

## Love-Driven Justice: *Part Three*

### Light + Life Group Conversation and Study Guide

Based on *Love-Driven Justice* by Bishop Matt Whitehead  
in Light + Life Magazine, March 2021



### Rebooting Our Thinking About Equity

This is the third study guide in a series of four. Be sure to download [part one](#), [part two](#) and [part four](#).

This is the third study guide in a series of four. Be sure to download part one, part two, and part four. Equity is a loaded and emotionally charged word for many today. In his article, Bishop Matt Whitehead invited us to reboot our thinking regarding this word. To do so, we should be encouraged to set aside our preconceived notions or thoughts, and humbly enter into this conversation.

### Begin with prayer.

*Love-Driven Justice* is active, not passive — movement, not stagnation. Progress on societal issues of equity for people of color since our founding in 1860 does not mean our work is *finished*. In the same way, even though B.T. Roberts wrote [“Ordaining](#)

[Women”](#) in 1891, that doesn’t indicate we have arrived at a place of real equity for women. Just because our social structures are far different than millennia ago when prophets wrote does not change the meaning of “foreigners.” Our work is not finished.

Bishop Matt begins with the reminder that “our work is not finished.” As you read this part of his article, what work is he referring to? Write your thoughts here:

Particularly, three people groups are mentioned: People of color, women, and foreigners. Considering that we are discussing how to reboot our thinking about equity, discuss with your group your thoughts about each people group, and whether or not they are treated with equity compared to their counterparts in our society today, and the basis for your answers.

1. People of Color vs. White People. (It will be particularly helpful for people of color in your group to give their insights and be heard.)
2. Women vs. Men. (It will be particularly helpful for women in your group to give their insights and be heard.)
3. Foreigners vs. Citizens. (It will be particularly helpful for any foreign nationals, here on a visa, to give their insights and be heard.)

Bishop Matt reminds us that “Love-Driven Justice is active, not passive — movement, not stagnation.” How can we be a people actively moving in the direction of equity for all people?

## A Story About Our Founder.

Roberts saw the egregious discrimination against non-whites (African Americans and Native Americans), which disturbed him deeply. In his definitive work on B.T. and Ellen Roberts, “Populist Saints,” Dr. Howard Snyder tells a story reported by B.T. Roberts’ son, Benson, providing insight into the character of his father:

*Roberts was traveling by train, as he frequently did. At one stop a group of about 10 well-dressed young African Americans boarded the train and entered his car. One of the passengers was incensed to see these black youth and insisted the conductor put them in second class.*

*“They have first class tickets,” the conductor explained.*

*The passenger grew irate and said he shouldn’t have to ride with [expletive deleted]. At this point Roberts intervened, defending*

*the young men and women. He “urged their cause convincingly, as he well could do,” Benson wrote. The youth took their seats, and the train went on.*

*When the train reached their stop, the youth gathered around Roberts and ... sang him “a most beautiful song” — a private concert. Roberts learned that these young men and women were the famed Jubilee Singers from Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee.*

It would be unthinkable to deny a person of color a seat today on a train, bus, or plane. But though we may agree on that singular point, we are still divided over other matters of equity. Today, we engage more insidious forms of “selective seating” where people of color are not offered opportunities to lead, given equal opportunity to share their insights, or treated with the same dignity offered to whites. Inequity is alive and well.

Roberts lived in a different day where slavery was still a daily reality. Although that is not the case today, what do you make of Bishop Matt’s statement that we “engage in more insidious forms of ‘selective seating’”?

Do you agree or disagree that inequity is “alive and well”? Why?

**Psalms 9:8** He rules the world in righteousness and judges the peoples with equity.

We read in this verse that God is a righteous judge. Are you glad that He judges you fairly and in light of His grace? Write down all the reasons you are grateful for God’s equitable judgment and righteousness.

**Micah 6:8** He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

In contrast, we see in Micah 6:8 that God asks us to be people of mercy, justice and humility. Equity is certainly a part of that equation. Why does God ask us to treat one another in this way?

Silence in the face of inequity was not B.T. Roberts' way, and it is not *The Free Methodist Way*. *Love-Driven Justice* positions itself in places where false accusation, inequitable treatment, unjust and oppressive systems, and active, unjustifiable harm to others do their evil work. *Love-Driven Justice* speaks for the voiceless unborn, the trafficked, and those

physically abused behind closed doors. *Love-Driven Justice* advocates, gets involved, and speaks up. Honestly, we are not yet fully awakened to biblical justice, mercy, and truth in our church, and we must search our hearts to see our barriers to equity and tear them down.

## Equity Is a Sign of Spiritual Awakening.

Today, there is a movement — numerous church and para-church groups asking God to bring spiritual renewal and awakening. This is a wonderful thing! Consider for a moment the bold title above: “Equity Is a Sign of Spiritual Awakening.” Do you agree? Why or why not?

In what ways can the church speak up today, like B.T. Roberts did so long ago? Why might we be hesitant to do so?

Close in prayer.