



Large Group Series

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

The Better World proxe station has been designed in response to the racial injustices perpetrated against the African-American community for generations. The purpose of this proxe station is to illustrate God's plan for "a better world" even in this midst of racism in the 21st century. This generation's rise of social media has catalyzed a new movement following the public violation of the dead body of unarmed black teen, Michael Brown, the non-indictment of George Zimmerman for the shooting of unarmed black teen, Trayvon Martin, and many others through publicizing trending topics with hashtags such as #blacklivesmatter and #staywoke. According to urbandictionary.com, the term woke refers to "a state of perceived intellectual superiority one gains from being socially conscious; i.e. relating to racism and social injustice." The Better World proxe hopes to bring awareness to the racial injustices in the 21st century, while engaging both Christians and non-Christians in conversations that provide hope.

Pretending that we were in a post-racial society may have been easier 15 years ago, but now, with the rise of social media and smartphones, anyone can broadcast the realities of this broken world instantly. We can view video proof of these injustices. Millions of views of these countless atrocities can bring the average viewer to a state of hopelessness. Will we ever see growth in race relations? How do we resolve these racial injustices? Marching? Protesting? Trending hashtags?

Moreover, does the Church have a voice in this dialogue? Both Christians and unbelievers alike can struggle with the concept of faith in the face of the wrongs we all witness and experience. If God is real, then why is this world so broken? Should we just "shut up and have faith"?

We are wrestling with these legitimate theological questions and more that, if gone unanswered, may cause many to reject the image of Jesus they have seen reflected in a divided Church that has been perceived as "asleep," ignoring or catalyzing the injustices of this society.

However, looking at the actual model of the entire Scripture, we see that in the New Testament, Jesus challenges His followers to "Stay Woke." We also see models even within the Old Testament of God's people facing oppression. God encourages His people not only to be aware of injustices but also, through Him, to create solutions that meet the needs of a divided society.

Throughout this small group and large group series, we will be exploring the life of Daniel and will be answering the following questions: How can a historically oppressed people group effectively communicate the gospel to their oppressor? Although many minority groups have been oppressed for generations, how can they/we effectively communicate the hope of a better world even in the midst of their/our brokenness?



Message 1: Embrace Excellence.

Main Passage: Daniel 1

INTRODUCTION

[Tell a personal story of when you strived for excellence in spite of the obstacles]

[In October 2016, I released my first spoken word album - thirteen tracks originally written and professionally mixed and mastered, available on iTunes (3:13 AM - smiley.jason). The entire process took over six years - from concept development to album debut. Throughout this undertaking, I recorded each spoken word poem multiple times in a professional studio with producers who composed a soundtrack for each piece. Even after much planning and revising, some poems didn't make the album. Other poems were added later. It would have been easy to settle for personal recordings made on my phone. The album would have been 'good enough', but would not have been excellent quality. As an artist, producing something excellent takes resources and tenacity. Therefore, I strive to live by the advice my dad always taught me: "Never settle for mediocrity."]

In his book, *Good to Great*, Jim Collins states, "Good is the enemy of great... Few people attain great lives, in large part because it is just so easy to settle for a good life."

Turn in pairs and share: In what areas have you settled for mediocrity because certain aspects of your life were "good enough" when they could be great?
On campus? In America? In the world?

TRANSITION

When looking at the racial injustices in America of historic oppression, racism, police brutality, mass incarceration, etc., how do we achieve excellence in spite of the obstacles we may face?

What prevents us from taking action and standing against these injustices? Maybe the perspective that racism isn't 'as bad as' or 'as violent as' the late 50s. Maybe the feeling that we've achieved a 'good enough' race relations where we can get by but have lost hope that this world could ever actually be excellent.

Negative environments expose the limitations of what we have and what we can do, which battles against our ability to achieve excellence. Scripture gives us a model of individuals achieving excellence despite their own limitations. We will take some time over the next few weeks to look at the characteristics of a person of excellence in the Bible who was held captive as a slave, lived as a minority, forced to submit to the majority culture yet, through his broken world, brought hope to an oppressor nation. I'm referring to Daniel.

BACKGROUND

The Babylonian army crushed the Egyptian army at Carchemish (Jeremiah 46:2)

1. The Babylonian army was led by Nebuchadnezzar II
2. Nebuchadnezzar quickly conquered the whole region
3. Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem. (Daniel 1:1)
 - a. As a result: Jehoiakim surrendered his allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar
 - b. The first Hebrews were deported to Babylon
 - c. A generation of young Hebrew leadership was taken away
 - d. Babylon's agenda was to erase the importance of the Hebrew God and culture



Read Daniel 1

SUMMARY OF DANIEL 1

Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and, Azariah were given three years to learn about the culture and customs of a foreign nation. They were taken out of the comfort of their community of faith and placed into a setting where they were forced as slaves to eat, live, and work in a culture that was completely different than their own. (Daniel 1:3-7)

Minorities in America have a similar experience. College students are given four (maybe five... or six) years to learn new culture and customs throughout college. Minority college students also are often taken out of the comfort of their community and placed in a setting where they are forced as students to eat, live, and work in an environment that may be different from home.

Daniel and his friends used this experience as an opportunity not to merely blend in, but to excel beyond their peers. The king found "none equal" to them (Daniel 1:19-20).

How were they able to achieve excellence?

MAIN POINTS

1. Excellence depends on God (v.17) *"To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning..."*

Maybe you have tried to achieve excellence within your own power. Maybe you have tried and failed. If you struggle with perfectionism, you may become extremely self-critical.

The bad news is... the standard of excellence *is defined* by the One who is supreme - God.
The good news is... the source of excellence *originates* from the One who is supreme - God.

Therefore, achieving excellence does not depend on your personal ability but rather on the empowerment of God. This privilege reminds me of the origin of a superhero.

Example: After a nonathletic teenage nerd named Peter Parker was bit by a radioactive spider, he eventually turned into one of the most powerful super-heroes of all time. The world of Peter Parker contained villains with evil powers desiring to destroy his neighborhood with violence and crime including the murder of his Uncle Ben Parker. It was not the radioactive bite but the powerful words from his late Uncle Ben, "With great power, comes great responsibility" that empowered Peter to achieve excellence ultimately becoming the Amazing Spider-Man.

The powerful Word of God can transform you to achieve excellence even in the midst of this broken world.

TRANSITION

As we depend on God, it is important that we also stand up for what we believe in.

2. Excellence requires tenacity (v.8) *But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission...*

Daniel decided to stand firm on his beliefs, even in the midst of opposition.



EXAMPLE

[Tell of a personal story about 'standing firm' in your beliefs or refer to introduction story]

[Certain elements for my spoken word album were non-negotiable. I wanted to release the completed album on my 30th birthday. The post production phase required major editing by the producer. Despite the obstacle of limited time, I *purposed in my heart* to meet that deadline with excellence, which demanded that I stay up late editing, pay extra fees, etc.]

In the same way, Daniel faced obstacles against what he believed. The authorities already changed his name and wanted to continue to assimilate him. Though he found himself like a fish out of water, Daniel *purposed in his heart* to be successful in Babylon but not to defile himself. *He showed those in authority that he didn't have conform, in order to be successful and to even have influence.* (Daniel 1:15-16).

Despite the fact that being in school means being surrounded by a culture that is contrary to Christlikeness, *we don't have to run away from the world to be holy and we don't have to become like the world to be influential.* Despite the fact that this world is full of racism, we do not have to conform to the divisive racists agenda, but rather live transformational with excellence like Daniel. (Romans 12:1-2).

ACTIVE RESPONSES

1. God calls us to excellence in all aspects of our lives just like Daniel. Think of a specific area in your life (school work, relationships, campus involvement, ministry) where you have settled for mediocrity in the past. Write out a plan for excellence in this area. **please feel free to put this on a slide or a handout* (1. What is your vision for this area in your life? 2. What elements are needed to accomplish this vision? 3. What would you start this week to help achieve this vision? 4. How will you depend on God?)

2. Missional Activity. Think of ways to strive for excellence in a cross cultural relationship. Start praying for someone who has a different culture than you. Invite them to eat their favorite meal this week. Use this time to learn about who they are and share more about who you are. (Sometime during your meal consider asking these questions to go deeper. 1. What events in your life has shaped who you are? 2. What gives you hope? Be ready to share about how you have been shaped and what gives you hope as well.)

3. Invitation to Faith. We cannot achieve excellence on our own. It comes from God. And God cares about all aspects of your life. Some of you are already following Jesus. However, you know there are areas of your life where you have tried to achieve excellence on your own yet have fallen short. This first invitation is for you to step into a deeper dependence on God. Some of you are not following Jesus. You have tried to achieve excellence on your own yet have often fallen short. This next invitation is for to take that initial step to follow Him. (You will have to write out the rest of the call to faith. How will you have someone respond? Examples can be found in the evangelism toolkit.)



Message 2: Stay Woke.

INTRODUCTION

Tupac Shakur is arguably one of the most “woke” artists known to date. His lyrics address issues within the African-American community and have been quoted, published in books, and spread across the world. [Listen to a clip of Tupac's critically acclaimed song, “Changes”](#) or [Read the following lyrics](#):

“I see no changes, all I see is racist faces
Misplaced hate makes disgrace to races
We under, I wonder what it takes to make this
One better place, let's erase the wasted
Take the evil out the people, they'll be acting right
'Cause both Black and White are smoking crack tonight
And the only time we chill is when we kill each other
It takes skill to be real, time to heal each other”

Originally recorded in 1992, Tupac's song paints a picture with words of the need for change amongst racial injustices. Conscious rap of the early 90s illuminated the brokenness of the world to modern society just as social media does today. This song is still relevant even in 2017 as we continue to see racism and “misplaced hate.”

Similarly, Daniel continued to face injustices as he lived marginalized in Babylon under different generations of governmental authorities.

SUMMARIZE THE STORY OF DANIEL 6

- Even though Daniel was a slave, he excelled above and beyond all others around him in the kingdom. King Darius loved him (6:3)
- Daniel prayed 3 times every day to the one true God. (6:10)
- However, the other administrators and satraps wanted to find a way to punish and kill Daniel, but he was not corrupt in any way. (6:4)
- [READ v. 6-11](#)
- These satraps created a law to ensnare Daniel exclusively.
- Even though King Darius liked Daniel, the satraps used the king's own words to coerce him to throw Daniel in the den.
- [READ v. 18-22](#)
- In response to the injustice, King Darius actually put the satraps in the den and submitted a decree to praise Daniel's God.
- [READ v. 25-27](#)

TRANSITION

Each major character illustrates a level of ‘social consciousness’ that we will discuss as we explore the significance of ‘Staying Woke’ to racial and social justice: the satraps, King Darius, and Daniel.

MAIN POINTS

1. ‘Asleep’ like the Satraps

When you are asleep, your body can only genuinely care about itself. It is highly unlikely that the purpose of your sleeping is to benefit others. (ref. 1 Thess 5:6-8) The Satraps were “sleeping.” They didn’t care anything about Daniel. They were searching for a trap to destroy him. (Daniel 6:4)



Self-righteous pride fuels hatred.

Ultimately the satraps created a law just so that Daniel could be killed (Daniel 6:6-9). They were motivated by their own self-righteous pride. Motivated by their own self-righteous pride, the satraps wanted to lawfully murder Daniel.

Even throughout the 21st century, this model of systemic injustice continues to be fueled by self-righteous pride, racism, and hatred. Michelle Alexander states in her book *The New Jim Crow*,

"We use our criminal justice system to label people of color 'criminals' and then engage in all the practices we supposedly left behind. Today it is perfectly legal to discriminate against criminals in nearly all the ways that it was once legal to discriminate against African Americans."

Who are the 'sleeping satraps' of today?

The injustice system continues to target low income communities imprisoning black males. The law seems to only protect the law makers.

Philando Castile was pulled over as a part of traffic stop by Officer Yanez. The police dashcam video shows that 40 seconds elapsed between when Yanez first started talking to Castile through the car window and when Yanez began shooting at him. According to the dashcam, after Yanez asked for Castile's driver's license and proof of insurance, Castile gave him his proof of insurance card, which Yanez appeared to glance at and tuck in his outer pocket. Castile then calmly informed Yanez: "Sir, I have to tell you that I do have a firearm on me."

Quoting the Star Tribune description of the next 13 seconds of the audio/video: Before Castile completed the sentence, Yanez interrupted and calmly replied, 'OK', and placed his right hand on the holster of his own holstered

weapon. Yanez said, 'Okay, don't reach for it, then.' Castile responded, 'I'm not pulling it out,' and Reynolds also said, 'He's not pulling it out.' Yanez screamed, 'Don't pull it out!' Yanez quickly pulled his own gun with his right hand while he reached inside the driver's window with his left hand. Yanez removed his left arm from the car and fired seven shots in the direction of Castile in rapid succession. Reynolds yelled, 'You just killed my boyfriend!' Castile moaned and said, 'I wasn't reaching for it.' Reynolds loudly said, 'He wasn't reaching for it.' Before she completed her sentence, Yanez again screamed, 'Don't pull it out!' Reynolds responded, 'He wasn't.'

- quoted from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shooting_of_Philando_Castile

Immediately following, Castile's girlfriend streamed the aftermath. Philando Castile's death was ruled a homicide, stating he had sustained multiple gunshot wounds. ([Read the Medical Examiner form](#)) On June 16, 2017, this homicide was justified when the officer was acquitted of all charges. The law seems to only protect the law makers.

Regardless of your opinion, Philando Castile was black man created in the image of God whose life was taken. And the entire world saw it happen.

Will you be like the satraps? Maybe you can turn a blind eye to the issues of this broken world because you have never been directly affected. Maybe you harbor racism and anger and want to cause more division.

Then you are still sleep.



TRANSITION

While the satraps were asleep, King Darius was “half-sleep” and on the brink of “waking up.”

2. ‘Half-sleep’ like King Darius

King Darius exhibited a transformation throughout this passage. Even though he caused Daniel to be thrown in the lion’s den, he was still worried.

King Darius was in anguish and couldn’t sleep (6:18). Something drastic occurred causing him to change.

Pop culture has multiple examples of villains changing to heroes:

[Feel free to create your own list that may connect well to your audience; here are a few examples:

1. Star Wars: Darth Vader killed the Emperor and sacrificed his life, when his son Luke faced death.
2. Dragon Ball Z: Vegeta joined with Goku as the danger increased from the evil Frieza.
3. Despicable Me: Gru retired as a super villain when he became a father of three girls.
4. Power Rangers: The Green Ranger joined the Power Rangers after the Red Ranger broke the evil spell from Rita.]

Something dramatic occurred with each of these characters causing significant transformation. Maybe they were manipulated into doing evil, when suddenly a drastic event rang in their life like an alarm clock waking them up!

The alarm clock in my life started ringing, when ... [state your personal testimony of how you met Jesus]

EXAMPLE

I had self-righteous pride, but then the world stop revolving around me. My dad became seriously ill; diagnosed with diabetes, high blood pressure, sudden loss of vision, and failed kidneys. In order to help around the house, I was homeschooled which allowed me to serve my dad meals and take care of his basic needs. I began to ‘wake up’ from my selfish pride as these events happened. As a twelve year old child in homeschool, I witnessed first hand my Dad’s pain, sickness, and disease. I felt like King Darius. (Daniel 6:18-19) I couldn’t sleep and I wanted God to “rescue him” from this den of disease. I wanted my Dad have his vision back.

The world stopped revolving around me, and I saw Jesus hold my Dad’s joy in the palm of His hand. My Dad’s smile flourished stronger even in the midst of the suffering. He was able to cry out like Daniel and say that the angel had shut the mouths of the lions that were meant to steal his joy. Jesus gave him peace

His attitude transformed my heart.

What is your ‘alarm clock’? The ‘alarm clock’ in your life may be the drastic events that happen directly to you. It could be the systemic injustice that plagues our society.



Maybe you have asked God why this has happened to you. Maybe you have asked why does God allow these injustices to happen? God can use what was meant for evil to transform someone into good. God may be refining you in the fire. He is transforming you like He did with King Darius. I believe the reason why Daniel was thrown into the den was so that we can see God transform the heart of a ruler who had caused oppression. A better world is possible.

TRANSITION

King Darius witnessed the hope of a better world by watching the rescue of Daniel.

3. 'Woke' like Daniel

Daniel was woke. He did not ignore the problems of the world, but rather pointed to the One who can bring peace. (Daniel 6:22). Daniel's bold stance ultimately influenced King Darius to not only follow God, but also to continue to influence the entire culture (Daniel 6:26-27).

Daniel knew the one true God could rescue him, but he also wasn't afraid of death. He continued to pray three times a day even after the decree was established! (Daniel 6:10).

Daniel's "woke-ness" empowered him to take a stand against injustice, even if it would possibly cost his life.

In the same way, if we follow Jesus, it is essential we do not ignore the problems of this world. This world is broken and is impossible to fix on our own. Activism without the solution of Jesus can get very discouraging.

Just like Daniel stood against injustice even if it costed his life, Jesus continues to stand against injustice and He paid His life.

Even after the satraps tricked him, Daniel was still willing to risk his life! Jesus also willingly embraced death although he was rejected by others. This is the gospel.

[Share personal story of how Jesus motivated you to share the gospel with others]



Call to Faith

The kingdom of God is designed to stand up for justice in the midst of systemic injustice and division within certain earthly kingdoms. We can see the brokenness and pain within our world (Circle 2 – refer to injustice, brutality, death etc. left side of mural)

THE GOSPEL

We are all created in the image of God. He made us with purpose, dignity, and beauty. We were designed to live in peace with one another, enjoying the unique characteristics of every people group, and learning from one another, with God at the center of our relationships.

But that is not the world we are living in today. We thought we could do better if we put ourselves at the center of the story, shoving God to the side. The results have been disastrous. Today, our world is clearly divided and hurting. Our ethnic journeys include the story of this pain, past and present. The brokenness is not just external; it's also within each of us. We carry scars from things that people have said, done, or not done to us. Our scars end up damaging others, causing more pain as we tolerate or even participate in systems that oppress people.

God did not turn away, leaving us stuck in our brokenness. Jesus took our personal sin and our world's sin into the grave with him. He defeated and redeemed it by coming back to life, proving that death & destruction do not have the final say. Jesus came to heal us, to affirm the beauty of how he made us, and to free us from the damage of brokenness done to us and by us, by individuals and systems—and to pardon us for the part we've played in that mess. Our broken ethnic stories become healed and redeemed as we follow Jesus. He helps us embrace our ethnic stories and offers us new hearts and new love to reconcile with each other and work towards restoration.

As he heals us, he's not satisfied with our individual transformation alone. Jesus leads us toward restoring relationships, repairing communities, and seeking justice. He breaks our chains of apathy, fear, and pain, and he sends us out to help break others' chains as well. And he invites us to share God's story of restoration with others. Our restored ethnic stories help bring healing and restoration to our communities and to our world. To follow Jesus is to trust him with our personal and collective pain and brokenness, and to trust that by defeating death, he has the power to make all things right.

INVITATION TO RESPOND

Let's take some next steps in response to what we have been learning. Each of us may be in a different place in how we connect our ethnic story and God's

story. That is fine. No matter where we find ourselves today, God is inviting us to go deeper into his story of redemption. Which of these 3 invitations do you want to respond to?

1. The call to forgive. In Matthew 6:12, Jesus teaches his disciples to pray, "And forgive us our sins, as we also have forgiven those who have sinned against us." (ISV). To experience God's forgiveness requires that we forgive others. Forgiveness is not optional as we follow Jesus. Which individuals and groups of people do you need to forgive?

2. The call to share this story of Jesus as Reconciler. We will take a moment and do 10



seconds of listening prayer. Please ask God who else around you needs to hear this message of hope? With whom can you share the gospel this week?

3. The invitation to adult faith in Jesus. Some of us are ready to make a new faith decision. Are you willing to say yes to following Jesus for yourself, to be healed, forgiven, and transformed by him in all of who you are, including your ethnic story. Will you say yes to him?

On the cross, Jesus paid for all the debts of the world. And because Jesus rose again, we can start over. If you are ready, please pray this prayer.

"God, I believe Jesus is your Son, the Savior of the world. I believe he died on the cross for me and took away all my sins, paying the cost for all of us. I believe in my heart that you raised Jesus from the dead and that he is alive today. I ask that you forgive me for the wrongs that I have done. I receive your forgiveness into my life. By faith I submit all parts of my life to Jesus as King. Please change me; make me the person you want me to be. I commit to being a member of your family on earth, pursuing your purposes and mission for the world. I give you my heart; I give you my life; I want to know you more! In Jesus' name, Amen."

**Have the Better World Pocket Proxe and script available with student leaders to hand out.*

ACTIVE RESPONSES

Some of you who are already following Jesus have been "woke" to the issues of injustice in society. Some of you are just now "waking up." And some of you still have questions about how God addresses injustice. Regardless, I invite all of us to share what we have learned this week. Invite the same friend you shared a meal with last week or someone new to walk through the Better World Pocket proxe. Share your personal testimony of how God helped you to "stay woke" with issues of injustice or how the story of Daniel is helping you in this process.



Message 3: Restoring Hope.

**Note: Please leave time in the talk for interactive prayer walk at the end*

Main Passage: Daniel 9

INTRODUCTION

Watch this clip from the film, *The Birth of a Nation* - <https://youtu.be/70TDYKaOTuo>

Nat Turner was an enslaved African-American preacher hired out to slave masters hoping to keep their slaves obedient. Seeing the hopeless conditions of other slaves motivated him to lead a rebellion on August 21, 1831.

Nat Turner desired to restore hope to his generation by advocating on behalf of the other slaves.

TRANSITION

Israel is still in exile after 70 years, and are continuing to be oppressed. Who will advocate for Israel? Where will they find hope?

Today, God is going to teach us how to advocate for our generation even in a hopeless atmosphere.

BACKGROUND

Daniel began to restore hope by interceding on behalf of the other Israelites who were in captivity. In chapter 9 Daniel had been in captivity for about 70 years, remaining faithful to God.

Daniel maintained hope in hopeless situations as he remembered the promises God communicated through the prophet Jeremiah (**Jeremiah 25:1-14**).

MAIN POINTS

There are 2 things we must know in order to see hope restored in our generation.

1. Daniel keeps hope alive for his generation. (Read Daniel 9: 8, 13, 15-19)

Daniel recounts the sin of his people and repents on their behalf and then He asks God to do what He had promised to do so long ago.

Daniel's expectation of God's promises was so deeply rooted in God's word and God's nature, that not even 70 years in captivity could lower them. Daniel did not let his circumstances determine his expectation; he let his expectation change his perspective in the circumstance.



Let us continue to keep this eternal perspective like Daniel as we also begin to own the sin of our generation. What are those sins? [e.g. racism, hatred of each other, murder, unfaithfulness, promiscuity, abuse, idols...]

We have to know how to confess the sin of our generation. Daniel did not try to give an excuse for the sin. In the same way, we must be open and honest to God.

This posture of confession will begin to bring hope to our generation.

2. God meets us between hopelessness and hope. (Read Daniel 9:20-23)

The angel Gabriel responds to Daniel's prayers by providing specific instructions to Daniel which restores his hope.

We don't know how God is going to change history, but he promises that we are greatly beloved and that he hears our prayers.

As we think about the hopelessness of the marginalized communities in our society, we can be confident that God continues to hear our prayers because Jesus is interceding at the right hand of the Father on our behalf (Hebrews 8:1).

We have to believe that we are beloved and we have spiritual authority in the heavenlies. That is why we pray.

ACTIVE RESPONSES

We have spent the last three weeks observing Daniel's excellence as he influenced both an oppressed nation (the exiles of Israel) and the oppressor nation (the Babylonians). Let us begin to have eyes to see how we can share that same excellence and influence for our nation, our city, and our campus.

We will spend the next 15-30 minutes specifically praying for our campus and our city. Using this passage as a guide, let's go on a prayer walk. Like Right now. Together.

PRAYER WALK INSTRUCTIONS

Divide the large group into groups of 3-5 students with a student leader leading each group. Pass out **A Prayer Guide of Daniel 9:4-19** (attached below) to each student. Have them pray this prayer as a group as they walk around campus. When they interact with individuals on campus, invite the group to pray for those individuals. Set a time to gather the group back together and debrief.

INTERACTIVE PRAYER WALK SCRIPT

"Hey, I'm [insert name here] with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. We are going around campus asking different people for prayer requests. Do you have anything you would like me to pray about?"



If they say no, just say thank you and move on. If they say yes, ask them permission to pray with them immediately. Then pray.

INVITATION TO FAITH

If they are responsive to your prayer, please invite them to take a next step. "Would you like to talk this week to connect further with InterVarsity?" If yes, schedule a time and location to follow up. Gather contact information.

A Prayer Guide of Daniel 9:4-19

**adjust the customized words to specifically fit your context*

"Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. We have not listened to your servants **the prophets in your Holy scripture**, who spoke in your name **to our presidents, our leaders and our ancestors**, and to all the people of the land.

"Lord, you are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame—the people of **America** and the inhabitants of **Jackson** and all **Mississippi**, both near and far, in all the **campuses** where you have scattered us because of our unfaithfulness to you. We and **our presidents, our leaders and our ancestors** are covered with shame, Lord, because we have sinned against you. The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him; we have not obeyed the Lord our God or kept the laws he gave us through his servants the **prophets in his Holy scripture**. All Israel has transgressed your law and turned away, refusing to obey you.

"Therefore the curses and sworn judgments written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against you. You have fulfilled the words spoken against us and against our rulers by bringing on us great disaster. Under the whole heaven nothing has ever been done like what has been done to **African-Americans**. Just as it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come on us, yet we have not sought the favor of the Lord our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to your truth. The Lord did not hesitate to bring the disaster on us, for the Lord our God is righteous in everything he does; yet we have not obeyed him.



“Now, Lord our God, who brought your people out of **slavery and Jim Crow** with a mighty hand and who made for yourself a name that endures to this day, we have sinned, we have done wrong. Lord, in keeping with all your righteous acts, turn away your anger and your wrath from **Jackson State University**, your city, your holy hill. Our sins and the iniquities of our ancestors have made **Jackson** and your people an object of scorn to all those around us.

“Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary. Give ear, our God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy. Lord, listen! Lord, forgive! Lord, hear and act! For your sake, my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name.”

**developed by Sean Michael Watkins, Tamice Spencer, and Jason “Smiley” Abrams*