specially to reconstruct a pathway out with the faith community; and piloting the way for freedom and Black equity.

### Overview

Dr. William A. Jones, has been described as outspoken, often controversial and sometimes provocative individual; especially in his fight for human rights and justice. Internationally recognized as a prophetic voice and civil-rights activist; the author did occupy many pulpits around the world. Dyson described Jones in the foreword as one of the nation’s greatest advocates of black radical evangelical belief; a servant that was “Sublimely self-confident with a vocal register that suggested that his voice was a divine instrument to make people listen.”<sup>1</sup>

Jones was quoted as saying that he lived his life “With the feeling that divine providence had upheld, sustained, and directed his destiny.” I believe that God had a special mark and anointing on this Black Brother that enabled him to wear the belt of truth and handle the sword of the Spirit without fear or favor. Jones practiced what he preached. He emersed himself into situations that could not be deemed business as usual, civil disobedience if you will; in order to facilitate the access of resources for the disenfranchised. He applied the Word as a means of resistance to “White Racism by Design.” He has left a legacy of prophetic eloquence and radical obedience **to the call on his life. behind. footprints for generations to come.**

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<sup>1</sup> Jones, William A., Jennifer Jones Austin, and Michael Eric Dyson. God in the Ghetto: A Prophetic Word Revisited. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press Publishers, 2021.

## Analysis

The main audience of God in the Ghetto is the church in general, and the Black church specifically. The writing style and content are absolutely appropriate. Jones uses many literary devices and prophetic wisdom to inform the reader. that the same Bible white supremacists used to commit genocide, practice uneven distribution of power and resources, systematic exclusion, polarization and terror on God's image bearers, to preach Jesus the Revolutionary. P.148 Jesus, the twelve years old who disobeyed his earthly parents to obey his heavenly Father; gospel of Christ is for the liberation of captives, to bind up the broken-hearted, and to open the prison doors for those in bondage. Any other gospel is a lie from the pit of hell.

The author challenges the Black church to revisit "racism" identifying this white nationalist religion as more than just a social, political and economic issue; but to examine it through a spiritual lens for its insidious nature." The Kerner Commission labels "Racism as demonism- a spiritual perversion." He exhorts Black Christians specially to abandon/reject any religion that abandon absolutes, disregard the sanctity of human life and embrace "Graceless Moralism." I concur. The Black church needs to be cognizant that theology matters. This is extremely important as the author reiterates the danger of faulty

He directs the reader's attention to America's ideology of exceptionalism

White superordination and black subordination still pervade relationships between b/w p.6

Jones determined that “Racism operated on the assumption that psychocultural traits and capacities . . . biological . . . races differ decisively from one another. The afore premise coupled with a belief in the inherent superiority . . . its right to dominate over others.”p.4 Base on these statements, I am assuming that whites believe that God’s creation with a different pigmentation was Black and blank, dark and dunce, ugly and undeserving.

With this master-race ethos, the racists engineered a master-plan using the “Word of Truth” as their floor plan. Here, I support the author’s argument that “Racists created God in their own image, and creation happens in divine racism.” p.32 All that was needed was God’s seal of approval on the descendants of Ham as the ‘cursed ones/slaves’ for the demonic diatribe of white supremacy to multiply. P.31-32) According to Will Herberg here it is prudent to insert the words of Lord Acton, “Power tends to corrupt and absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely . . . the ultimate absurdity of power is that those who possess it have the tendency to try to play God.” P.88 This proves that power is an awesome and awful allurements.

### doctrinal and programmatic aspect

The narrative also appeals to the unconcerned, and those in denial about the existence of racism and white supremacy. The umbrella covers pastors, preachers, scholars, seminarians and practitioners who have wandered deeper into the mire of white supremacy, white privilege and white power. The writing style is very appropriate. However, the plangency of the America existing more than four decades ago juxtaposed with America in 2023 is truly frightening.

## Strengths

A close scrutiny of “The System” reveals that Americans are controlled and manipulated by a sinful minority that is neither young, colored, nor poor. They own the nation’s wealth, rape the world’s resources, make political decisions, plan the nation’s military ventures, hurt our humanity, and defaced our dignity.” P.52 “Despite the many milestones, and the absence of overt expressions the demise of covert realities are still evident. “Nothing has changed between Black and white people.” p.4-5

Back Door Divinity; He didn’t have to do it, but He did. The God of heaven chose to be merciful; “In the fullness of time God sent forth His Son” to demonstrate His love towards falling mankind. A divine sacrifice was required, therefore, the ‘only’ blood that could satisfy the wrath of a just God was from a “Deity” who entered the ghetto robed in humanity and humility. He grew up in the neighborhood, had a menial job; became homeless; hang out with the rejects; he also touched the leper. He was despised and rejected by the powerful and privilege mostly for confronting the system, and false theology.

He came our way by way of the back door. Jesus’ sojourn and tabernacling, his flesh-and-blood involvement has made us beneficiaries of a love we didn’t deserve and favor we didn’t earn. God was, and is still in the ghetto. Therefore, “Whenever and wherever one’s personhood is ignored or demeaned, the front door/back door syndrome is alive and active.”

**P.86, 87-91**

**! God the Revolutionary p.148-153**

## Usefulness

God in the Ghetto informs the reader that “The ghetto is essentially as boundless as Blackness.” It is the most profound and visible symbol of “The System.” Without its existence, there would be no need...derisive terms employed to characterize America. The ghetto is an idea clearly objectified; and manifested. The ghetto is created, condoned and maintained by white Americans whose tangible desires for superiority have driven them to erect colonies to confine the powerless and perpetuate their powerlessness. Yes! The ghetto has surpassed neighborhood boundaries; graduated from simply geography; I believe like the author it is extended to a cultural condition; but God is not a stranger to the ghetto. P.8-9

## Take-a-way

Pharaoh was racist. He was a practitioner of the master-race ethos. He had a plan to exterminate all the Hebrew boys. 1. From mud hut to big house p.122-126

My conscience is deeply troubled. My heart is heavy, my mind is perplex over the the restless and reckless currents of our time. 2. The flag and the cross p139

life in the ghetto is essentially the same as life on the mainland, for the difference is in degree than kind . . . Behavior patterns . . . poverty . . . larger society; therefore, the ghetto applies to the society as a whole. 22 From mud hut to big house

## **Significance for Ministry**

Mankind must realize that racist man presumes upon the prerogatives of God. He rejects the divine sovereignty and requires that God meet their specifications as to nature and purpose. (P.31-32) the racist creates God in their own image, and the creation eventuates in divine racism. According to Will Herberg

Slavery is alive and well in America The brutality and constant discrimination against blacks, especially males represent modern day state sanctioned slavery. P.209 the chains and the lynching trees

**Christianity calls on its adherents to submit to the authority of our lord, numerous scriptures have pointed to has often whilst Christ admonishes us to render unto Caesar what is Caesar's.....**

**Most Christian literature make mention/lorded of the resilience of MLK, but how many are willing to manifest civil disobedience as a weapon to achieve justice for others? For their children and grandchildren? Or the nation as a whole? Many Christians disagree with civil disobedience based on scripture. Romans 13:1-7; John 19:11, Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13-17**

**When William A. Jones wrote God in the Ghetto over four decades ago, America looked bad, I wish he could see the gangrene now. There is enormous scarring in millions of families,**

communities, and the society as a whole. The need for reconstructive surgery is hundreds of years overdue as mentioned previously. “Historically, the nation has been long on promise and short on performance.” P.3 The American promise contained in the Declaration of Independence for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as unalienable Rights have seen millions living in constant hope and dying in despair; then and now. The truth be told some progress have been made by..... Because racism is as dangerous as gangrene and has the potential to be fatal; and since Americas inclination to towards injustice and silence; the symptoms of indifference are escalating. The coldness, numbness, poor circulation of equity, justice and love for neighbor and the swelling desire of greed for superiority, wealth, and winning; unless there is amputation more children will die for hunger, and from gun violence. many more homeless will be on the streets; and millions more of our black men loose their manhood in prisons or become perverts. Million more women caring the burden of parenthood alone and mental and psychological illnesses increase.

As Jones described it then, so it is now, The System reveals a sick sociology based on a faulty anthropology, which emanates from a false theology.p.3

he level of greed at the grassroots and the escalation of immorality in church leaders that have perpetuated the wickedness of the wicked; and the foothold Satan has gotten in the “**body of christ.**” I believe if there was need for civil disobedience in MLK days, there is a greater need today. The black church has a greater responsibility to the mission field because many of our people only see the gospel through the the eye of the slavery narrative. They reject church because they believe it’s the religion of “the white man” they often refer to the blue-eyed Jesus that was presented, they get angry. I truly believe that **the two religions** being

lifted up is the primary cause of the shift in the religious data in especially the last decade; the ‘nones’

As it was when jones spoke in 1979, so it is today. Though there has been upward mobility for many Black americans, the economic outlook for the most vulnerable looks dismal.

I pray for a cooperative heart like Jochebed’s

I am eternally grateful that our/my “God is concerned for the whole humanity, and the unalterable and undeniable reality is that most of His children are back door dwellers.” P.86, 87-

**91**

The ghetto is the most visible and most profound symbol of the American System, that systematic, sociocultural design that created and perpetuated the existence of two cultures, one white and one Black, under one flag. . . . Its visibility level is so high . . . . most serious indictment . . . . But worse than this . . . . the ghetto phenomenon in a Bible land and a God-fearing country. . . . The ghetto is a pot of desolation and death where futility abounds and where economic genocide is a current reality. P. 82-84

The ghetto was created by white supremacist in order to oppress those on the margins. The “System” was and is still rigged with “Graceless moralism”

## Bibliography

Jones, William A., Jennifer Jones Austin, and Michael Eric Dyson. *God in the Ghetto: A Prophetic Word Revisited*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press Publishers, 2021.