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SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Thesis

HOPE FOR RECONCILIATION OR AGENT OF THE STATUS QUO: MULTIRACIAL CONGREGATIONS, THEIR THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS AND POWER DYNAMICS

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology
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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, the biblical vision of egalitarian multiracial communities is compared to the present practices of Christian congregations in the United States. The thesis establishes that, while multiracial congregations bear the potential for racial reconciliation and equality, this potential may be thwarted by the unintended, counterproductive consequences of racial essentialism and white hegemony. Although I hypothesize that these results reflect the realities of multiracial congregations in general, the focus is on evangelical multiracial churches that are predominantly black and white.

The thesis begins by exploring the arguments evangelicals have used to support and oppose racial hierarchy during nineteenth century U.S. slavery and the Civil Rights movement. Next, it traces theological beliefs used to advocate for multiracial congregations today. This is followed by an exploration of the development of multiracial congregations and how they can contribute to racial reconciliation, drawing heavily upon the national study completed by Michael O. Emerson in 2006.

Despite the hope offered in the earlier chapters, I go on to present obstacles that blacks encounter in multiracial congregations. Following a description of the black church tradition, the thesis describes Gerardo Marti's research on how blacks can be utilized and essentialized in multiracial congregations in an effort to achieve diversity. Korie Edwards' study on multiracial congregations, which suggests that, under certain circumstances, potential for racial reconciliation and egalitarian relationships can be hindered by white hegemony, is also employed. This is followed by an examination of how the ideology of whiteness contributes to white hegemony and suggests white identity development as a tool to abate this inequality. Thereafter, formative influences on an individual's identity are explored and a case is made for how multiracial congregations can transform a person's racial identity. It is suggested that such a change bears the potential for racial reconciliation. The thesis concludes with implications for practice today and suggestions for future research. The objective of this thesis is to contribute to the actualization of a biblical vision within multiracial congregations by critically exploring the interactions between theological ideals and sociological realities.

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INTRODUCTION

FOUNDATIONAL RESEARCH

America is a racialized society. A racialized society is one "wherein race matters profoundly for differences in life experiences, life opportunities and social relationships… It allocates differential economic, political, social and even psychological rewards to groups along racial lines; lines that are socially constructed."[1] These words were penned by sociologists Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith in their landmark book, *Divided by Faith*.[2] Therein they establish how, despite the church's potential for reconciliation and social change, American evangelicals are producing and sustaining racial division through homogeneous congregations.

> Religion can provide the moral force for people to determine that something about their world so excessively violates their moral standards that they must act to correct it. It can also provide the moral force necessary for sustained, focused, collective action to achieve the desired goal. Nevertheless, we argue that religion, as structured in America, is unable to make a great impact on the racialized society. In fact, far from knocking down racial barriers, religion generally serves to maintain these historical divides and help develop new ones.[3]

Appealing to the purpose of religion in America, social realities, and the white evangelical tool kit, Emerson and Smith make a persuasive case that, independent

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[1]Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 7.

[2] Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[3] Ibid., 18.

of overt prejudice, American evangelicals remain racially segregated in the interest of their own preferences and needs:

> Religious groups find themselves catering to people's existing preferences rather than their ideal callings...The congregation often looks to religion not as an external force that places radical demands on their lives, but as a way to fulfill their needs…As a result, many religious leaders, even if they desire change, are constrained. Unless their message is in the self-interest of the group, they must necessarily soften and deemphasize their prophetic voice in favor of meeting within group needs. [4]

Although this is discouraging, Emerson and Smith do not leave us without hope:

> Trying to overcome racial division in America has been very difficult in the past and we should not expect things to get much easier in the very near future. At the same time the choices and actions that people make to deal with racial division do matter and can make a difference. Good intentions are not enough, but educated, sacrificial, realistic efforts made in faith across racial lines can help us together towards a more just, equitable, and peaceful society. That is a purpose well worth striving for.[5]

It is this hope that led scholars and practitioners alike to join in the conversation surrounding racial division in the church in America.[6] Some hypothesized that multiracial congregations had greater potential than their homogeneous counterparts to foster reconciliation because they already consisted of racially integrated communities.[7]

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[4] Ibid., 169.

[5] Ibid., 172.

[6] For example, see J. Russell Hawkins and Phillip Luke Sinitiere's *Christians and the Color Line: Race and Religion After Divided by Faith*. This is a collection of ten articles that address issues raised in *Divided by Faith*.

[7] For a clear presentation on how multiracial congregations are believed to contribute to reconciliation see United by Faith by Curtiss Paul DeYoung, Michael O. Emerson, George A. Yancey, and Karen Chai Kim.

In pursuit of this hypothesis, Emerson completed a seven-year study on multiracial congregations of both Christian and non-Christian faiths as described in his book, *People of the Dream* (2006). Multiracial congregations, for the purpose of Emerson's study, were defined as congregations that have no more than 80 percent of a single race.[8] Conducted in partnership with the Hartford Institute and funded by the Lily Foundation, Emerson's research utilized the National Congregations Study,[9] more than 2,500 telephone interviews, hundreds of surveys, and extensive visits to eighteen multiracial congregations throughout the United States. The result was a thick description of multiracial congregations and the most complete study of this phenomenon to date.[10] Emerson's work presented an encouraging picture of multiracial congregations and gave reason to believe that they "may be the harbingers of racial change to come in the United States."[11]

Building upon Emerson's work and seeking to test the claim that multiracial congregations have potential for racial reconciliation, sociologist Korie Edwards chose to focus on interracial congregations, congregations that she

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[8] See pg. 70 for a more detailed description.

[9] "About the National Congregations Study," National Congregations Study, 2014, accessed February 08, 2015, http://www.soc.duke.edu/natcong/about.html. The National Congregations study is "an ongoing national survey effort to gather information about the basic characteristics of America's congregations." Data has been collected in 1998, 2006-2007 and 2012.

[10] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), book jacket.

[11] Ibid.

defines as being predominantly black and white.[12] I will adopt this definition in my thesis. While not necessarily multiracial, statistical analysis revealed that racial hegemony functioned the same in these contexts as it would have in a multiracial church (see Chapter Five, footnote 4). In researching interracial churches, Edwards explored how Emerson's conclusions played out in a congregation that featured the two races that had historically been divided in the United States. Her research suggests that under certain circumstances in these contexts, white hegemony hinders the potential for reconciliation for which Emerson's study allowed readers to hope. The research of Emerson and Edwards inspired me to explore multiracial congregations. Their studies provide the foundation of this present work and will be further explored in-depth in the chapters to come.

My Overarching Research Interests

Influenced by the aforementioned research, my theological convictions, and personal experience, I desire to explore the fields of practical theology, sociology, and organizational development to better understand and transform the hegemonic power dynamics in multiracial congregations. To begin this journey, I am to research the ecclesiological beliefs and values of leadership in multiracial churches, how these are communicated to the congregation, and understood,

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[12] Korie L. Edwards, *The Elusive Dream: The Power of Race in Interracial Churches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 189. For the purpose of this paper, I define a black person as someone of black African-American descent. This includes, but is not limited to, West Indians and South American blacks who were carried from Africa through the Atlantic slave trade. This echoes Edward's definition and, like her, I use the term "black" and "African American" synonymously. I define a white person as someone of European-American descent.

interpreted, and lived out by the congregants themselves. At its core, this study will compare the theological ideals of the leadership to the practice of the congregants, and it will explore the process that produces discrepancies between actions, intentions, and beliefs. It is my hope that by better understanding these elements, I can identify where counterproductive dynamics begin, how they are fostered, and how they can be overcome through a change in congregational praxis. This knowledge could empower pastors to contribute to racial reconciliation and equality both within and between congregations, creating a unified witness and empowering individuals to be agents of justice in every sphere. This thesis serves as the first step of this journey. Although it does not answer my research question directly, it lays a firm foundation from which my future investigation can be pursued. It provides a systematic presentation of the historical and theological context, sociological dynamics, cultural preferences, and previous research needed to pursue my goals.

CURRENT FOCUS

Building upon the aforementioned studies, the scope of the present research will target interracial, evangelical congregations. The reason for this interracial focus is twofold, and the first dynamic is explained by Edwards herself. Edward's gave two reasons for focusing on predominantly black and white congregations. First, she suspected that "black/white interracial churches are the most challenging type to develop

and sustain relative to other types of interracial churches."[13] For example, when "comparing whites' relations with all racial minorities, whites are least likely to marry, live near, *or attend churches* with blacks [emphasis mine]".[14] This is due in part to historical divisions and distinct differences between black and white cultures (for more information see Chapter Five 217-223). This hypothesis is supported by the fact that, in 2006, when multiracial congregations[15] represented around 7 percent of U.S. congregations, only 2.5 percent were congregations that were at least 20 percent black and 20 percent white.[16] Furthermore, although the percentage of multiracial congregations has nearly doubled since then, when Korie Edwards researched interracial congregations that are predominantly black and white for the research she published in *The Elusive Dream* in 2008, she found less than twenty congregations in the National Congregations Study[17] that met the 80:20 requirement for being a multiracial church after accounting for missing data (Ch. 5 for a more detailed description of criteria).[18] Emerson

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[13] Ibid., 7.

[14] Ibid.

[15] As defined by Michael Emerson in his national study, completed in 2006. See (insert chapter #, footnote #) for this definition.

[16] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 138.

[17] Note that this does not reflect the total number of multiracial congregations that are predominantly black and white in the United States, only the number of such churches in the National Congregations Study.

[18] Korie L. Edwards, *The Elusive Dream: The Power of Race in Interracial Churches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 153; "Thesis Feedback from Senior Researcher in the Applied Research and Consulting Department of the Emmanuel Gospel Center," interview by author, February/March 2015. Based on conversations I had with Rudy Mitchell, Senior Researcher in the Applied Research and

suggests that, unlike congregations composed primarily of immigrant groups, wherein immigrants may come expecting to conform to the larger culture and make sacrifices to succeed economically, blacks and whites generally feel like they have an "equal right" to practice their culture.[19] They have little interest in giving up their culture and often see their culture as if it were in opposition to the other.[20] As a result, blacks and whites are less likely to yield to the others cultural preferences and thus are also less likely to worship together in a multiracial congregation.

Consulting (ARC) Department of the Emmanuel Gospel Center (EGC) in Boston MA, I came to question if the data Edwards analyzed from the National Congregations Study (that produced such a small number of multiracial congregations that are predominately black and white), reflects the actual presence of churches in communities. Though the National Congregational Study in particular seemed to have a good way of identifying representative sample for their surveys, let me take the opportunity to note that national surveys have limitations in that they may reach visible congregations, but overlook storefront churches, immigrant churches, and other congregations that tend to fly under the radar; "EGC's Research Uncovers the Quiet Revival," Emmanuel Gospel Center, November/December 2014, accessed April 2015, http://www.egc.org/qr-discovery. An example of how churches may be missed by national organizations that conduct local surveys is evident in the case of Boston's Quiet Revival. The Quiet Revival is an unprecedented and sustained period of Christian growth in Boston that began in 1965. Though in 1993, 87% of congregations in the American Baptist, Congregational, Methodist, and Episcopal church had experienced a measure of decline in the quarter century leading up to that point, EGC found that, despite an appearance of decline in mainline churches, other churches in Boston were experiencing growth. This growth was hidden to some because it was not occurring in visible congregations where one may expect it. Rather, Executive Director Jeff Bass explains, “the growth was happening in non-mainline systems, non-English speaking systems, denominations you have never heard of, churches that meet in storefronts, churches that meet on Sunday afternoons.” EGC's long-term relationship with churches in the city, knowledge of the community, and reputation as a trusted ministry that is committed to the vitality of urban churches and their communities, facilitated their discovery of data that others may have missed. For more information on the Quiet Revival, visit http://www.egc.org/quietrevival.

[19] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 139.

[20] Ibid., 138.

Second, Edwards focused on blacks and whites because, blacks have the option to worship separately from whites in one of the seven African-American controlled denominations.[21] Edwards explains:

> Arguably, the availability of African-American churches that are within a black-controlled religious structure affords African Americans greater opportunity than other racial minorities to attend churches that are largely free of the influence of the dominant culture and where their religious and cultural preferences are practiced.[22]

Furthermore, blacks are desired by these organizations and, because both black and white religious institutions exist, both races are put on an "equal level in racially diverse religious organizations" in that "each group can draw upon an independent religious culture and tradition to contribute to potentially new ones."[23]

In addition to affirming Edward's rationale, I believe that I am well equipped to address congregations composed predominantly of blacks and whites. This is because I

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[21] Korie L. Edwards, *The Elusive Dream: The Power of Race in Interracial Churches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 190. African Methodist Episcopal (AME); African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ); the Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME); the National Baptist Convention, USA, Incorporated (NBC); the National Baptist Convention of America, Unincorporated (NBCA); The Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC); and the Church of God in Christ (COGIC); Charles Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African-American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 1. Note that, when Lincoln and Mamiya wrote their classic text The Black Church in the African American Experience in 1990, "the seven major black denominations with a scattering of smaller communions make the Body of the Black Church and it is estimated that more than 80 percent of all black Christians are in these seven denominations, with the smaller communions accounting for an additional 6 percent."; "Thesis Feedback from Senior Researcher in the Applied Research and Consulting Department of the Emmanuel Gospel Center." Interview by author. February/March 2015. Note that, while historically black denominations may be better known, other racial minorities, such as Hispanics, have their own race-based denomination controlled by people of their own race. Examples of Hispanic denominations found in Boston, MA include Iglesia de Cristo Misionera, Iglesia de Dios, Inc., Iglesis de Jesu Cristo el Buen Samaritano, and Iglesia Evangeliacl Apostoles y Profetas. Ethnic groups whose presence in the United States is too small to develop their own denomination may create networks and fellowships instead.

[22] Korie L. Edwards, *The Elusive Dream: The Power of Race in Interracial Churches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 7.

[23] Ibid.

am a white woman who grew up in white churches but who is currently active in the black Christian community. While I in no way claims to be an expert on race relations and recognizes that I have to be especially cautious about bringing my preconceived notions into my work, my four years of living in a predominantly black neighborhood, five years of receiving a contextualized urban education in a racially diverse seminary, and six years of experience serving on the leadership team of a predominantly black church, equip me with the knowledge and perspective to make more informed decisions about, be familiar with the experiences of, and have more culturally sensitive interactions with congregations that are predominantly black and white.

With that having been said, I acknowledge that my own whiteness poses limits to what I see, am mindful of, and understand. Furthermore, without black voices, I could not pursue my area of research with accuracy. Recognizing both my qualifications and limitations, this paper focuses on whites in interracial congregations. Though the foundation I establish is applicable to all races, my focus on whites is is seen especially in chapters five and six. It is my hope that this focus will lead other whites to become more aware of their whiteness, to give up their power to the oppressed, and to use their privilege to fight for equality and justice.[24]

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[24] Michael O. Emerson and George A. Yancey, *Transcending Racial Barriers: Toward a Mutual Obligations Approach* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 80-81, 84. Though I chose to focus on changing whites and equipping them to work towards justice, I recognize that both whites and people of color bear responsibility in this journey of equality, justice, and reconciliation. In consideration of sociological realities, Michael Emerson and George Yancey explain why both conservative and liberal approaches to reconciliation fall prey to ethnocentrism and group interest, thus preventing their ultimate success. As a result, they argue for a "mutual obligations approach" that considers the perspectives and interests of both whites and people of color. This approach give all sides the opportunity to express themselves and requires that everyone both work towards change within their communities and partner with one another to pursue a shared, overarching goal. This approach is contrasted to those that put the

The second characteristic on which the research will focus is that of American Evangelicalism.[25] This is because the thesis will build upon the foundation laid by Emerson and Smith and again, my personal experience in evangelical congregations. Although a diverse Christian tradition that permeates American society, despite (or perhaps because of) its prevalence, it is difficult to define. As a result, it is necessary to explore various definitions of the evangelical church to better understand the focus of this work.

Defining the Evangelical Church

The evangelical church is an amorphous Christian movement that has its roots in the First Great Awakening. The name evangelical has its origin in the Greek word *euagellion*, meaning "good news." Shared beliefs about this good news unites the ninety to one hundred million Americans who identify as evangelical.[26] Despite the shared name, evangelicalism is not a denomination or collection of denominations. Rather, as the second largest grouping of Christians in the world,[27] it is a movement that transcends religious denominations and traditions.[28] For example, the understanding of the word

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responsibility solely on either the minority- or majority-group and encourage people to make improvements by assimilating to the interest of the other.

[25] Note that, because I am focusing on congregations within the Christian faith, when speaking of my own research, I use the term congregation and church interchangeably.

[26] Larry Eskridge, "How Many Evangelicals Are There?," How Many Evangelicals Are There?, 2012, accessed January 13, 2015, http://www.wheaton.edu/ISAE/Defining-Evangelicalism/How-Many-Are-There.

[27] Gerald R. McDermott, *The Oxford Handbook of Evangelical Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 19.

[28] Keith A. Roberts and David Yamane, *Religion in Sociological Perspective*, 5th ed. (Washington DC: Pine Forge Press, 2012), 191-192. For example, evangelicalism includes people from the Reformed,

evangelical is so broad that Fundamentalists, Pentecostals, and Charismatics, although notably distinct from mainstream evangelicalism, have been identified as subsets of the movement.[29] Historian Douglas Sweeney affirms that, despite common references to an "evangelical church,"[30] "there has never been—and there never will be—an evangelical denomination." Although evangelicals come together around certain people and institutions (E.g. National Association of Evangelicals, Billy Graham, Christianity Today, Youth for Christ, etc.), these institutions do not have final authority to define this movement of faith. Furthermore, no constitution or guidelines exist that could construct a denomination from that movement.[31]

In *Christianity Today*, evangelicals' flagship magazine, the Executive Editor Timothy George defined evangelicals as "a worldwide family of Bible-believing Christians committed to sharing with everyone everywhere the transforming good news of new life in Jesus Christ, an utterly free gift that comes through faith alone in the

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Holiness, Anabaptist, Charismatic, and Pentecostal traditions and even extends beyond the Protestant church as well.

[29] Gerald R. McDermott, *The Oxford Handbook of Evangelical Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 19. Mainstream evangelicals today are generally set apart from fundamentalists in their interpretation of scripture, engagement with culture, participation in social action, dialogue with liberals, ethos, fissiparousness and view of Israel (7). Mainstream evangelicals are set apart from Pentecostals in their belief in the Holy Spirit as manifest in spiritual gifts today, specifically their view in speaking in tongues. For a brief overview of historical connections and further distinctions between these subgroups see Randall Balmer's "Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Journey into Evangelical Subculture" pg. xi.

[30] Note that by referring to an "evangelical church," I do not mean to imply that it is a part of a denomination or other unified entity. I do not believe that this term necessitates those associations. Rather, by the "evangelical church" I mean a church within the movement of evangelicalism.

[31] Douglas A. Sweeney, *The American Evangelical Story: A History of the Movement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), Kindle, location 171.

crucified and risen Savior."[32] Although many would agree with George's general description, little consensus exists beyond this. However, by exploring definitions from various perspectives, readers can get a sense of the spirit of evangelical Christianity that, although present among people of diverse cultural, social, and political orientations, is united by theological emphases and beliefs.

In his book *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity*, theologian Allister McGrath suggests that "evangelicalism is grounded on a cluster of six controlling convictions, each of which is regarded as being true, of vital importance and grounded in Scripture."[33] These convictions are:

1) The supreme authority of Scripture as a source of knowledge of God and a guide to Christian living.
2) The majesty of Jesus Christ, both as incarnate God and Lord and as the Savior of sinful humanity.
3) The lordship of the Holy Spirit.
4) The need for personal conversion.
5) The priority of evangelism for both individual Christians and the church as a whole.
6) The importance of the Christian community for spiritual nourishment, fellowship and growth.

Although these tenets are not unique to evangelicals, evangelicals set themselves apart by their emphasis on these beliefs.[34] As an alternative, David Bebbington draws upon a

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[32]Ibid., 132-134.

[33]Ibid., 139-145.

[34] Gerald R. McDermott, *The Oxford Handbook of Evangelical Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 6.

historical perspective to provide a quadrilateral of priorities that he thinks define evangelical beliefs:[35]

1) Conversion: The belief that lives need to be transformed through a "born-again" experience and a lifelong process of following Jesus.
2) Activism: The expression and demonstration of the gospel in missionary and social reform efforts.
3) Biblicism: A high regard for and obedience to the Bible as the ultimate authority.[36]
4) Crucicentrism: A stress on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross as making possible the redemption of humanity.

Note that McGrath and Bebbington's definitions, the most popular in their respective fields, are both similar, yet notably different. They have also been critiqued for two primary reasons. First, they are so vague that they could include Christians that do not see themselves as evangelicals. Second, they do not acknowledge within themselves that groups which predated the evangelical movement also held these beliefs.[37]

Sweeney responds to these critiques by offering a definition that includes historical influences. He believes that evangelicalism is "a movement that is rooted in classical Christian orthodoxy, shaped by a largely Protestant understanding of the gospel, and distinguished from other such movements by an eighteenth-century twist."[38] In

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[35] "What Is an Evangelical?," National Association of Evangelicals, accessed January 12, 2015, http://www.nae.net/church-and-faith-partners/what-is-an-evangelical.

[36] "Statement of Faith," National Association of Evangelicals, section goes here, accessed January 13, 2015, http://www.nae.net/about-us/statement-of-faith. The statement of faith of the National Association of evangelicals fleshes out the specific beliefs that flow from this high view of scripture. These include the doctrine of the Trinity, virgin birth, miraculous works of Christ, Christ's atoning death and bodily resurrection, the judgment of all humanity, and the spiritual unity among Christians.

[37] Douglas A. Sweeney, *The American Evangelical Story: A History of the Movement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), Kindle, 145.

[38]Ibid., 239.

elaborating he explains that, while this definition could include some who are not evangelical, evangelicals' uniqueness comes from their adherence to: "(1) beliefs most clearly stated during the Protestant Reformation,[39] and (2) practices shaped by the...Great Awakening."[40] The Protestant Reformation, Sweeney asserts, was formative in evangelicals' commitment to "the orthodoxy (i.e., right doctrine and right worship) expressed in the ancient Christian creeds and promoted further by Reformers" through the doctrines of sola scriptura, sola gratia, sola fide, and sola Christus.[41] The Great Awakening, on the other hand, shaped how the good news was shared, "engender[ing] a new sense of gospel urgency and a new spirit of cooperation." As a result, this helped people see themselves less as a member of a theological tradition (as was customary during the sixteenth century Protestant disputes) and more as a unified Body of Christ.[42]

The definitions provided by theologians and historians are complemented by a sociological perspective. For example, drawing upon their 1998 research on American evangelicalism,[43] *in Divided by Faith,* Emerson and Smith describe evangelicals as those who conform to the following characteristics. Evangelicals believe that,

1) Final, ultimate authority is in the Bible.

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[39]Gerald R. McDermott, *The Oxford Handbook of Evangelical Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 5. Though generally affirmed, the primacy of reformation beliefs have been questioned by N. T. Wright and Thomas Oden.

[40]Ibid., 242.

[41]Ibid., 250-261. Naturally, those who are not Protestant do not adhere to these doctrines in the same way as Protestants do. Regardless, Sweeney acknowledges these influences none-the-less.

[42]Ibid., 319, 339.

[43] Christian Smith et al., *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

2) Christ died for the salvation of all, and that anyone who accepts Christ as the one way to eternal life will be saved.
3) Christians should share their faith, or evangelize.
4) Engaging orthodoxy, or taking the conservative faith beyond the boundaries of the evangelical subculture and engaging the larger culture and society, is a key element of Christian life.

Emerson and Smith further enhance one's understanding of evangelicalism by making an important distinction regarding race. At the time of their study (2000), nearly ninety percent of Americans who identified themselves as evangelical were white.[44] This is because many blacks, despite similar beliefs, do not identify as evangelical on account of the largely separate histories of black and white Christians in the United States. This historical division has also contributed to different political orientations and understanding of social engagement between the black and white church. As a result, blacks are more likely to associate themselves with a historically black denomination than the predominantly white evangelical movement that has excluded and oppressed blacks throughout history. The *Oxford Handbook of Evangelical Theology* explains:

> In the United States, white evangelical churchgoers and black Protestant churchgoers affirm just about the same basic convictions concerning religious doctrines and moral practices. But for well-established historical reasons concerning the discriminatory treatment of African Americans, black Protestant political behavior and social attitudes are very different from those of white evangelicals. If, in terms of both historical descent and religious convictions, most black Protestants could also be considered evangelicals, the history of racial attitudes has driven a sharp social wedge between them and white evangelicals.[45]

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[44] Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3.

[45] Gerald R. McDermott, *The Oxford Handbook of Evangelical Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 22.

This sentiment is captured by a black former InterVarsity fellowship director's explanation of his relationship with the term "evangelical":

> The belief system I inherited from my parents and my black church was similar to evangelicalism and fundamentalism...but as I get older, I have found those terms have become pejorative and lack meaningfulness to my experience as an African American Christian who also embraces his ethnic and cultural identity.[46]

In consideration of the dynamics discussed above, and for the purpose of their study, Emerson and Smith identified people as evangelical if those people self-identified with evangelicalism as their primary religious identity.[47] It is important to note, however, that a Barna group survey found that the number of self-proclaimed evangelicals is almost five times larger than people who affirm nine doctrines Barna identified as evangelical beliefs (thirty-eight percent vs. eight percent).[48] As a result of this discrepancy, Barna makes a distinction between Christians who are "evangelical" and "born again," with the latter group subsuming many of the people who are self-proclaimed, but don't consent to Barna's nine beliefs. These two groups differ in demographics, political perspectives, and religious behavior. Examples include self-proclaimed evangelicals being more likely to be white (sixty-six percent vs. seventy-six percent), more likely to be democrat (thirty-five percent vs. twenty-six percent), and forty percent less likely to read their Bible

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[46] Edward Gilbreath, *Reconciliation Blues: A Black Evangelical's Inside View of White Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 39.

[47] Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3.

[48] "Survey Explores Who Qualifies As an Evangelical," Barna Group, 2009, Size Counts, accessed April 03, 2015, https://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/13-culture/111-survey-explores-who-qualifies-as-an-evangelical#.VR1FUSkh7gV.

throughout the week.[49] While intriguing, with doctrines such as "believing that Satan exists" and "the Bible is accurate in *all* that it teaches [emphasis mine]," Barna is clearly utilizing a more narrow understanding of the word evangelical than McGrath, Bebbington, or Emerson and Smith (e.g. cp. to Bebbington's "A high regard for and obedience to the Bible as the ultimate authority," McGrath's "The supreme authority of Scripture as a source of knowledge of God and a guide to Christian living," and Emerson and Smith: "Final, ultimate authority is in the Bible").[50] I imagine that the number of evangelicals would be significantly larger if people were asked whether or not they affirmed less and/or more general criteria such as that represented by the other voices above. Regardless of how broad or specific the definition is, evangelicals have generally been distinguished from more theologically liberal Christians. In the last forty years, the general public has also associated the movement with more conservative politics. This is

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[49] "Survey Explores Who Qualifies As an Evangelical," Barna Group, 2009, "Demographic Profiles Differ and Divergent Religious Behavior, accessed April 03, 2015, https://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/13-culture/111-survey-explores-who-qualifies-as-an-evangelical#.VR1FUSkh7gV.

[50] "Survey Explores Who Qualifies As an Evangelical," Barna Group, 2009, Research Details, accessed April 03, 2015, https://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/13-culture/111-survey-explores-who-qualifies-as-an-evangelical#.VR1FUSkh7gV. According to the Barna report: "'Born again Christians' are defined as people who said they have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in their life today and who also indicated they believe that when they die they will go to Heaven because they had confessed their sins and had accepted Jesus Christ as their savior. Respondents are <u>not</u> asked to describe themselves as 'born again.' 'Evangelicals' meet the born again criteria...*plus* seven other conditions. Those include saying their faith is very important in their life today; believing they have a personal responsibility to share their religious beliefs about Christ with non-Christians; believing that Satan exists; believing that eternal salvation is possible only through grace, not works; believing that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life on earth; asserting that the Bible is accurate in all that it teaches; and describing God as the all-knowing, all-powerful, perfect deity who created the universe and still rules it today. Being classified as an evangelical is not dependent upon church attendance or the denominational affiliation of the church attended. Respondents were <u>not</u> asked to describe themselves as 'evangelical.'

due in part to the backlash of Bob Jones v. United States,[51] though the Religious Right is not an accurate representation of all evangelicals.

The variety of views expressed above illustrate how evangelicalism is difficult to define. This is due in part to the diversity within the movement. Sweeney explains that,

> Part of the challenge that anyone faces in trying to define the movement more narrowly has to do with the great wealth of evangelical diversity. Any movement as immense as that of global evangelicalism will include many who share little else in common. Men and women on every continent count themselves as evangelicals, from the very rich to the very poor, from the well educated to the uneducated, both capitalists and socialists, democrats, monarchians, and everything in between.[52]

Furthermore, he writes, "Our constituency is comprised of innumerable subgroups, each with its own major emphases, institutions, and even leaders. Any attempt to describe the movement must come to terms with this reality."[53] As a result, metaphors such as that of a kaleidoscope or patchwork quilt have been used to describe the diversity of the evangelical community. Robert Johnston even suggests that "evangelicals resemble a

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[51] Randall Balmer, *Thy Kingdom Come: An Evangelical's Lament - How the Religious Right Distorts the Faith and Threatens America* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), excerpt from NPR article, accessed April 2015, http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5502785. Bob Jones v. United States is a supreme court case decided in1983 that ended a dispute that had been filed in 1971 by Bob Jones University in response to the 1970 revision to the IRS tax regulation. These regulations stated that tax exceptions were not to be awarded to schools that violated public policy, such as racial discrimination. Due to racially discriminatory practices, Bob Jones had their tax exception withdrawn. This led some evangelicals to engage in politics, believing that political engagement was necessary to protect against the state putting limitations on their expression of faith. This has been believed to have marked the beginning of the religious right in America.

[52]Douglas A. Sweeney, *The American Evangelical Story: A History of the Movement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), Kindle, 163.

[53] Ibid., 184.

large, extended family and should be described in only a general manner in terms of their 'family resemblance' rather than pigeonholed with excessive, propositional precision."[54]

In recognition of the vast diversity within evangelicalism, I affirm that there is a measure of truth in each of the definitions mentioned above. I acknowledge the complexity of the issue and invite readers to dwell in the tension. Accordingly, the following exploration focuses on evangelicals in a general manner: examining those who have been historically labeled as an evangelical, who clearly express what evangelical beliefs, and/or are self-identified as a part of the movement.

Looking Ahead

In this thesis, I will lay a foundation for future research on white hegemony in evangelical, multiracial congregations. The conversation begins in chapter one by exploring primary cultural and theological traditions that vary significantly between historically black and white congregations. This exploration establishes patterns of behavior and belief in homogeneous churches so as to help readers grasp the significance of the dynamics present in multiracial congregations. The second chapter looks at how theology has been used to advocate for or oppose racial hierarchy during nineteenth century American slavery and the Civil Rights Movement, thus providing a context for the theology that is espoused in multiracial congregations today. Chapter three explores this contemporary theology and establishes the beliefs that are communicated to and theoretically shape the behavior of the congregation. Drawing upon Emerson and Smith's research, chapter three provides an in-depth description of multiracial congregations and

[54] Ibid. 202.

highlights their potential for reconciliation. An introduction of the socially constructed ideology of whiteness in chapter four, however, illustrates how this can perpetuate rather than resolve the problem at hand. Chapter five explores the role congregational life plays in racial identity formation and how this shapes people's religious preferences. The work concludes with a brief section, chapter six, on implications and plans for future research. Through this structure, I will lay the foundation that is needed to begin an effective investigation of power dynamics in evangelical, multiracial congregations today.

I. A THEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF RACIAL HIERARCHY WITHIN THE BODY OF CHRIST

> ...No one observing the history of the church in America can deny the shameful fact that it has been an accomplice in structuring racism into the architecture of American society. The church, by and large, sanctioned slavery and surrounded it with the halo of moral respectability. It also cast the mantle of its sanctity over the system of segregation... - Martin Luther King Jr.[1]

The dividing walls between races in the United States run both high and deep. These barriers, however, are not the mere result of a contemporary context, but the product of a dark historical legacy. When European settlers came to North America's shores, they did so with the understanding that they were God's chosen people. For them, their venture meant God-given freedom, opportunity and resources that would empower them to become a "city on a hill."[2] While settlers initially believed that divine favor would be conferred only if they walked in righteousness, as the nation became more secular, they began to see themselves as privileged, regardless of whether or not they honored the Lord.[3] In addition to shaping how Europeans saw themselves, their narrative of chosenness also influenced how they saw others: to be chosen necessitates that others *not* be favored by the Lord. It is this principle that both foreshadowed and shaped racial hierarchy in America. Over time, whites drew upon the Hamitic narrative (Gen. 10:18-

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[1] Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), 101, accessed December 2014, http://nubiannolege.com/library/Martin%20 Luther%20King,%20Jr_/Where %20Do%20We%20Go%20From%20Here_%20Chaos%20or%20C% 20(59)/Where%20Do%20We%20Go%20From%20Here_%20Chaos%20-%20Martin%20 Luther%20 King,%20Jr_.pdf.

[2] Sylvester A. Johnson, *The Myth of Ham in Nineteenth-century American Christianity: Race, Heathens, and the People of God* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 11, accessed December 2014, http://site.ebrary.com.ezproxy.bu. edu/lib/bostonuniv/reader.action?docID=10135428.

[3] Ibid., 15-16.

27), which had been used to explain the origin of Africans as descendants of Ham, to view blacks as inferior.[4] While Africans initially took pride in their Hamitic lineage, recognizing that it affirmed their humanity and connected them with the noble accomplishments of their past, this association changed over time. By nineteenth century America, "to be Hamitic was to be descended from those who historically were not people of God, according to the biblical 'record.' Ham, for instance, was the ancestor of Canaanite people and is repeatedly represented in Christian and Judaic thought in antithesis to those-who-know-and-are-affiliated-with the one true God."[5] It was in the context of this narrative that the tension between blacks and whites developed in the United States; it was this tension which triggered theological discourses that would in turn shape both racial oppression and pursuits of justice.

Over the centuries, theology has been instrumental in shaping how the church has treated people based on race. Be it in the nineteenth or twenty-first century, the Bible has been the foundation from which evangelical Christians have informed their view of race and its social, political, and spiritual implications. Although drawing upon the same scriptures, socio-historical realities have led evangelicals to interpret the Bible in ways that support both racial equality and hierarchy. As a result, Christians today would benefit from being students of history, aware of how biblical interpretation has been influenced over time and how certain interpretations contributed to racial oppression and injustice. An awareness of these developments and their implications can contribute to

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[4] This process through which blacks became seen as racially inferior is actually far more complicated than this, but the chosen people narrative played a significant role in this process.

[5] Ibid., 6.

followers of Christ more faithfully interpreting and applying the Word today. When this is done, they will be better equipped to cease their legacy of oppression and be agents of racial justice.

As a result, this chapter will describe American evangelical theological perspectives on the racial hierarchies during two time periods that brought the discussion of pursuing more egalitarian racial integration to the national fore: nineteenth century slavery and the Civil Rights Movement (1954-1968). It will begin by exploring biblically based arguments evangelicals made for and against slavery in the thirty years prior to the Emancipation Proclamation. The second section of the paper will discuss the discrepancy between the beliefs and actions of evangelicals during the Civil Rights Movement. It will go on to present the theology of Martin Luther King Jr., who did not self-identify as an evangelical,[6] but who built upon shared beliefs to produce a viable perspective that fostered the integrity and action evangelicals lacked. Exploring King helps further one's understanding of what evangelicals chose not to live out and allows consideration of how they could modify their beliefs to produce more faithful action. It is my hope that, in learning how the theology of American evangelicals' shaped their interpretation of racial hierarchy in the past, Christians will be able to better engage the issue of race in a way that furthers equality and justice in the twenty-first century.

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[6] See the section "Defining the Evangelical Church" in the Introduction, specifically pgs. 14-15 to learn about why some blacks who held the fundamental tenants of evangelicalism did not self-identify as a part of the evangelical movement.

NINETEENTH CENTURY SLAVERY IN THE UNITED STATES

A Baptist minister of the South has denounced the speaking against slavery as a "sin against the Holy Ghost." On the other hand, the imputation of slavery to God, as its author, or institutor, or approver, has been declared to be "blasphemy" by too many to be enumerated. - Cyrus Pitt Grosvenor, Baptist minister and abolitionist, 1847.[7]

The impact that African slaves had on the United States in the nineteenth century cannot be underestimated. In 1800 there were 894,452 slaves in the United States[8] and by 1860, there were 3,953,760 according to the U.S. census.[9] Slaves made up 10 percent of the population at that time. More significant than their number was their impact on the U.S. economy. It is estimated that, on the eve of the Civil War, the American South produced seven-eighths of the world's cotton. That translated into wealth not only for those states which would become known as the Confederacy, but also for the North's textile industry[10] and the shipyards and merchants that would carry the cotton overseas. As a result, in 1860, the value of slaves was 'roughly three times greater than the total amount invested in banks,' and it was 'equal to about seven times the total value of all currency in circulation in the country, three times the value of the entire livestock

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[7] James O. Buswell, III, *Slavery, Segregation, and Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 9.

[8] "Return of the Whole Number of Persons Within the Several Districts of the United States," U.S. Department of State, section goes here, accessed December 2014, http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/1800-return-whole-number-of-persons.pdf.

[9] "Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eight Census," U.S. Department of the Interior, http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/1860a-01.pdf.

[10] "Why Was Cotton 'King'?," PBS, accessed December 14, 2014, http://www.pbs.org/wnet/african-americans-many-rivers-to-cross/history/why-was-cotton-King/." 'New England mills consumed 283.7 million pounds of cotton, or 67 percent of the 422.6 million pounds of cotton used by U.S. mills in 1860.' In other words, on the eve of the Civil War, New England's economy fundamentally dependent upon the textile industry, inextricably intertwined, as Bailey puts it, 'to the labor of black people working as slaves in the U.S. South.'"

population, twelve times the value of the entire U.S. cotton crop and forty-eight times the total expenditure of the federal government that year.'"[11] As a result, although people may have strived to interpret and apply scripture without ulterior motive, to think that the debate over slavery was strictly theological would be naïve. With mixed motivations, people engaged in a debate that could not be separated from their way of life.[12] Abolitionists and advocates of slavery battled over what seemed to be human rights versus national well-being.[13]

In the thirty years preceding the Emancipation Proclamation, there was increasing tension between abolitionists and slaveholders. This was manifest in the full expression of the theological debate on slavery during this time.[14] As abolitionists rose up in response to the atrocities of the second middle passage that transported slaves from the Upper South to the Deep South to meet the demands of the cotton industry, slaveholders, mindful of the recent abolition of slavery in Great Britain, promoted regulations and laws to protect their industry and way of life. A battle was raging between abolitionist societies, whose members held conferences, published materials, and lobbied for political change, and wealthy slave owners, who worked to suppress abolitionists and influence

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[11] Ibid.

[12] James O. Buswell, III, *Slavery, Segregation, and Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 11. "Although the Southern way of life was a complex and rich civilization, it was 'so completely identified with slavery as to make its very existence seem to depend upon the defense of that institution.' "

[13] I am using the term "abolitionist" broadly to include anyone who was making a public argument against slavery. It was the beliefs espoused by these abolitionists that shaped the American consciousness.

[14] Harris, John Collin. *The Theology of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.* Doctoral thesis, Duke, 1974, 41, 47.

the passing of laws that stripped even free blacks of their basic liberties.[15] Two notable federal developments during this time included the second fugitive slave act,[16] which required officers of the law to detain any black even accused of being a slave and return them to an affidavit-bearing owner, and the Dred Scott ruling, which denied citizenship to slaves' descendants. Due to mounting social and economic instability, slave-owners and abolitionists made rousing arguments based on the Bible, the holy book to which most Americans ascribed. Defenders of slavery passionately "theologized" to protect their way of life and abolitionists drew attention to the inconsistency between the principles of the Bible and the dehumanizing practice of slavery.[17] Evangelicals, who dominated public life by mid-century,[18] were central in this debate. The following section explores the arguments used to defend and oppose the slavery that institutionalized racial hierarchy and division both within society and the body of Christ.

Biblically Based Arguments For and Against Slavery

There were four primary types of arguments that evangelicals drew from the Bible to support or oppose American slavery. These arguments developed over time in response to the rejoinders of opponents and the state of society. The first argument

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[15] E.g. South Carolina's "Black Code" that prohibited slaves from assembling, producing food, earning money, learning how to read, or owning good quality clothing. E.g. Richmond Virginia's slave code (1857) that, among other things, prohibits slaves from self-hiring, restricts blacks from entering certain parts of the city, specifies public etiquette, forbids smoking, carrying canes, standing on the sidewalk and provocative language.

[16] This was a result, in part, or the Compromise of 1850 that Henry Ward Beecher argued against.

[17] Harris, John Collin. *The Theology of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr*. Doctoral thesis, Duke, 1974, 52-53.

[18] This was due in part to the First Great Awakening.

focused on whether or not slavery - as conducted in nineteenth century America - was practiced in the Bible, the second on whether or not slavery is a sin, the third was related to moral principles, and the fourth to the development of morality over time. An exploration of the arguments on both sides of these debates will identify Bible passages that have been used to address racial hierarchy and impart an understanding of how they were interpreted and lived out at that time.

Challenging the Existence of Slavery in the Bible

The first argument addressed whether or not slavery, as practiced in nineteenth century America, existed in biblical times. It focused on different definitions of American slavery and tried to prove that the servitude seen in the example of Abraham, Old Testament law, and select passages from the epistles described slavery that was or was not equivalent to contemporary times. For example, abolitionist and southern Baptist minister, William Henry Brisbane, defines a slave as "one who is in the power of another, whom he is compelled to serve without the power of redress when wronged."[19] Naturally, he argues that slaves in the Bible were not in this condition. On the other hand, Baptist preacher and advocate of slavery, Thornton Stringfellow, emphasized a simpler definition, asserting that slavery treats people as property without their consent both today and in biblical times.[20] If it could be reasoned that the slavery of the Bible was disparate in nature from the nineteenth century institution, abolitionists could argue that

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[19] William Brisbane, *Slaveholding Examined in the Light of the Holy Bible* (Philadelphia: U.S. Job Print Office, 1847), 2, microform.

[20] Thornton Stringfellow, *Scriptural and Statistical Views In Favor of Slavery*, 4th ed. (Richmond: J. W. Randolph, 1856), 7, accessed December 2014, http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/string/string.html.

the oppressive experience of blacks was not supported by the Bible, an authority to which both slaveholder and abolitionist claimed to ascribe. If slave owners, however, could demonstrate that the slavery in the Bible was like the nineteenth century institution, they could argue that it was ordained by the Lord. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to describe the variety of definitions that were used, this work will provide a brief exploration of the primary interpretations of key scriptures to familiarize readers with some of the issues addressed and ultimately presented to favor certain definitions. Herein, Brisbane and Stringfellow's themes of compulsion, redress, and ownership can be heard.

First, to support their definition and worldview, advocates of slavery cited passages in which Abraham was given slaves (Gen. 20:14), purchased servants (Gen. 17:12-13), and counted them as property given from God (Gen. 24:35-36). Slaves also come into the narrative when an angel tells Sarai's fleeing maidservant, Hagar, to return to her master and that, in doing so, she would be blessed (Gen. 16:7-10). Abolitionists, on the other hand, strived to prove that, even if there was a hierarchical relationship, it did not imply complete ownership of a person or oppression such that one could not receive redress for wrongs.[21] For example, abolitionists Theodore Dwight Weld and Amos Phelps wrote that "bought" must have meant "bought services in advance" because no historical document can be provided to prove that a Hebrew purchased a slave from a

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[21] Molly Oshatz, *Slavery and Sin: The Fight against Slavery and the Rise of Liberal Protestantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 67. "Thornwell, Fuller, and Rice adopted William Paley's definition of slavery as an obligation on the part of the slave to labor for the master without consent or contract.[26] Slavery was not, they argued, the total ownership of one human being by another, or the holding of a man as chattel."

third party.[22] Brisbane attempts to augment this by asserting that slaves experienced a fundamentally different level of respect in biblical times. For example, slaves were addressed with titles of honor (Gen. 24:18), Abraham's servant, Hagar, was sent away after her conflict with Abraham's wife instead of being sold to another master (Gen. 21:14), and, had Abraham not had children, his servant would have been his heir (Gen. 15:3).[23] Moses Stuart, a nineteenth century biblical scholar, succinctly concludes the abolitionists' tune: "Abraham's relation to these slaves was somewhat different from that of master to slave among us."[24]

When turning to Old Testament law, advocates of slavery pointed to such arguments as how God's people were told to enslave the Heathen (Lev. 25:44-46, Deut. 20:10-11), how the unequal punishments of crimes exacted upon slaves indicated that they were of lesser value (Ex. 21:20), and how slaves are listed among property by God (Ex. 20:17). Abolitionists, on the other hand, drawing upon protective regulations such as the facts that a Hebrew could not enslave another Hebrew for more than 6 years (Deut. 15:12-15) and that all slaves were supposed to be released on the year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:10), argued that this was not the case. After having emphasized the rights of slaves, in favor of his definition, Brisbane concludes:

> And let a fair and full examination of all the laws of Moses be made, and it seems to be that the candid mind will have to admit that there is nothing therein from beginning to end, that tolerates or gives the slightest countenance to

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[22] Ibid., 63.

[23] William Brisbane, *Slaveholding Examined in the Light of the Holy Bible* (Philadelphia: U.S. Job Print Office, 1847), 28-30, microform.

[24] Moses Stuart, *Conscience and the Constitution* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1950), 23.

> slavery. If the Jews made slaves of their fellow men or oppressed them in any way it was not because their law, given by Moses, allowed such a state of things, but it was without law, and directly contrary to both the letter and the spirit of the law.[25]

Drawing from the New Testament, advocates of slavery and abolitionists alike argued over the interpretation of key passages that speak to the subservience of slaves (Titus 2:9-10; Eph. 6:5-9; Col. 3:22-25; and 1 Pet. 2:18-20) and tell them to respect their masters (1 Tim. 6:1-2; Eph. 6:5-9). They also highlighted instructions for slaves to be satisfied with their "calling" (1 Cor. 12:13-26) and cite the example of Paul who returns a slave to his master (Phm. 1:10-19). With biblical evidence ostensibly in their favor, advocates of slavery could let the biblical text speak for itself. On the other hand, abolitionists strained scriptural interpretation to argue that passages like 1 Peter 2:18-20 emphasizes the value of honor rather than a hierarchical relationship,[26] that Onesimus was only a temporary aid, or that the word "slave" should actually be understood as a "servant." Brisbane adds that early converts were unlikely to own slaves because they tended not to be people of wealth and, at times, fled under persecution. In response to abolitionists' claims that the word translated as "slave" or, "servant" in the King James Bible should be understood as a hired servant, advocate of slavery Albert Taylor Bledsoe said, “If the term ‘doulos’ signifies a ‘hired servant,’ or an ‘apprentice,’ it is certainly a most extraordinary circumstance that the best lexicographers of the Greek language have

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[25] Ibid.,73.

[26] Ibid.,141.

not made the discovery."[27] Senator James Henry Hammond affirms that "it was well known that both the Hebrew and Greek words translated 'servant' in the Scriptures usually meant 'slave.'"[28]

As these interpretations of biblical texts were reflected upon, the weakness of the abolitionists' nuanced arguments against the belief that slavery in the Bible was commensurate to the nineteenth century institution, could be seen. In time, advocates were also able to clearly establish abolitionists' exegetical fallacies. Although evangelicals who were against slavery wanted to believe that their unchanging God would make the same claims to all generations, what they felt God was telling them in their current context did not align with the biblical text.[29] For indeed there was inequality and oppression in the Bible that seemed to be condoned by God. As a result, abolitionists were forced to think beyond the text itself to a biblically based argument on whether or not slavery was a sin.[30]

Christians today should note how these disparate arguments were both drawn from and could be supported by the biblical text. As the battle over slavery illustrates, biblical interpretation can vary greatly and an argument's reflection of the literal words of scripture does not assure that that argument reflects the will of God. I suggest that, while

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[27] Molly Oshatz, *Slavery and Sin: The Fight against Slavery and the Rise of Liberal Protestantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 62.

[28] Ibid., 64-65.

[29] Ibid., 80.

[30] Moderates did this better than passionate abolitionists, who struggled to acknowledge that slavery was supported within the biblical text itself.

maintaining the primacy of scripture, other guides for interpretation may be needed to align one's understanding with the heart of God. These guidelines include the context of the author and original audience, Christian tradition, reason, the leading of the Holy Spirit, culture, and experience.[31] Similarly, when people who believe they are pursuing the will of God have an argument that cannot be supported well by the literal words of the Bible, they must acknowledge that they need to let go of literalism and, like the forthcoming example of the abolitionists, seek more creative means of seeing God's will done.

Slavery As a Sin

Those who opposed slavery made the case that, because slavery produced sin, it was necessarily sinful. Examples of such sin, given by E.P. Barrows, a Presbyterian minister from New York, include the dehumanization of slaves, division of families, violence, masters' blunted moral sensibilities, licentiousness, white laziness, and laws against literacy that prevented blacks from reading the word of God.[32] Advocates of

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[31] Alan K. Waltz, *A Dictionary for United Methodists* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), s.v. "Glossary of Terms: The Wesleyan Quadrilateral," accessed March 2015, http://archives.umc.org/interior.asp?mid =258&GID=312&GMOD=VWD. Note that the criteria of scripture, tradition, reason, and experience are drawn from John Wesley's quadrilateral for theological reflection; Stacey Floyd-Thomas et al., *Black Church Studies: An Introduction* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 77-79.The similar criteria of sacred inheritance, experience, and scripture are described by Stacie Floyd-Thomas et al, as informing the black sacred worldview. These three criteria functions similarly to the Wesleyan Quadrilateral. With overlapping criteria it may seem redundant and even unnecessarily divisive to have a separate interpretive framework for blacks, but some blacks affirm a separate paradigm so as to distinguish themselves from the interpretive tools of whites who used scripture to support oppression for so many years. The first element in the African-American paradigm, sacred inheritance, referring to West African worldview, cultural norms, and practices, inspired me to add "culture" to my suggested guidelines for biblical interpretation. I believe that, when interpreting scripture, people should ask themselves, "how does my culture shape the way I view the text?" Asking "how might viewing the text through the lens of another culture illuminate my own understanding" is also helpful.

[32] Molly Oshatz, *Slavery and Sin: The Fight against Slavery and the Rise of Liberal Protestantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 66.

slavery, however, argued from the general to the particular, claiming that, just because slavery could produce sin did not mean it was a sin per se. This argument put abolitionists in a difficult position, requiring them to contend that the relationship between master and slave is sinful within itself.

In the institution's defense, Presbyterian clergyman, F. A. Ross, responded to this accusation with simple logic: "The Bible settles the question: sin is the transgression of the law, and where there is no law there is no sin."[33] Prior to the law, the patriarchs did things that now would be considered sinful, like marrying one's close relative, but their actions were not condemned because the law had not yet established that it was condemnable.[34] Sin, Ross asserts, is not inherent in anything. Rather it exists when the human will goes against God's will and, if there is no law making clear that slavery is against the will of God, it must be concluded that it is not a sin.[35]

In opposition to slavery, Baptist Preacher James Pendleton pointed out the error of the deductive argument in which advocates of slavery required abolitionists to engage:

> Hence when the position is established that 'slavery is not of necessity sinful,' that it 'is not a sin in the abstract,' pro-slavery men most ridiculously transport their idea of the innocence of slavery in the abstract to slavery in the concrete. Because they can conceive of circumstances in which a master may hold a slave without doing wrong, they infer that there is nothing wrong in the system of slavery in Kentucky. They reason from what *might be* to what is. For example, they would say something like this: The slavery which sacredly regards the marriage union, cherishes the relation between parents and children, and provides for the instruction of the slave, is not sinful. Therefore the system of

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[33] F. A. Ross, *Slavery Ordained of God* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1857), Kindle, 301.

[34] Ibid., 316-319. E.g. Adam's children presumably marrying their siblings and Abraham marrying his half-sister.

[35] Ibid., 304-306, 341-346.

> slavery in Kentucky, *which does none of these things*, is not sinful. Is this logic? Is it not rather a burlesque on logic?[36]

Unfortunately, defenders of slavery did not accept his appeal. Although they often recognized the need for reform, they consistently explained that the sin it caused was a product of circumstances, not the hierarchical relationship.

Proving this relationship to be sinful was especially challenging because, in doing so, it called into question other socially acceptable hierarchical relationships. Old school Presbyterian Nathan Rice, in a debate against Jonathan Blanchard, complains that abolitionist logic "begins with destroying the relation of master and slave, and ends with sweeping away the relations of husband and wife, parent and child, ruler and subject!"[37] Ross also addresses this argument by establishing that the involuntary service that characterized the master-slave relationship was also found in the socially accepted institution of nineteenth century marriage. "Do you say, the slave is held to involuntary service? So is the wife. Her relation to her husband, in the immense majority of cases, is made for her, and not by her."[38] Ross goes on to condone the buying and selling of slaves as well: "Do you say the slave is sold and bought? So is the wife the world over." He clarifies:

> Oh, she is not sold and purchased in the public market. But come, sir, with me, and let us take the privilege of spirits out of the body to glide into that gilded saloon, or into that richly comfortable family room, of cabinets, and pictures,

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[36] Molly Oshatz, *Slavery and Sin: The Fight against Slavery and the Rise of Liberal Protestantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 66.

[37] Ibid., 68.

[38] F. A. Ross, *Slavery Ordained of God* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1857), Kindle, 410-411.

> and statuary: see the parties, there, to sell and buy that human body and soul, and make her a chattel![39]

His point is that if these elements are acceptable in one relationship, they cannot be sinful in the other. Although Ross' argument may make the modern reader cringe, the logic he and his cohorts appealed to frustrated the efforts of abolitionists. Molly Oshatz summarizes the conundrum well.

> As long as abolitionists and proslavery divines agreed that the issue at hand was the sinfulness of slavery in itself, every moderate antislavery attempt to prove slavery wrong by discussing the wrongs of *Southern* slavery failed. All the proslavery side needed was for antislavery commentators to admit that the problem with slavery was in its practice. In order to prove that abolitionists were wrong, that slavery was not a sin in itself, the defenders of slavery did not need to show that the institution of slavery in the South was perfect or even good. They just needed to demonstrate that, both in theory and according to the Bible, a Christian slave master could practice slavery without sin. If a person could commit an act and remain innocent, that act could not be a sin. Try as they might, moderate antislavery Protestants could not divert the slavery debates away from the question of slavery's sinfulness in itself.

According to the presented logic, it would seem as if an unequal relationship, which causes division between two parties, is not inherently sinful. Therefore, it is acceptable to have division within the body of Christ. It would be to this issue that abolitionists would next direct their attention.

The debate over slavery serves as a warning of the destruction that can be sown if biblical interpretation is driven by contemporary issues. Clearly, the debate over slavery was shaped by the social, economic, and political realities of that day. I believe that the divinely inspired Word of God is to shape one's understanding of how to engage in these contexts, not be manipulated to support preconceived positions and vested interests.

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[39] Ibid., 428-436.

Perhaps if advocates of slavery were not blinded by their contemporary concerns, they may have been able to see how, despite their nuanced argument, slavery did not reflect the will of God.

Racism as Sinful

Having lost another debate, those opposing slavery turned to the sin of racism and how it was unbiblical to claim that blacks were fundamentally inferior to whites. Although this argument is accepted today, it encountered limited success at the time it was made because of the deeply rooted racism in nineteenth century society. The argument began in Acts 17:26, and asserted that all humanity was made from "one blood" (KJV). Abolitionists naturally used this to support equality while proponents of slavery believed that equality was not inherent in the shared origin on which most[40] agreed. For example, nineteenth century biblical scholar, Moses Stuart, argues that, because humanity is created from the same man, people have no right to enslave one another. He went on to call the belief in a superior race the "unbiblical," if not "anti-biblical," battle of might over right that contradicts scripture’s discussion of origins and Christ's teachings about gentleness and love. Ross, on the other hand, proclaims that being formed from one source does not necessitate equality; he expresses his opinion by assuming the persona of the patriarch Moses:

> Why hast thou tortured my speech wherein I say that I have made of one blood all nations of men, to mean that I have created all men equal and endowed them with rights unalienable save in their consent? I never said that thing! I said that I

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[40] Colin Kidd, *The Forging of Races: Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World, 1600-2000* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 141-142. Others refuted a shared origin through support of polygenesis, but because this argument is based on scientific grounds it extends beyond the scope of this paper and thus will not be further discussed.

> made all men to descend from one parentage!...Thou mightest as well say that 'all cattle, and creeping thing and beast of the earth, are created equal, because I said I brought them forth of the earth, as to affirm the equality of men because I say they are of one blood.[41]

In response to claims of inequality, abolitionists developed their argument from Ephesians 2:11-22, where Christ makes two peoples one by tearing down the dividing wall of hostility. Clergyman John Hersey, in agreement with Presbyterian pastor E. P. Barrows, declares:

> Has not Christ broken down the middle wall of partition between the Jew and gentile, and extended mercy's boundary line as far as to include the whole human family, whether they tread the burning sand beneath the equator, or shiver around the frozen poles; whether men are found in Asia, or Europe, or America; or even in degraded Africa, that are now all brethren.[42]

Indeed, advocates of slavery were posed with the question: "if God reconciled humanity to himself and one another, who then became the modern "heathen" Israel was permitted to enslave?" Abolitionists argued that, geographically and anthropologically, people could identify others as heathens; however, spiritually, through Jesus' work on the cross, they were now brothers and sisters in Christ. This argument was augmented by references to Galatians 3:28, declaring that, regardless of social divisions, people are one in Christ. Advocates of slavery opposed this strongly by saying that, even if all could come to Christ and were one in him, people were created by God in inequality: this was God's order of things and that was just the way things were.

> God reveals to us that he...created MAN "male and female," (Gen. i. 27;) that he made the woman "out of the man," (Gen. ii. 23;) that he made "the man the

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[41]Ibid., 1373-1379.

[42] John Hersey, *An Appeal to Christians on the Subject of Slavery* (Baltimore: Armstrong and Plaskitt, 1833), kindle, location 69.

> image and glory of God, but the woman the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man," (1 Cor. xi.;) that he made the woman to be the weaker vessel (1 Pet. iii. 7.) Here, then, God created the race to be in the beginning TWO,--a male and a female MAN; one of them not equal to the other in attributes of body and mind, and, as we shall see presently, not equal in rights as to government. Observe, this inequality was fact as to the TWO, in the perfect state wherein they were created.[43]

A tract of the Society for the Advancement of Christianity affirms: "No man or set of men in our day, unless they can produce a new revelation from Heaven, are entitled to pronounce slavery as wrong. Slavery as it exists at the present day is agreeable to the order of Divine providence."[44] This stance is further defended by how, in 1 Corinthians 12, although Christians are described as one body, each person has their own duties and gifts which, while valuable, are not necessarily equal.

Inequality as "the way things were" was further defended by the Hamitic curse. The Hamitic curse is an element of the Hamitic narrative (Gen 9:18-27) that describes Noah's cursing of his son Ham after he drew attention to his father's nakedness. Although, throughout history, the Hamitic narrative was primarily used to explain ethnic origins and did not emphasize the curse itself, it was a popular means to defend slavery at this time. This was done primarily by asserting that "the character given of God to each of these three sons" - Ham being characterized by wickedness, ferocity, and violence - "is the character of their descendants at this present moment," thus spreading fear of blacks

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[43] Ibid., 967-975.

[44] James O. Buswell, III, *Slavery, Segregation, and Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 13.

and offering justification for their oppression in the modern age.[45] The words of Thornton Stringfellow, a Baptist preacher from Virginia, illustrates how proponents of slavery used the argument to corroborate racial inequality. In reference to Genesis 9 he writes:

> Here, language is used, showing the *favor* which God would exercise to the posterity of Shem and Japheth, while they were holding the posterity of Ham in a state of *abject bondage*. May it not be said in truth, that God decreed [slavery] before it existed; and has he not connected its *existence* with prophetic tokens of special favor, to those who should be slave owners or masters? He is the same God now that he was when he gave these views of his moral character to the world; and unless the posterity of Shem and Japheth, from whom have sprung the Jews, and all the nations of Europe and America, and a great part of Asia...I say, unless they are all dead, as well as the Canaanites or Africans who descended from Ham, then it is quite possible that his favor may now be found with one class of men who are holding another class in bondage.[46]

Abolitionists responded to this belief by asserting that not all of Ham's descendants were cursed, only Canaan, and that the curse saw fulfillment when the Hebrews took (and largely killed the inhabitants of) the land of Canaan. Therefore, this curse would not be related to any surviving descendants of Ham in the nineteenth century. Rather, God established a new unity upon the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ through which all people are equal.

Despite the potential this stance had, the argument against racism never took center stage.[47] While the same verses were preached to emphasize people's

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[45]Ibid., 16.

[46] Thornton Stringfellow, *Scriptural and Statistical Views In Favor of Slavery*, 4th ed. (Richmond: J. W. Randolph, 1856), 9, accessed December 2014, http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/string/string.html.

[47] Molly Oshatz, *Slavery and Sin: The Fight against Slavery and the Rise of Liberal Protestantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 74. "In the context of the slavery debates, the seldom-made charge that the racism of Southern slavery was unchristian amounted to providing yet another example of the many evils of slavery as practiced in the South. Like the claims that Southern slavery necessitated

equal access to God during the First Great Awakening, they were not effective in convincing people that the fundamental inequality that undergirds racism was unbiblical. For example, when calling people to salvation, George Whitefield, in his sermon "The Righteousness of God," addresses the blacks in the crowd:

> For in Jesus Christ there is neither male nor female, bond nor free; even you may be the children of God, if you believe in Jesus. Did you ever read of the eunuch belonging to the Queen of Candace? A Negro like yourselves. He believed. The Lord was his righteousness. He was baptized. Do you also believe and you shall be saved.[48]

Regardless, many believed that blacks could be saved without believing in the sinfulness of the institution that enslaves them. Convinced by the presence of slavery in the Bible, Whitefield himself was a slave owner who saw it as beneficial to the economy.[49] Therefore, although the biblical text served the abolitionist cause, it never became a central argument for two reasons.[50] First, people tended to focus on individual sin,[51] specifically the relationship between slave and slave-holder,[52] instead of corporate or social transgressions. This individualism is an essential value for evangelicals that is still

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cruelty, the separation of families, and illiteracy, the charge that it was racist was ultimately irrelevant to the very narrow question of the debate, that is, whether or not slavery was a sin in itself."

[48] George Whitfield, "The Lord of Righteousness," in *Sermons on Important Subjects* (London: Thomas Kegg, 1841), 197.

[49] In contrast, consider First Great Awakening preacher and abolitionist, Charles Finney.

[50] Molly Oshatz, *Slavery and Sin: The Fight against Slavery and the Rise of Liberal Protestantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 73.

[51] Ibid., 75. "The nearly obsessive antebellum focus on individual sin kept in-depth discussion of such promising topics as the feasibility of bringing Southern slave codes in line with biblical directives or the relationship of racial slavery to the slavery of the biblical world from gaining traction."

[52] Ibid., 73. "Antebellum antislavery Protestants tended to focus their moral concerns on their relationship with slaveholders. They saw slavery as a moral issue between slaveholders and abolitionists, not between Christians and black slaves."

seen today in their emphasis of "a personal relationship with God." Rodney Stark and Charles Glock explain the individualistic roots of evangelical Christianity:

> Underlying traditional Christian thought is an image of man as a free actor, as essentially unfettered by social circumstances, free to choose and thus free to effect his own salvation. The free-will conception of man has been central to the doctrines of sin and salvation. For only if man is totally free does it seem just to hold him responsible for his acts...In short, Christian thought and thus Western Civilization is permeated with the idea that men are individually in control and responsible for their own destinies.[53]

Second, society at large was explicitly racist and whites could not see how these socially acceptable actions contradicted their faith.[54] For example, if whites were asked if they were loving their neighbor, they would say yes, because in their mind, their neighbor was white and thus they were not in violation of this biblical principle. Furthermore, if slavery was not considered a sin, it meant that anyone could be enslaved: had social conditions been reversed, whites could have been enslaved under the same theological pretense as blacks. The thought of a white person being enslaved would have been both ridiculous and offensive to whites. Race-bound slavery that oppressed blacks, however, was less offensive to whites at the time. As a result, it was accepted, despite the fact that the Bible makes a clear case to the contrary.[55] If society had not held such racist sentiments the

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[53] Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 77.

[54] Molly Oshatz, *Slavery and Sin: The Fight against Slavery and the Rise of Liberal Protestantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 74.

[55] Ibid., 74."Antebellum whites looked to the Bible for moral instruction, and the Bible clearly denounced racism. Nevertheless, as a matter of reflexive common sense, they believed that race-blind slavery was more offensive than racial slavery. Its racism actually made Southern slavery more, not less, palatable to Northern whites. It is no surprise, then, that antislavery Protestants did not believe that an argument against racial slavery would have strengthened their case." Note that, while racism did not exist in the Ancient Near east the way it does today, ethnic tensions between Jews and Gentiles had a similar

argument likely would have been more effective, but alas, time would have to pass before the biblical force of these arguments would be commensurate with their social impact.

This phase of the slavery debate illustrates the importance of guarding against the uncritical acceptance of the status quo. Although the racist assumptions made in nineteenth century America would be offensive to many people today, note that the advocacy of slavery was perceived to not only be reasonable, but a defense of the way things were. To challenge this was decried by some as radical, suspect, and unfaithful to the Bible. I believe that, because society at large embraced the status quo and accepted it as God's intended order, some evangelicals allowed themselves to be blinded to the injustice inherent in enslaving another human being.

Today, people must guard against being blinded in a similar manner. Too often, Christians become comfortable with what is socially acceptable without considering if what society accepts reflects the will of God. Early Christianity radically challenged social, political, and economic spheres as Christ's followers were called to be transformative agents, set apart to make way for the Kingdom of God.[56] I believe that this

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social influence. Because the Bible says that Jesus' work on the cross overcame these divisions and united all people, it can be assumed that this argument applies to racial equality as well.

[56] In the early church, a counter-cultural lifestyle was essential to Christianity. This changed during the rule of Constantine who declared that the previously persecuted religion was to be tolerated per the Edict of Milan. Shortly thereafter, Christianity became associated with the ruling power structures. While this facilitated the spread of Christianity, with the faith being carried wherever the empire would go, it also allied the church with the state, thus nearly eliminating the church's prophetic voice that challenged the status quo. Therefore, instead of working towards peace and justice, the institutional church aligned itself with the empire, characterized by oppression and war. Regardless of intentions, injustices such as the crusades, American slavery, and segregation have stained the church's legacy. Death and destruction, believed by the dominant class to have been done in the name of God, leaves the church with bloodied hands have that accomplished the work of the world instead of the work of God; For a resource on how white Western culture utilizes influence over Christianity to exercised imperial power today as well how the North American church can minister in an increasingly diverse context see the following: Rah, Soong-

calling is still on Christians today. As a result, I suggest that they critically consider whether or not contemporary practices and social systems promote justice according to the teachings of the Bible. If not, Christians have a responsibility to help bring present practice into alignment with the will of God. If they abjure this responsibility, let the havoc of slavery stand as a warning of what can happen when Christians hold the status quo above biblical principles.

Christian Principles

When abolitionists' appeal against racism fell short, they turned to focusing on Christian principles. Once established, this became their staple argument.[57] Abolitionists asserted that, although Christ did not condemn slavery directly, it was forbidden through its inconsistency with elements of Christianity such as God's commands to love others, utilize one's God-given gifts, and seek justice.[58] For example, new school Presbyterian Albert Barnes avers that "the spirit of the New Testament is against slavery, and the principles of the New Testament, if fairly applied, would abolish it."[59] The Presbyterian Synod of Kentucky (1935) affirms that, although the Bible does not explicitly renounce slavery, slavery is incompatible with scriptural principles:

Chan. *The Next Evangelicalism: Releasing The Church from Western Cultural Captivity*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009. The issue of imperialism is addressed most directly in chapter six.

[57] Mark A. Noll, *The Civil War As a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 41.

[58] David Thurston, *An Address to the Anti-slavery Christians of the United States* (New-York: J.A. Gray, 1852), 10. "We have in our country a population, free and bond, of between three and four millions, who, merely on account of their completion, are treated with almost total disregard of that justice and humanity enjoined by the religion we profess"

[59] Molly Oshatz, *Slavery and Sin: The Fight against Slavery and the Rise of Liberal Protestantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 75.

> [God] has specified the parts which composed it, and denounced them, one by one in the most ample and unequivocal form...The precepts against fraud, oppression, pride, and cruelty, all cut directly through the heart of the slave system. Look back at the *constituents* and the *effects* of slavery, and ask yourself, 'Is not every one of these things directly at variance with the plainest commands of the two laws - it violates the whole code - it leaves scarcely one precept unbroken.[60]

One Christian principle that abolitionists argued was violated through slavery is the Golden Rule. Written in Leviticus 19:18, and spoken by Jesus in Matthew 7:12, it says: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men *should* do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (KJV, emphasis mine). Advocates argued that slavery did not violate this rule because Christ said this with the assumption that what one *should* do is act in accordance with the teachings of the Bible. Because the Bible permits slavery, the argument goes, one's actions should not oppose this institution. Furthermore, they said, although slavery may appear to lack justice and love *at times*, it is *ultimately* in the best interest of the slave because it brings them to salvation. Stringfellow writes:

> [Slavery], when engrafted on the Jewish constitution, was designed principally...to ameliorate the condition of the slaves in the neighboring nations. Under the gospel, it has brought within the range of gospel influence, millions of Ham's descendants among ourselves, who but for this institution, would have sunk down to eternal ruin; knowing not God, and strangers to the gospel. In their bondage here on earth, they have been much better provided for, and great multitudes of them have been made the freemen of the Lord Jesus Christ, and left this world rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.[61]

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[60] Keith Hardman, *Issues in American Christianity: Primary Sources with Introductions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1993), 200 - 201.

[61] Thornton Stringfellow, *Scriptural and Statistical Views In Favor of Slavery*, 4th ed. (Richmond: J. W. Randolph, 1856), 55, accessed December 2014, http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/string/string.html.

In response to people's focus on the letter of the law while ignoring its spirit, Rev. Henry Ward Beecher passionately preached that such reasoning countered the work of Christ.

> "'I came to open the prison doors,' said Christ; and that is the text on which men justify shutting them and locking them. 'I came to loose those that are bound;' and that is the text out of which men spin cords to bind men, women, and children. 'I came to carry light to them that are in darkness and deliverance to the oppressed;' and that is the Book from out of which they argue, with amazing ingenuity, all the infernal meshes and snares by which we keep men in bondage. It is pitiful."[62]

Although focusing on Christian principles produced a rational argument, it left a glaring question to be addressed: If slavery violates the principles in the Bible, why didn't Jesus oppose it? Those against slavery countered that Jesus's silence on the subject did not mean he affirmed it. Rather, slavery was so embedded in the social structure that to challenge it would have caused such an uprising that it would have hindered the spread of the Gospel itself. This may have been why, instead of addressing the issue head on, Christ imparted principles that would gradually erode this social evil. Proponents of slavery, on the other hand, responded with a harsh rebuke to this sentiment, reminding abolitionists of the slippery slope they courted when interpretations separated what the Bible literally said from what God intended. Southern Baptist preacher Richard Fuller asserts that the Bible was God's way of communicating his standards to the world. If God did not explicitly establish slavery as a sin in the Bible, yet believed it to be a sin, then he would be requiring people to perceive a subtext beneath the written word that contradicts

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[62] Mark A. Noll, *The Civil War As a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 44.

its ostensible meaning. This would bring into question God's intentions[63] and one's ability to trust the text. Unlike abolitionists' initial argument that drew upon the biblical text to challenge the *form* of slavery, or the subsequent nuanced debates on sin, this argument challenged a literal interpretation of scripture. As a result, some who wanted to oppose slavery, such as congregational preacher Leonard Bacon, withheld their conviction on this account.[64]

On the one hand, passionate defenses of principles made a literal interpretation of the Bible look weak, while on the other, those opposing this approach in favor of slavery were made to look like defenders of the Bible itself. As a result, walls towered high and people fought vehemently to reconcile this tension in a way that aligned with their perspectives and beliefs. This debate, however, leads me to suggest that perhaps the better course of action would have been to have *dwelt* in the tension. As the complexities of the Bible are acknowledged and examined, being the divinely inspired word of God, both integrity and justice can be found within.

Moral Progress

To make clear that Jesus did not intend to sanction slavery, some abolitionists supported the conclusion that morals progress. In other words, some of what was acceptable in biblical times was no longer acceptable. For example, in reference to Isaac's

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[63] Molly Oshatz, *Slavery and Sin: The Fight against Slavery and the Rise of Liberal Protestantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 77.

[64] Mark A. Noll, *The Civil War As a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 45. Many ended up agreeing that the Bible did not condemn slavery, but, in alignment with anti-slavery advocate's initial approach, worked around it by exclaiming that it did not affirm the type of slavery practiced in America.

procurement of a wife, Hersey asks: "Would any of us in the present age be willing to send our most favoured servants to procure a wife for our son? 'Certainly not; that was a custom peculiar to the early and dark ages of the world, which has been exploded by the progress of civilization and Christianity.' "[65] Barnes builds on this by claiming:

> It is certainly a supposable case that the sentiments of the world on moral subjects may undergo a change for the better, bringing them nearer to the proper standard of truth; that a thing may be regarded as innocent in one age which the subsequent age may justly see to be fraught with criminality; that a custom may prevail in one age which a more just application of the principles of the Bible would lead men to abandon; and that an evil may be so entrenched and fortified in one age that it would be hopeless to attempt to remove it then, which, nevertheless, a subsequent age might regard as wholly opposed to the gospel, and wholly at war with the best interests of mankind.[66]

Although helpful to the abolitionist cause, it was argued that this logic threatened, if not contradicted, their evangelical beliefs and high view of the Bible.[67] Contemporary historian Molly Oshatz explains:

> When it came to the issue of slavery, the literal wording of the Bible was not authoritative. What mattered instead was the gradually unfolding meaning of biblical principles, as presented to the Christian conscience. Antislavery Protestants had determined, despite themselves, that the Bible's ultimate meaning depended on the development of human morality.[68]

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[65] John Hersey, *An Appeal to Christians on the Subject of Slavery* (Baltimore: Armstrong and Plaskitt, 1833), kindle, location 724-726.

[66]Molly Oshatz, *Slavery and Sin: The Fight against Slavery and the Rise of Liberal Protestantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 78-79.

[67] Mark A. Noll, *The Civil War As a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 31. Some non-evangelical Christian abolitionists, such as William Lloyd Garrison, did not believe in the inerrancy of the Bible, in line with a growing number of Americans who no longer believed in the all-sufficiency of scripture.

[68] Molly Oshatz, *Slavery and Sin: The Fight against Slavery and the Rise of Liberal Protestantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 80.

While this position was helpful to the cause of the abolitionist in one regard, it served as an obstacle in another. Since it was already difficult for some Christians to hear from those who challenged a literal interpretation of the Bible, many felt that in entertaining moral progressivism abolitionists had gone too far. Presbyterian clergyman Henry Van Dyke avers:

> Abolitionism leads, in multitudes of cases, and by a logical process, to utter infidelity...One of its avowed principles is, that it does not try slavery by the Bible; but...it tries the Bible by the principle of freedom...This assumption, that men are capable of judging beforehand what is to be expected in a divine revelation, is the cockatrice's egg, from which, in all ages, heresies have been hatched."[69]

Dyke offers a valuable critique, challenging what I myself identified to be the dangers of putting contemporary concerns, preconceived positions, or the status quo first in one's interpretation of the Bible. While leery of the abolitionists' reasoning, which reflects a willingness to submit the Bible to a preferred result, I also disagree with Dyke's condemnation of abolitionism. Rather, I affirm that God's heart or understanding of justice within itself did *not* change. What changed, in the case of nineteenth century slavery, was the Lord's willingness to tolerate a destructive social system that had been allowed on account of how integrated it was in society and the short-term impact that uprooting it would have had in the ancient Near East. Indeed, it would take time and transitions to root out the sin of slavery, but as history reveals, the nineteenth century institution was overcome.

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[69] Mark A. Noll, *The Civil War As a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 31.

While the arguments of abolitionists were received with mixed responses, by challenging the form of slavery in the Bible, affirming the sinfulness of the institution and racism, highlighting conflicts between slavery and Christian principles, and asserting that morality changes over time, abolitionists played a powerful role in ending nineteenth century slavery. It would seem as if, although opposed by their contemporaries, their prophetic voices have been affirmed in the annals of history, a history that offers understanding of racial division and the theological arguments surrounding it in the twentieth century and beyond.

From the End of Slavery to the Civil Rights Movement

> Apartness of the races is a black and white thread woven into the fabric of American Southern life - its social, political, sexual, cultural, economic life. Apartness is like a vine which, rooted in slavery, never uprooted, but merely twisted by the Civil War, flourished and by now entangles everyone and everything in a suffocating net from which no one, white or black, knows how to extricate himself - John Bartlow Martin, American diplomat[70]

Although some slaves were granted their freedom in 1863 through the Emancipation Proclamation and the rest by the 13th amendment in 1865, racial oppression continued. John Harris Collins explained that, although one expression of oppression was eliminated, there remained "the subtle assumption that there [was] something inherently superior about the white race, a superiority that can and should be maintained by relegating the black race to a position of political, economic, social, and

[70] James O. Buswell, III, *Slavery, Segregation, and Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 51-52.

educational subordination".[71]By the 1880's, although reconstruction efforts were hopeful in their education and legal empowerment of former slaves, racism had contributed to blacks being severely handicapped in their participation in the legal process and stripped of their basic civil liberties.

Social segregation was supported by arguments akin to those that defended slavery; segregationists argued either that segregation was a part of God's design or that blacks were created to be separate and subservient.[72] These arguments were based on three primary scripture passages related to the dispersion of humanity throughout the earth: Cain's exile from the land and being set apart from his people, Noah's pronouncement of the Hamitic curse, and humanity's separation at the Tower of Babel.[73] Additionally, the biblical concepts of sanctification and separatism, including prohibitions against marrying non-Jews (Deut. 7:3, Ezra 9-10) and mixing certain materials (Lev. 19:19), were used to support segregation as well. In the New Testament, Acts 17:26, the very verse that abolitionists used to assert that all humanity was of one blood, and thus equal, was used by segregationists to argue that segregation was biblically condoned. Although the beginning of Acts 17:26 supports a shared origin, the

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[71] Harris, John Collin. *The Theology of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr*. Doctoral thesis, Duke, 1974, 54.

[72] Julia Kirk Blackwelder, *Fundamentalist Reactions To The Civil Rights Movement Since 1954*, PhD diss., Emory University, 1972 (UMI Dissertations Publishing, 1972), 127, accessed December 2014, http://search.proquest.com/docview/288096970/.

[73] James O. Buswell, III, *Slavery, Segregation, and Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 59. Advocates of segregation argued that Babel "indicates that the development of different languages was not merely natural or accidental, but served a Divine purpose, in becoming one of the most effective means of preserving the separate existence of the several racial groups." With that having been said, there is no certainty as to whether or not people of different skin colors were present in Babylon in that day.

second half of the verse says that God has "determined allotted periods and the boundaries for [people's] habitation." Furthermore, like the proponents of slavery themselves, segregationists asserted that if Christ did not oppose the similar social systems of his time (i.e. division between Jews and Gentiles, religious leaders and lay people, etc.) there could not be grounds to condemn segregation.

> Since Christ and the Apostles taught the love of God for all mankind, the oneness of believers in Christ, and demonstrated that the principles of Christian brotherhood and charity could be made operative in all relations of life, without demanding revolutionary changes in the natural or social order, there would appear to be no reason for concluding that segregation is in conflict with the spirit and teachings of Christ and the apostles, and therefore un-Christian.[74]

Interpreted through a particular theological lens, scripture continued to be used to support racial hierarchy. One can also imagine the same dynamics of social, economic, and political concerns as well as the acceptance of the status quo motivating this tenuous defense.

Despite these appeals to scripture, by the 1950s and 60s, such arguments were, by and large,[75] no longer accepted in support of segregation as people realized they could not be directly connected to race.[76] As a result, people like Ben Marais, Professor of Christian History and a frequent contributor to American fundamentalist journals, argued

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[74] James O. Buswell, III, *Slavery, Segregation, and Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 61.

[75] Op. cit., 129. Biblical arguments for segregation were made at this time by a few, such as G. T. Gillespies, though this was the exception and not the norm.

[76] Ibid., 139-140, accessed December 2014, http://search.proquest.com/docview/288096970/. For example, Ben Marais explains that, the Israelites prohibition against marrying non-Israelites was related to faith, not race as surrounding people were also Semites (139). Furthermore, the barriers established between at the Tower of Babel were linguistic, not racial and that any nations that formed along linguistic lines were no longer in existence (140).

that the Bible could not rule one way or the other regarding segregation.[77] As a result, evangelicals generally did not have a well-articulated theology regarding race relations[78] and their actions were shaped more by pragmatic arguments and a desire to set themselves apart from secular society. This contributed to them not living out the beliefs they did have regarding human equality and thus not being involved in the Civil Rights Movement. The following section of this paper describes their lack of involvement and then goes on to explore the lived theology of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Civil Rights Movement

Evangelicals Fail to Engage in the Civil Rights Movement

> The theological effort that is most faithful to the Christian revelation is the theology which seeks to give expression to that revelation not only with abstract words and concepts but also with concrete action. Theology becomes the rendering of the Gospel not just into language, but also into experienced reality - John Collin Harris[79]

Between the Civil War and World War II, the racial division present in society at large[80] was reflected in the segregation of evangelical congregations. Although theologically liberal churches engaged in the Civil Rights Movement, the majority[81] of

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[77] Ibid.,139, accessed December 2014, http://search.proquest.com/docview/288096970/.

[78] Ibid., 145.

[79] Harris, John Collin. *The Theology of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr*. Doctoral thesis, Duke, 1974, 175.

[80] Philadelphia's 10th Presbyterian Church or the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship, a national evangelical parachurch ministry, were notable exceptions.

[81] Progressive evangelicals were an exception. Their voices could be heard through periodicals such as *Sojourners* and *The Other Side* (formerly Freedom Now). For more examples, see "*Glimmers of Hope*"*: Progressive Evangelicals and Racism, 1965-2000* in Hawkins, J. Russell, and Phillip Luke Sinitiere. *Christians and the Color Line: Race and Religion After Divided by Faith*. New York: Oxford Press, 2014. Kindle.

evangelicals[82] tended to conform to the racial patterns around them and perpetuate division in the body of Christ.[83] In an interview I conducted with Rev. Dr. Michael Haynes, a former statesman and civil rights activist who was a good friend of King, Haynes recalled an analogy King made during his ministry at 12th Baptist Church in Roxbury, MA. In regard to evangelicals' involvement in the Civil Rights Movement, Haynes recalls King saying that, "The evangelical church is supposed to be the headlights. They are supposed to be illuminating the path and leading the way. The evangelical church, however, has become the taillights, putting the brakes on the movement."[84] As a review of evangelical publications and interviews revealed, it was not that evangelicals were avoiding the issue nor that they believed segregation was theologically correct. Rather, it was that they failed to demonstrate their beliefs through faithful action. As history attests, despite active social engagement in the nineteenth century, Evangelicals withdrew from secular realms in the 1920s and instead assumed a focus on being "set apart."[85] While evangelicals *began* their transition in the 1940s "from a culturally isolated

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[82] Note that during this time, the Evangelical Church was understood as predominantly white. Even if black churches largely ascribed to evangelical beliefs they usually did not associate themselves with evangelicals.

[83] Julia Kirk Blackwelder, *Fundamentalist Reactions To The Civil Rights Movement Since 1954*, PhD diss., Emory University, 1972 (UMI Dissertations Publishing, 1972), 21, accessed December 2014, http://search.proquest.com/docview/288096970/.

[84] Michael Haynes, "Evangelical Theology During the Civil Rights Movement From A Black Evangelical Civil Rights Leader Perspective," telephone interview by author, December 1, 2014.

[85] "A Born Again Christian Writes MLK," The Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, accessed December 12, 2014, http://www.thekingcenter.org/archive/document/ born-again-christian-writes-mlk. The emphasis on being set apart from the world and focusing on other-worldly things is seen in a letter written to MLK signed by "A Born Again Christian." (Note that the term "born again" is a used to refer to Evangelical Christians). Herein, the author contrasts a focus on the things of God and the

fundamentalism" to a "more socially engaged" faith, the following primary sources make it painfully clear that, at the time of the Civil Rights Movement, the transition was not yet complete.[86]

The beliefs of the evangelical church regarding segregation are well summarized in the statements of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE). In 1956[87] the NAE made a declaration of human rights confessing the "inherent worth and intrinsic value of every man, regardless of race, class, creed or color." They also encouraged "all [their] constituency to use every legitimate means to eliminate unfair tactics by any individual or organized groups."[88] They confessed that "the teachings of Christ are violated by discriminatory practices" and that "those in authority, political, social, and particularly evangelistic groups have a moral responsibility to work effectively and openly for the creation of that cultus of life which will provide equal rights and opportunities for every individual."[89] Despite this, as explained in part in a 1958 NAE resolution declaring that

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public demonstrations of the Civil Rights Movement. He implies that King should give up his civil engagement to preach the message that people should repent and turn to the Lord. His belief that personal transformation (not systemic change) leads to external peace is reflected in his statement, "we cannot expect Peace until Jesus reigns within our hearts."

[86] J. Russell Hawkins and Phillip Luke Sinitiere, *Christians and the Color Line: Race and Religion After Divided by Faith* (New York: Oxford Press, 2014), Kindle, 15.

[87] Julia Kirk Blackwelder, *Fundamentalist Reactions To The Civil Rights Movement Since 1954*, PhD diss., Emory University, 1972 (UMI Dissertations Publishing, 1972), 21, accessed December 2014, http://search.proquest.com/docview/288096970/. Note that 10 years earlier in 1946 the National Council of Churches issued its initial statement opposing segregation. Neither the American Council of Christian Churches nor the National Association of Evangelicals made such a statement at that time.

[88] Ibid., 22.

[89] Ibid., 22-23.

segregation was "not un-Christian"[90] (perhaps influenced by the longstanding Plessey vs. Ferguson ruling stating that people could be "separate but equal"), there were "no specific endorsements of concrete actions aimed at overcoming discrimination" at that time.[91] It wasn't until 1964 that the NAE acknowledged that segregation was counter to God's will. Even then, they did not actively address this issue. It would seem as if again, theological interpretation and application promoted beliefs and behaviors that did not reflect the will of God.

After evangelicals acknowledged that segregation was unbiblical, they still allowed it to prevail. An article by Harold Lindsell, then Dean of Administration of Fuller Theological Seminary, provides what author Julia Kirk Blackwelder calls "a model example of the paradoxes and evasions which are characteristics of moderate fundamentalist attitudes towards contemporary race problems."[92] Therein, Lindsell begins by asserting that the "race problem must be faced and solutions arrived at which are Christian." He goes on to state that there is not a biblical justification for segregation and that Christians are all one in the body of Christ. Despite this, he doesn't affirm desegregation for pragmatic reasons:

> To refuse a Negro admission to a Christian church on the grounds that he is of a different color is an act of sin. Note, however, that this observation is based on the supposition that color is the only ground for this refusal. There are circumstances and situations when other factors might make unadvisable

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[90] Ibid., 23.

[91] Ibid.

[92] bid., 145.

> and inexpedient that which is not wrong in principle but the doing of which might result in great harm to the body of Christ.[93]

It should be noted that Lindsell never elaborates on what this "great harm" may be.

Similarly, in reflecting upon her analysis of twenty-six fundamentalist churches' response to the Civil Rights Movement as expressed through Christian publications including Christianity Today and Eternity, Blackwelder affirms:

> Articles which announced intentions of promoting better relations between the races often provide justifications for continued segregation through invoking strict obedience to civil authority and the observance of a circumscribed interpretation of biblical doctrine.[1]

Excuses present in these publications ranged from an unwillingness to engage in controversial and divisive action[94] to disagreement about timing and methods to simply not knowing what to do.[95] In a similar exploration of postwar evangelical publications, Miles Mullin II concludes that, despite evangelicals' desire to re-engage in the public

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[93] Ibid.

[94] Ibid., 29.In an article by Southern Baptist Clergyman H. H. Barnette he expressed that "the race issue is a moral one and the preacher must take a lead in the solution" and yet he also discouraged them from using divisive terms like "segregation and desegregation." Rather, he suggested that biblical principles be emphasized so the preacher can "avoid the semantical problems which grow out of the use of the emotionally explosive terms as "integration" and "segregation." He insists that this avoidance of directly addressing the issues "is not a compromise, but an effort to reach the hearts and minds of the people with the spirit of the Gospel. It is easy for 'ethical snipers' who are far removed from an issue to sit in judgment on others who do not use their terminology and techniques in approaching that problem. To be honest, the preacher must proclaim principles rather than specifics about the race problem. For the Bible does not contain proof texts to support either segregation or integration." This indicates that, instead of thinking about integration and segregation from a theological perspective and allowing those convictions to shape action, they were motivated by the greater concern of avoiding conflict.

[95] Ibid., pg #. In a 1954 article published in Christianity today, following the ruling of Brown vs. the Board of Education, H. H. Barnette expresses the tension between knowing that segregation is wrong and yet not knowing what to do: "Southern Baptist pastors, denominational leaders and seminarians are burdened about the racial issue because they see a basic contradiction between out ideas about human relationship and our practice of segregation and discrimination. They have the conviction that the supreme Court's decision to desegregate the public schools is in harmony with both Christian and democratic principles. But they honestly ask, "What can we do about it?"

sphere and notable efforts of *individuals* to address the topic of race, as a group, they were divided and unable to take a collective stand against racism. He attributes evangelicals' lack of opposition to this injustice to their focus on personal conversion and the nature of evangelicalism at the time. Their "commitment to personal conversion as the foundation of experience of the Christian life"[96] led them to hold worldviews that were counterproductive when applied to racism. First, it caused them to focus on the actions of individuals to the exclusion of systemic problems. Second, people believed that racial justice need not be a primary concern because, if people were truly Christians, the Lord would change their hearts. As a result, their focus remained on evangelism and discipleship[97] Mullins summarizes this perspective:

> ...During that formative period, the historic evangelical emphasis on personal conversion combined with other factors to shape a moderate, individualistic approach to race relations. This approach focused on church integration but obscured systemic and structural factors involved in racial discrimination. Moderate individualism became the dominant evangelical approach to the problem of race for the remainder of the century.[98]

Although lukewarm, this approach was promoted in an effort to maintain unity among the diverse and amorphous evangelical community (see Introduction) who already struggled to find commonality between them.

Conclusions drawn from published materials were affirmed through interviews of

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[96] J. Russell Hawkins and Phillip Luke Sinitiere, *Christians and the Color Line: Race and Religion After Divided by Faith* (New York: Oxford Press, 2014), Kindle, 17.

[97] Ibid., 30. "Evangelicals had confidence that those who held racist views but had truly had been born again would eventually arrive at the right perspective as they 'matured in Christ.' In their minds, only being converted to Christ and the subsequent transformation of the Holy Spirit could overcome racial prejudice."

[98] Ibid., 15.

those who were members of the evangelical church during the Civil Rights Movement. Doug Hall, social activist and President Emeritus of the Emmanuel Gospel Center in Boston shared that, in his experience, "the Civil Rights movement was not a move of the evangelical church at all. The liberal church was involved, but not the evangelicals."[99] On the contrary, he described how evangelical organizations like Gordon College fled the city during white flight. Doug and his wife Judy explained that they came to faith in the conservative, evangelical tradition and, even though they engaged in the black community by teaching Sunday school at a Boston mission, they were not thinking in terms of civil rights. The church had not shaped them to think that way. Although they ultimately did align themselves with the black community, it was not because the church had imparted theological convictions; rather, they "were always looking for what was vital and seeking to nurture it," and they found vitality there. In the Halls' opinion, "the (evangelical) church had a mental model of a white thinking process which didn't allow them to look at the [biblical] text very clearly [to establish a theologically based response to segregation]." "I don't remember anyone having a clear position on segregation..." Doug Hall reflects, "it wasn't that the church was opposed to integration, it was just that they had missed it."[100]

The lack of engagement of the evangelical church persisted until the death of King. King's death served as what Rev. Dr. Haynes called "an awakening" for evangelicals. The Halls recall that, following King's assassination, white pastors asked

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[99] Doug Hall and Judy Hall, "Evangelical Theology During the Civil Rights Movement From White Evangelical Perspectives," interview by author, December 5, 2014.

[100] Ibid.

them what to do because they were engaged in the black community and many white clergy had no relationships therein. Christian ministry leader and social activist, Roger Dewey, shared in a personal interview that, although largely unengaged up until that point, upon the death of King, he was compelled to address the issue of racial inequality. As a grad school student at Harvard, he tried to rally predominantly white clergymen (through Park St. Church in Boston) to march for equality. While all the white pastors involved had agreed, when he addressed Rev. Dr. Haynes regarding the support of the black community, he was told not to march. Haynes explained that, if they did, it would be a lie. Whites were not in solidarity with blacks. Real, genuine relationships would have to be developed before they could march with integrity. In retrospect, Dewey said that evangelical leaders gave "lip service" to what they knew they ought to do, but they did not really oppose the status quo "because the church never taught that it is idolatry."[101]

Despite evangelicals' eventual stance against segregation, they remained largely uninvolved in the Civil Rights movement. Reasons for this included pragmatic concerns, a recent history of having withdrawn from secular society, and the influence of individualism on their theology. Regardless, action did not accompany their beliefs and there lack of integrity is remembered both by members of the movement and the annals of history. May this shameful past serve as a lesson to future generations, motivating them to love justice and live out their convictions.

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[101] Roger Dewey, "Evangelical Theology During the Civil Rights Movement From A White Evangelical Perspective," interview by author, December 4, 2014.

The Theology of Martin Luther King Jr.

The lived theology[102] of Martin Luther King provides a life-giving alternative to the lack of theological convictions and lack of Christ-like response that evangelicals demonstrated during the Civil Rights Movement. Although not unlike evangelicals' expressed beliefs, King's theological perspective on civil rights was more developed and necessitated action. Understanding King's theology illustrates what evangelicals may have heard, but ultimately rejected through their inaction. It also serves as an example for the evangelical church today, providing a contextualized theology that yields not to majority concerns, but challenges the status quo and ushers in justice.

A Loving and Involved Deity

King saw God as a personal[103] and imminent creator who works with humanity to bring forth reconciliation and justice. Drawn from his personal view of God, King

[102] Luther D. Ivory, *Toward a Theology of Radical Involvement: The Theological Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 43-45. King's theology was distinct from other theologians of his time in form, method, goal, and action. Luther D. Ivory in "Toward a Theology of Radical Involvement" explains: King's theology, "is not neatly or systematically presented in the doctrinal categories of classical theology, nor is it explicitly delineated in a singular magnum opus. Rather, King's theology represents a 'systemic' mode of thinking emergent from, informed by, and in critical dialogue with a public context of liberative struggle...He did not 'theologize' in the traditional, normative format of structured rationalistic discourse typical of scholars. It was the street rather than the library that delineated the primary contours of his research laboratory. It was the concrete fulfillment of justice rather than polished, public treatises that defined the aim and focus of his program." In addition, "King's method of 'doing theology' represented a paradigm shift in the way theological formulation had been conceptualized. Indeed, the very way in which King understood and approached the aim and tasks of the theological vocation was markedly different from the prevailing models of academia...King's theological discourse, either followed or was articulated in the midst of public campaigns aimed at societal change...Consequently, King's speech may be characterized as sustained reflections upon concrete, social action in light of a commitment to a specific theological vision."

[103] Martin Luther King, "My Pilgrimage to Non-Violence," in *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story*, accessed December 2014, http://King-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/documentsentry/my_pilgrimage_to_non violence1/; Rufus Burrow, *God and Human Dignity: The Personalism, Theology, and Ethics of Martin Luther King, Jr*. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 70. King's view of a personal God was shaped by both his experience in the black church and his study of Personalism, conducted during his time at

believed that there was a natural order of the universe and that, in that order, God was on the side of justice would triumph in the end. He wrote, "the universe is on the side of justice. It says to those who struggle for justice, 'you do not struggle alone, but God struggles with you.'"[104] King believed in both the sovereignty of God and human responsibility: people must work alongside God to see justice done.

King believed that this divine-human partnership was to be based in love.[105] He understood God as "love-in-action." It was love that motivated God to engage in the world and love that served as a redemptive process. King saw the "love of God as the power of reconciliation [that] unites races and fractured communities. [It] provides the commitment to struggle against segregation and all that would threaten the wholeness of community." [106] It is a powerful force in both God and humanity. In sum, King understood God as a loving

> ...Cosmic liberator and reconciler who is radically and inextricably involved in the affairs of human history. [He] conceived of God as a proactive, Devine Personality working ceaselessly within the drama of human experience to

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Boston University. "[Personalism] gave me metaphysical and philosophical grounding for the idea of a personal God, and it gave me a metaphysical basis for the dignity and worth of all human personality."

[104] Noel Leo. Erskine, "Martin Luther King Jr.'s Theological Perspective," in *King Among the Theologians* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 1994), 140.

[105] Timothy P. Jackson, "Church, World and Christian Charity," in *Bonheoffer and King: Their Legacies and Import for Christian Social Thought*, by Willis Jenkins and Jennifer M. McBride (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 69. King believed that God acted specifically what he called an *agape* love. In "Stride Toward Freedom" King describes *agape* as "understanding, redeeming good will for all men." He also equated it with four primary qualities: disinterest, a focus on the need for others, a willingness for mutual sacrifices, and a recognition of the interconnected nature of life.

[106] Noel Leo. Erskine, "Martin Luther King Jr.'s Theological Perspective," in *King Among the Theologians* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 1994), 144.

> create a beloved community where the virtues of love, justice, and peace become normative for every conceivable relationship.[107]

Here, like the abolitionists' argument about Christian principles, King's view of God present the nature of the deity as incompatible with the results of segregation. It was King's theology of God that shaped his view of humanity and how people were to engage in the world.

Humanity is Created in the Image of God, thus Interconnected and Designed to be Free

King saw humanity as created in the image of God and thus inherently valuable and equal. In *The Ethical Demands for Integration* King writes:

> Our Hebraic-Christian tradition refers to this inherent dignity of man in the Biblical term the *image of God*. This innate worth referred to in the phase the image of God is universally shared in equal proportions by all men. There is no graded scale of essential worth; there is no divine right of one race which differs from the divine right of another. Every human being has etched in his personality the indelible stamp of the Creator.[108]

On this account, King believed that no culture or race could be ascribed normative status nor define what John Collins Harris identifies as King's concept of "genuine man."[109] Rather, humans are all members of the Lord's family with equal value and authority. Contrary to early America's chosen people narrative, yet in alignment with

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[107] Luther D. Ivory, *Toward a Theology of Radical Involvement: The Theological Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 46.

[108] Martin Luther King, "The Ethical Demands for Integration," in *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr*., ed. James Melvin. Washington (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 119.

[109] Harris, John Collin. *The Theology of Martin Luther King Jr*. Doctoral thesis,153,170, Duke, 1974. Genuine man is the state where people are free from dehumanization. Here, "individual man becomes free man and collective man becomes community man."

the abolitionists' belief that racism was sinful, King averred that there is no racial hierarchy before God.

As a result, the belief that all of humanity has been imbued with the image of God is antithetical to segregation and demands that this inequality be addressed on moral and theological grounds. King writes:

> Segregation stands diametrically opposed to the principle of the sacredness of human personality. It debases personality... So long as the Negro is a means to an end, so long as he is seen as anything less than a person of sacred worth, the image of God is abused in him and consequently and proportionally lost by those who inflict and abuse. Only by establishing a truly integrated society can we return to the Negro the quality of 'thouness'[110] which is his due because of the nature of his being.[111]

In addition, like the eighteenth century abolitionists, King further affirmed integration through refuting the Hamitic curse and affirming the common origins of humans (Acts 17:26).[112]

Related to King's belief in the image of God and shared human origins, he believed in the interconnectedness and necessary freedom of humanity. King believed

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[110] This is a reference to Martin Buber's concept of the I-thou relationship that communicates connectedness between individuals.

[111] Martin Luther King, "The Ethical Demands for Integration," in *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr*., ed. James Melvin. Washington (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 119.

[112] Martin Luther King, "Paul's Letter to American Christians" (speech, Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, Montgomery Alabama, December 4, 1956), accessed December 12, 2014, http://King-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia /documentsentry/doc_pauls_letter_to_american_christians/. This equality spoke against the idea of the Hamitic curse. Assuming the voice of the Apostle Paul, King declared, "I understand that there are Christians among you who try to justify segregation on the basis of the Bible. They argue that the Negro is inferior by nature because of Noah's curse upon the children of Ham. Oh my friends, this is blasphemy. This is against everything that the Christian religion stands for. I must say to you as I have said to so many Christians before, that in Christ 'there is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for we are all one in Christ Jesus.' Moreover, I must reiterate the words that I uttered on Mars Hill: 'God that made the world and all things therein . . . hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.' "

that because all humans are interconnected, the oppression of one group oppresses every group and the freedom of the oppressed liberates the oppressors.[113] King's belief in connection is illustrated in the biblical image of the interdependent body of Christ.[114] In a speech that King gave from the perspective of the Apostle Paul, he identified the church's ideal form and expressed his concern for its reality:

> ...The church is the Body of Christ. So when the church is true to its nature it knows neither division nor disunity. But I am disturbed... to no end about the American church. You have a white church and you have a Negro church. You have allowed segregation to creep into the doors of the church. How can such a division exist in the true Body of Christ? You must face the tragic fact that when you stand at 11:00 on Sunday morning to sing "All Hail the Power of Jesus Name" and "Dear Lord and Father of all Mankind," you stand in the most segregated hour of Christian America.[115]

On this account, King asserted, that Christians must work towards the freedom to which all people are entitled by virtue of their humanity. This freedom is not a freedom of will, but freedom to deliberate, make decisions, and be responsible. King saw "the denial of freedom (as) an attempt to play God by defacing the image of God, and making another

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[113] Johnny Bernard. Hill, "From Every Mountain Side: Reconciliation and the Beloved Community," in *The Theology of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Desmond Mpilo Tutu* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 84. "All men are interdependent. Every nation is an heir of a vast treasury of ideas and labor to which both the living and the dead of all nations have contributed. Whether we realize it or not, each of us lives eternally 'in the red'...The agony of the poor impoverishes the rich; the betterment of the poor enriches the rich. We are inevitably our brother's keeper because we are our brother's brother" - King in "Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community"

[114] Johnny Bernard. Hill, "From Every Mountain Side: Reconciliation and the Beloved Community," in *The Theology of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Desmond Mpilo Tutu* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 82. Unlike evangelicals, King saw the body of Christ, aka. the church, as those committed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, whether inside or outside of the Christian community.

[115] Martin Luther King, "Paul's Letter to American Christians" (speech, Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, Montgomery Alabama, December 4, 1956), accessed December 12, 2014, http://King-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/ documentsentry/doc_pauls_letter_to_american_christians/.

person over in one's own image."[116] While his understanding of the image of God was not disparate from evangelicals', the interconnectedness and social equality he associated with it was not at the forefront of evangelical thought. Furthermore, while evangelicals were willing to tolerate division, King felt strongly that it needed to be radically and immediately addressed.

Humans Have a Moral Obligation to Work towards Social Restoration

King's understanding of God and humanity contributed to his belief that people had an *ethical obligation* to work towards a "right relationship with God, a proper concern for self, and a compassionate concern for others."[117] Because God was actively working towards justice in the world, humans were created in God's image and thus imbued with the potential to achieve justice, and the well-being of an interconnected humanity depended on injustices being overcome, people had a moral obligation to partner with God to work towards a shalomic[118] community. Ivory affirms that,

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[116] Luther D. Ivory, *Toward a Theology of Radical Involvement: The Theological Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 60.

[117] Ibid., 62.

[118] Megan E. Lietz, "The Restorative Nature of Exile: Reforming God's People to Usher in Shalom," *The Africanus Journal*, April 2015, 37-38. Shalomic is an adjectival form of the Hebrew noun *shalom*. *Shalom,* though often understood as "peace," far transcends the meaning of peace in the English language. Though *Shalom* certainly captures this understanding, it is used multiple ways in the Hebrew, thus allowing it to be translated in a wide array of ways including welfare, completeness, rest, security, prosperity, wholeness, and victory. It also conveys the ideas such as health, reconciliation, justice, harmony and salvation. The meaning of *Shalom* I use here captures God's right order of things: a state of peace, equality, and justice. The connection between peace and justice can be seen throughout the Old Testament in passages like Isaiah 54:13-14: "I will teach all your children, and they will enjoy great peace. You will be secure under a government that is just and fair. Your enemies will stay far away. You will live in peace, and terror will not come near" (NLT). Furthermore, prophets speak doom on account of injustice (Amos 5:21-24; Jer. 22:1-15) and declaring that Shalom will come in the future when justice is done (Isa. 9:1-7; 11:1-9). Perry Yoder, summarizes Shalom well: "We are tempted at times to think that peacekeeping is maintaining the status quo without conflict, but our study of Shalom shows us that peacemaking is whitewashing when we think we can have peace in spite of oppression, exploitation and unjust laws…The

> Behind King's public witness lay a theological focus on radical involvement that stressed co-responsible agency - the notion that human beings, in response to the divine agenda for freedom, must become radically active, liberative agents in God's historical project of moral improvement and social redemption.[119]

While evangelicals emphasized a partnership between God and humanity in relation to *personal* salvation, their lack of action during the Civil Rights Movement illuminated their priorities and revealed their wanting faith in a divine collaboration that sees justice done.

King's conviction to engage socially was connected to his belief that the Gospel promoted holistic freedom in concrete political, economic, social, psychological, and spiritual terms. Influenced by Walter Rauschenbusch and the Social Gospel, King declared:

> It is all right to talk about 'long white robes over yonder' in all of its symbolism. But ultimately people want some suits and dresses and shoes to wear down here. It's all right to talk about 'streets flowing with milk and honey,' but God has commended us to be concerned about the slums down here, and his children who can't eat three square meals a day.[120]

King believed that the church should not only pursue otherworldly ends, but do God's work in the present. He asserted, on theological grounds, that not to engage in the

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Biblical understanding of peace…points positively to things being as they should be; when things are not that way, no amount of security, no amount of peacekeeping in the sense of law and order and public tranquility will make for peace. Only a change in the way things are will allow shalom…to be realized. Only a transformation of society so that things really are all right will make for biblical peace."

[119] Luther D. Ivory, *Toward a Theology of Radical Involvement: The Theological Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 130.

[120] Noel Leo. Erskine, "Martin Luther King Jr.'s Theological Perspective," in *King Among the Theologians* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 1994), 152.

problems of the world was a sin. Although evangelicals may not have disagreed theologically with King, their priorities, timing, and methods[121] differed from his.

The Ultimate Goal: The Beloved Community

The ultimate goal for King was the beloved community:[122] a global community where justice and equality reigned. This was not an eschatological ideal, but something he believed could be achieved if people committed to making it a reality. The King Center further describes this end:

> In the Beloved Community, poverty, hunger and homelessness will not be tolerated because international standards of human decency will not allow it. Racism and all forms of discrimination, bigotry and prejudice will be replaced by an all-inclusive spirit of sisterhood and brotherhood. In the Beloved Community, international disputes will be resolved by peaceful conflict-resolution and reconciliation of adversaries, instead of military power. Love and trust will triumph over fear and hatred. Peace with justice will prevail over war and military conflict.[123]

King believed the Beloved Community could be fostered through non-violent, reconciling actions taken, not against people, but against the "evil systems, forces, oppressive policies and unjust acts" of this world.[124] He held that if people cooperatively

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[121] i.e. Focus on personal conversion vs. social engagement, civil disobedience vs. working through the established system, etc.

[122] Ibid., 142. King said that, "the end is reconciliation; the end is redemption; the end is the beloved community."

[123] "The King Philosophy," The Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, The Beloved Community, accessed December 12, 2014, http://www.theKingcenter.org/King-philosophy#sub4.

[124] Ibid.

engaged unto liberation this dream could be achieved.[125] For King, desegregation was the first step towards the Beloved Community.[126]

The idea of a beloved community is consistent with the biblical concept of the Kingdom of God,[127] and thus an already-not-yet shalomic ideal (along with King's aforementioned tenants) was not foreign to evangelicals. This reveals that, unlike the debates over eighteenth century slavery, differences in theological interpretation during the Civil Rights movement were not the primary source of division within the evangelical church. Rather, by the 1950s, as the debate moved to segregation and directly connected biblical insights waned, divergent priorities, methods, and timing seemed to explain the evangelical church's lack of involvement in the Civil Rights Movement.

Theological Agreement, but a Difference of Priorities, Methods and Timing

The dynamics that contributed to evangelicals' lack of involvement in the Civil Rights Movement is illustrated in the letter from eight Alabama clergymen that inspired King's famed *Letter from Birmingham Jail*. These eight men were white social moderates who, although overseeing predominantly white, segregated congregations, had theologically-based liberal views on race and stood against racial oppression. For example, prior to their letter to King, they produced a statement promoting social integration in response to Gov. George Wallace’s inaugural speech that proclaimed

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[125] Luther D. Ivory, *Toward a Theology of Radical Involvement: The Theological Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 143.

[126] Martin Luther King, "I Have a Dream" (speech, March on Washington, Lincoln Memorial, Washington, DC, 1963), http://www.archives.gov/press/exhibits/dream-speech.pdf. The beloved community is further described, indirectly in King's famous "I Have a Dream Speech."

[127] Rufus Burrow, *God and Human Dignity: The Personalism, Theology, and Ethics of Martin Luther King, Jr*. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 80.

"segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever."[128] Their statement confessed, "every human being is created in the image of God and is entitled to respect as a fellow human being with all basic rights, privileges, and responsibilities which belong to humanity."[129] Despite this, they stood against King, expressing a belief that progress can be made through the system and that his demonstrations were "unwise and untimely," threatening forthcoming progress. As an alternative, they suggested negotiations among local leadership and an avoidance of the violence that results even from non-violent means. A similar sentiment is also seen in an anonymous letter King received. It reads, "Rev Martin Luther King,.. you are not alone in your struggle to help the colored people. Christian people are praying that white people can right the many wrongs that your people have faced. [However] I believe more can be accomplished by prayer and righteous living than violence and demonstrations." The writer goes on to remind King that others are worse off than he was and encourages him to "count [his] blessings and be thankful for what [he has] and wait on the lord. It has been said in the final days that those who have the low places in this life will have the high places in the hereafter and

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[128] It is important to note that their liberal beliefs on race and initial engagement already set them apart from some evangelicals, who, regardless of shared theological beliefs, may have drawn different conclusions about race relations or been bound by the apathy, fear and other obstacles that hinders engagement. Regardless, because their theological beliefs are shared with evangelicals at the time, they serve as a valuable and comparable examples.

[129] Edward Gilbreath, *Birmingham Revolution: Martin Luther King Jr.'s Epic Challenge to the Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 79.

vice versa. If God be for us who can be against us?"[130] In response to dissenting people "of genuine good will"[131] King replies:

> More and more I feel that the people of ill will have used time much more effectively than have the people of good will. We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people. Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be co-workers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation. We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right. Now is the time to make real the promise of democracy and transform our pending national elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood. Now is the time to lift our national policy from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of human dignity.[132]

To King, despite evangelicals' good intentions, inaction was unacceptable; King called for transformative action in the here and now. As a result, those who responded to this call to action contributed to a fundamental change in how blacks were treated in America, bringing the country one step closer to a biblical ideal.

Looking Ahead to Multiracial Congregations Today

It is with King's call and evangelicals' legacy in mind that the church should consider how to address racial hierarchy today. The evangelical church finds itself in an interesting place in twenty-first century America. For as much progress as has been made, deeply engrained systemic racism still produces glaring differences in areas like job opportunities, education, healthcare, and criminal justice. Furthermore, the recent

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[130] "Anonymous Letter to MLK," The King Center, accessed December 2015, http://www.thekingcenter.org/archive/document/anonymous-letter-mlk-2.

[131] "Letter from Birmingham Jail," Martin Luther King to Fellow Clergymen, April 16, 1963, in *Stanford's Martin Luther King Jr. Research and Education Institute*, http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu:5801/transcription/document _images/undecided/630416-019.pdf.

[132] Ibid.

deaths of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Walter Scott, and Freddie Gray graphically illustrate that racism is alive and well in America. With U.S. census data trends predicting that whites will be the racial minority in the United States by 2043[133] racial diversity is on the rise and the evangelical church must decide how to engage with this changing reality. Will they oppose and exclude like the slaveholders, rationalize and ignore like the well-intentioned moderates of Civil Rights, or welcome people of all hues and fight for their justice like the abolitionists, King, and dare I say, Jesus Christ?

Multiracial congregations provide hope that the church is striving to embody the radical inclusiveness of Jesus. For the purpose of this paper, multiracial congregations[134] will be defined are those in which no more than 80 percent of a congregation is made up of a single race.[135] In 2010, these communities represented 13.7 percent of congregations

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[133] "U.S. Census Bureau Projections Show a Slower Growing, Older, More Diverse Nation a Half Century from Now," United States Census Bureau, December 12, 2012, A More Diverse Nation, accessed April 29, 2015, https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/population/cb12-243.html.

[134] Most research on multiracial congregations, including that of expert and champion Michael O. Emerson, have been conducted within the evangelical church.

[135] Michael O. Emerson, "A New Day for Multiracial Congregations," *Reflections: A Magazine of Theological and Ethical Inquiry*, Spring 2013, accessed December 9, 2013, http://reflections.yale.edu/ article/future-race/new-day-multiracial-congregations; Manuel Ortiz, *One New People: Models for Developing a Multiethnic Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 88-89. Compare this to Ortiz's definition of multiethnic congregations that includes both a qualitative and quantitative dimension. After analyzing a number of definitions for a multiethnic church, Ortiz concludes that, "taken together, the definitions provided both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. The quantitative dimension primarily deals with the numerical makeup of the ethnic groups that meet together...There must be sufficient representation of any particular ethnic group in order to claim that a church is multiethnic...[At the same time] the effective (multiethnic church) is more than just a variety of cultures meeting together under one roof. The qualitative dimension is essential, having to do with the life of the church as well as the organization of the ministry." Gerardo Marti, *A Mosaic of Believers: Diversity and Innovation in a Multiethnic Church* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 5, accessed March 2015, http://www.oxfordscholarship.com.ezproxy.bu.edu/view/10.1093/acprof: oso/9780195392 975.001. 0001/acprof-9780195392975. Gerardo Marti, who, unlike Ortiz, published six years after Emerson's definitive study, echoes Ortiz's sentiment by defining multiracial churches as those that "successfully integrate two or more racial-ethnic groups in the same worship service."

in the United States and they are a growing element of America's religious landscape.[136] Because multiracial congregations are defined quantitatively and not qualitatively, however, their existence does not necessitate King's vision of a genuinely integrated and egalitarian community. Rather, all such congregations exist on a spectrum of integration.[137] While research indicates that participating in a multiracial congregation can improve race relations and minorities' social and economic capital,[138] it also confirms that even well intentioned congregations that possess characteristics that can contribute to their success[139] may actually maintain white hegemony.[140] As a result, although multiracial congregations are a step in the right direction, there is much more work that needs to be done. In the next chapter, building upon the historical arguments for racial equality, I will present a theological defense of multiracial congregations as expressed by advocates of these communities. Thereafter, in chapter four, these congregations will be explored from a sociological perspective that considers their potential for reconciliation. This will be followed by an exploration of white hegemony and the underlying ideology of whiteness that poses a challenge to the reconciling work of multiracial congregations.

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[136] Ibid. The amount of multiracial congregations is compared to 7.4 percent in 1998.

[137] Alan Parker, "Towards Heterogeneous Faith Communities: Understanding Transitional Processes In Seventh-Day Adventist Churches In South Africa" (PhD diss., University of Stellenbosch, 2004), 187-192, accessed 2014, https://scholar.sun.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10019.1/5493/parker_towards_2004.pdf?sequence=1.

[138] Korie L. Edwards, *The Elusive Dream: The Power of Race in Interracial Churches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 99.; Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 95-98, 101. For example, whites that attend are more likely to recognize racial inequality, the social and systemic causes thereof, and be more supportive of racial equality. Blacks gain social and economic capital, and both blacks and whites increase the number of relationships with people of other races on all levels of intimacy.

[139] Korie L. Edwards, *The Elusive Dream: The Power of Race in Interracial Churches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 8, 136.

[140] Ibid., 8, 136.

SUMMARY OF HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Theology has played an instrumental role in the how the church and society have viewed racial hierarchy in the United States during nineteenth century slavery and the Civil Rights Movement. The argument over slavery addressed whether or not this institution, as practiced in nineteenth century America, was in the Bible and if it, and the racism that sustained it, was a sin. It went on to discuss whether or not slavery violated Christian principles and, ultimately, the possibility of moral progress. Following the abolition of slavery, blacks continued to be oppressed through racial segregation in both the church and society at large. Although some drew upon biblical narratives to support segregation, by the time of the Civil Rights Movement, people acknowledged that, in the Bible, this issue was not directly addressed. As a result, evangelicals did not have a well-articulated theology regarding race and acted in response to social realities more than theological convictions.

Primary source publications and personal interviews reveal that, despite stated beliefs in the equality of all people and the sinfulness of racism, despite commitments to work against the segregation and oppression in their midst, evangelicals were largely inactive in the Civil Rights Movement. This did not mean that they were necessarily *actively* oppressing blacks, but that they were perpetuating oppression through slow, moderate approaches that maintained the status quo. In contrast to the majority of evangelicals, King developed a robust theology that drew upon biblical beliefs and moved people to counter-cultural action. Viewing God as a loving and involved deity, he believed that the Lord was on the side of justice. This Mighty Creator made all people in

God's image, making them equal, interconnected, and designed to be free. These concepts contributed to the belief that God calls all people to work together unto the development of the beloved community. While evangelicals' did not necessarily disagree with King's theology, their deeply rooted individualism and hesitancy to challenge the status quo led them to pursue different methods, timing, and priorities.

Today, the evangelical church finds itself in an increasingly diverse context where racial tensions are high and racism is alive and well in America. Although largely systemic and more subtle than the blatant racism of the fifties and sixties, this national sin still prevails. As a result, evangelicals must consider how their theology has shaped their response to racial hierarchy in the past, as well as how it can inform their dialogue on the multiracial congregations that offer both potential for conflict and hope for reconciliation. Considering their interpretative methods and King's implications of the image of God, developing cross-racial relationships and re-evaluating their priorities would be a good place to start.

Evangelical theology has played an instrumental role in how the nation has responded to race relations and can continue to do so in a country that has been strongly influenced by such beliefs. By exploring the church's involvement in two definitive times during American history, evangelicals today can be better equipped to learn from their past, engage in conversation, and work towards racial equality. As historical tensions arise both in our streets and congregations, may the evangelical church be the "city on a hill" *God* intended (Matt. 5:14-16). In the midst of oppression, may the church shine a

light that illuminates the fallacy of a divine racial hierarchy, the idolatry of the status quo, and the hope of reconciliation.

II. THEOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR MULTIRACIAL CONGREGATIONS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

> The first three years [of pastoring a multiethnic church] were spent implementing the vision, which included communicating it and making key changes along the way... Even with [a multiracial vision of worship and leadership], however, it would not mean that we were a multiethnic congregation. God showed me that I would have to instruct the body of believers in the area of theology if lasting change was to occur.[1] - Rodney Woo, Pastor of Wilcrest Baptist Church

Emerging from a checkered past regarding their response to racial hierarchy during nineteenth century American slavery and the Civil Rights Movement, evangelicals show a new hope for opposing the racial inequalities of the current day. This hope is demonstrated in the growth of multiracial congregations and a robust theology for the development of egalitarian, multiracial communities. This chapter will explore said theology as expressed by evangelical advocates of multiracial congregations in the twenty-first century.[2] Assuming arguments that reflect those championed by abolitionists and King, and demonstrating a greater commitment to action as evidenced through the movement's activities and growth (explored further in chapter 4), some evangelicals seem to be following more faithfully their call to be ministers of reconciliation.

Ethnicity and Race in the Ancient Near East

The evangelical theology of multiracial congregations draws heavily upon the relationship between Jews and Gentiles found in scripture. As a result, to begin this exploration, I will briefly explain this relationship and how it addresses the modern

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[1] Rodney M. Woo, The Color of Church: A Biblical and Practical Paradigm for Multiracial Churches (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009), 38.

[2] At times, as an abbreviation, these individuals are referred to simply as advocates.

construct of race. In the Ancient Near East, the concept of race did not exist as it does today.[3] While skin color was varied according to what we now call race, it was not yet imbued with the social meaning that contributed to racial hierarchy. As a result, the Bible does not address what is understood as race today, but it does speak to an Ancient Near Eastern equivalent: The ethnic division between Jews and Gentiles.[4] This relationship produced dynamics similar to those of race today. In "United by Faith," Curtis DeYoung et al., explain:

> The first-century world as described in the New Testament did not experience racism in the same way it is understood today in the United States...(However) the world in which Jesus and members of the church lived did have distinctions that brought division and hierarchies that produced discrimination rooted in personal and societal understandings of ethnicity and culture. These differentiations often contained the same emotional and structural power to divide as race does today. This was especially true of Jews and Gentiles.[5]

In the relationship between Jews and Gentiles as described in the biblical text, Jews are God's chosen people and thus saw themselves as superior to Gentiles (not unlike the

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[3] Norman A. Peart, *Separate No More: Understanding and Developing Racial Reconciliation in Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 96.Though the word race is mentioned in the Bible, in the New Testament, the Greek word, *genos,* translated as race, refers to an individual's descendants (Acts 4:6) or family (Acts 7:13) and peoples or nationalities (Mk. 7:26). "The word *race* in the Bible may refer to the origin, lineage, or unity of humanity in that all people are members of the human race (Acts. 17:28-29)." It does not refer to the racial categories in which people are placed today.

[4] Norman A. Peart, *Separate No More: Understanding and Developing Racial Reconciliation in Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 97. The Greek *ethnos* is often used to refer to people who share a common country or history. The Jews were one specific ethnicity and the term *gentiles* described everyone else. "Ethnic distinctions are general characteristics that include a person's nation of origin, language, lineage, customs, and outward features such as skin color." It should be noted that "when familiar racial identifiers, such as skin color, are used in the Bible, it is to distinguish and differentiate between people and people groups (Simeon was called Niger, which denotes his dark complexion, in Acts. 13:1)."

[5] Curtiss Paul. DeYoung et al., *United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 11.

European pioneers who settled the United States). Gentiles were the ones from whom they were to be set apart (Lev. 20:24-26) and whom they were to lead out of sin and darkness (Isa. 46:6). Furthermore, the Jew's notable dislike of Gentiles was due in part to their history of oppression by foreign nations and the increase of inter-ethnic (and thus often interreligious) marriages that, historically, led Israel into sin.[6] Similar to how race shapes people's experience and relationships today, this social hierarchy led to concrete differences in lived experience. Rodney Woo, former Pastor[7] of Wilcrest Baptist Church in Texas and Professor at South Western Baptist Theological Seminary, explains:

> ...The Jews and Gentiles coexisted but did not interact or cultivate friendships with one another...[They] did not share the same worship places, schools, diet, or values, and strongly discouraged intermarriage. The wall between the Jew and Gentile pervaded every area of their existence.[8]

It is with this relationship in mind that we must consider the arguments made by advocates of twenty-first century multiracial congregations. It is foreshadowed in their discussion of the Old Testament and will take a central role in the New Testament dialogue where, prior to echoing the abolitionists' and King's exploration of the epistles, they offer a fresh emphasis that focuses on the radically inclusive ministry of Jesus and interracial congregations in the early church.

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[6] Ibid.,11.

[7] Note, all pastors mentioned in this section on biblical and theological perspectives on multicultural congregations are or were pastors of multiracial churches.

[8] Rodney M. Woo, *The Color of Church: A Biblical and Practical Paradigm for Multiracial Churches* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009), 87.

A THEOLOGY OF MULTIRACIAL CONGREGATIONS

The Nature of God and Humanity

A theology of the multiracial church begins, not unlike our discussion of the theology of Martin Luther King Jr., in the nature of God and humanity. Indeed, the way one views these elements impacts how one interacts with creator and creation. Contemporary arguments, however, focus more on the unity in diversity present in God through the trinity than God's pursuit of justice and call for radical engagement. The doctrine of the Trinity, widely accepted by the evangelical church, holds that one God exists in three persons that are co-substantive, co-eternal, and co-equal. Therefore, although made of three diverse persons, each person is equal, and together, they are one. Drawing upon the trinity, advocates argue that God's very being embodies unity in diversity, thus reflecting the type of relationships God desires for humanity:

> The Godhead reveals why God desires to have a diverse humanity living in deep relational unity together. It allows us to reflect something of the diversity and unity of his triune being. Furthermore, the Trinity serves as a standard and model of how relationships among God's diverse created beings should function in unity.[9]

The equality implied in the doctrine of the trinity is further affirmed through the concept of the image of God, the depravity of humanity, and to a lesser extent, belief in monogenesis. Although debates exist as to what the image of God means (i.e. physical, spiritual, and/or emotional resemblance etc.), there is agreement that it implies that all people should be treated equally. Echoing the beliefs of abolitionists and King, Woo articulates this understanding:

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[9] Ibid.,10-11.

> The fact that as humans we all equally possess a divine image necessitates that we perceive and treat each other with a dignity commensurate to that truth. To interact with someone who has been created in His image, regardless of skin color, affords us the opportunity to see the face of God as we gaze into the face of another created being. Whether the line of demarcation is race or status, how we treat another created being reflects how we treat our creator... "[10]

He concludes: "The image of God in us should completely dismantle any concept that one race is either superior or inferior to another race."[11]

This conclusion is further affirmed through advocates' view of a depraved humanity. According to the Bible, when Adam sinned, this disobedience marred all people (Rom. 5:12), thus, making everyone sinful from birth (Ps. 51:5) and in need of God's grace (Rom. 3:23-24). Therefore, although the image of a perfect God was marred in each of us, it was marred equally and therefore, no one can claim to be ontologically better than another human being.

The final element of these arguments is that of monogenesis, the belief that all humans came from a single pair of ancestors. Although not nearly as prevalent as it was during the time of slavery, it still remains. In reference to Acts 17:24-27, David Ireland, Pastor of Christ Church in New Jersey, writes:

> Every people group came from a single source, Adam. The first created humans were given the commission to multiply and fill the earth. This was the mandate that caused all the future variations in mankind to come. The farther in history we are removed from creation, the more diversity exists among the descendants of Adam and Eve. It's important to note that this increasing diversity is not an accident that occurred over time. The scripture says that God has "determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live" (Acts 17:26).[12]

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[10] Ibid., 9.

[11] Ibid., 10.

[12] David Ireland, *What Color Is Your God? A New Approach to Developing a Multicultural Lifestyle* (Verona, NJ: Impact Pub. House, 2000), 67.

Note that this argument takes the tone of an explanation for diversity and God's sovereignty over it instead of a direct justification for the equality of all races. This may be because the aforementioned doctrines establish this more firmly while avoiding the disputed biblically-based theories on the origins of human kind.

Related to this are arguments born from the Tower of Babel narrative (Gen 11:1-9) that speak to God's intentions for humanity as it relates to unity in diversity. Interestingly, while many people see this passage as significant, there are various interpretations and reasons why. For example, Woo argues that the one language with which people spoke reveals that God intended humanity to be unified from the beginning so they could work together to fulfill their purpose of glorifying the Lord. When people tried to make a name for themselves, however, God confused their languages and people were divided by diversity. Woo contends that this illustrates that God desires for us to be together, but sin separates us, not only from God, but from humanity (Gen 11:4).[13] Ireland, on the other hand, emphasizes that the Tower of Babel was people's attempt to band together and not be dispersed as God intended them to be. While, "men were unified in their determination to prevent diversity and maintain cultural and ethnic uniformity, God was equally determined that diversity develop." When people wouldn't disperse and fill the Earth, God forced their hand. Ireland concludes, "Diversity among nationalities, races, cultures, and ethnic groups

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[13] Rodney M. Woo, *The Color of Church: A Biblical and Practical Paradigm for Multiracial Churches* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009), 76.

was an indispensable ingredient in the plan of God regarding mankind."[14] In the first example, affirming God's desire for unity, the dispersion of people was the consequences of sin, *not* the will of God. Conversely, in the second, affirming God's value of diversity, people were scattered because it *was* the will of God. Although both views can support an element of the unity in diversity present in multiracial congregations, there is a disagreement over how unity and diversity relates to the will of God.

Pastor Stephen Rhodes offers a perspective that ameliorates the tension between these two interpretations. Similar to Ireland, Rhodes attributes the unity to human intention, pointing out that what motivates people to "make a name for themselves" is the fear of being scattered across the earth (11:4). "Afraid of once again being separated and differentiated from one another, humanity presents God with a common front and a unifying purpose - self-preservation on their own terms."[15] It was thus pursuing unity *on humanity's terms* that was the sinful action. Rhodes goes on to explain this distinction in motives by drawing upon the Genesis commentary of theologian Walter Brueggeman. Brueggeman suggests that there are two types of unity in the Babel narrative. The first is a unity affirmed by the Lord "which permits and encourages scattering. The unity willed by God is that all

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[14] David Ireland, *What Color Is Your God? A New Approach to Developing a Multicultural Lifestyle* (Verona, NJ: Impact Pub. House, 2000), 67.

[15] Stephen A. Rhodes, *Where the Nations Meet: The Church in a Multicultural World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 25.

humankind shall be in a covenant with him (9:8-11) and with him only, responding to his purposes, relying on his life-giving power." The second type of unity is:

> 'Sought by a fearful humanity organized against the purposes of God. This unity attempts to establish a cultural human oneness without reference to the threats, promises, or mandates of God. This is a self-made unity in which humanity has a 'fortress mentality.' It seeks to survive by its own resources.' The focus of humanity is self-interest, not on obedience to God.[16]

With this in mind, it appears that that Woo was highlighting the type of unity willed by God and Ireland was highlighting the unity born from human intentions.

Rhodes goes on to address the tension surrounding the dispersion of God's people and similarly suggests a resolution to this biblical complexity. He argues that God's judgment upon humanity "is twofold: (1) the diversity of languages is restored as God had originally intended; and (2) humanity is again spread across the earth so that the people may "multiply and fill the earth.'"[17] Therefore, God's confusion of people's languages and scattering of them across the earth was not just a punishment, but a punishment with a purpose: it scattered people so that God's original intention could be fulfilled.[18] Returning to the differences in opinion of Woo and Ireland, Woo discusses dispersion as a consequences of sin, highlighting the aspect of punishment. Ireland, on the other hand, emphasizes God's original creation mandate (Gen 1:28). As before, these perspectives are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they are emphasizing different elements in a rich and multifaceted text.

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[16] Ibid. 26.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid., 27.

Old Testament Law and the Prophets

Advocates of multiracial congregations have drawn in a small part from Old Testament law and the Prophets, highlighting God's concern for the Gentile and the Lord's plan to incorporate them into the new covenant. This argument begins in God's covenant with Abraham in Genesis 12 and the Lord's promise that, through the patriarch, the Great Provider would bless all the nations of the world. This is echoed in prophetic passages declaring that the Gentiles would come to know God (Isa. 2:2, 52:10, 56:6-8 and 66:18). In addition, the peaceable reign of God described in Isaiah 11:6-9 depicts a future state in which people of all races and ethnicities will be in right relationship with one another.[19] It also extends to more practical instructions to take care of immigrants (Deut. 10:19; Lev. 19:33-34, Jer. 22:3, Ezek. 47:21-23). Of particular note is Ruth, the Moabitess (Ruth 2:10), and Rahab, the Cannanite, who find favor from and ultimately became a part of the people of God. Although a small component of a complex argument, these passages make clear that, long before the reconciling work of Jesus, the Gentile was on the heart of God.

The Life of Jesus

While multicultural congregations as they are understood today did not exist during the lifetime of Jesus, advocates of such communities insist that Jesus' radically inclusive ministry, high priestly prayer, and Great Commission affirm that multicultural congregations are in alignment with the ministry and spirit of their Lord. Jesus himself

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[19] Eric H. F. Law, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb: A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1993), 3.

knew what it was like to have been an outsider: born in a manger, led into Egypt, and raised by a poor family in a town of ill repute, he would have had compassion for those who were outside of the social and ethnic majority. Ministering in the diverse region of Galilee, he would not only have encountered pervasive Hellenistic influences, but also Assyrians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Macedonians, Persians, Romans, Syrians, and indigenous Canaanites.[20] It was in this context that Jesus formed a radically inclusive ministry.

Advocates argue that, from the birth of Christ himself, the authors of Matthew and Luke foreshadowed the ethnically inclusive nature of Jesus' ministry. Be it the temporal indicator in the infancy narrative that puts Jesus' birth in the context of global leadership (Lk. 2:1-2), the visit of the magi (Matt. 2:1), Christ's flight to Egypt (Matt. 2:13-15), or Simeon's declaration that Christ would be a "light to the Gentiles" (Lk. 2:32), these elements hint that both Jew and Gentile would be accepted into God's family.[21] Further evidence of Jesus' inclusivity arose when he chose the company in which he would abide over his three years of ministry. For example, his disciples were despised tax collectors (Mk. 2:14, Lk. 5:27), common fishermen (Matt. 4:18-22), and dangerous zealots (Lk. 6:15, Acts 1:13). "The fact that 'both a tax collector and a zealot, a resistance fighter, are included in the most intimate group of disciples...points to a readiness for reconciliation which transcends frontiers and culminates in the requirement to love one's

[20] Curtiss Paul. DeYoung et al., *United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 15.

[21] Ibid.,13.

enemy.'"[22] This was further affirmed by the presence of women among Jesus' followers (Lk. 8:1-3; Mk. 15:40-41) who were viewed as inferior and would not have been given value or authority outside of the home at that time.

The fact that Jesus lived and ate with such people (E.g. Mk. 2:15-16) violated the beliefs established in the pharisaical ritual of table fellowship and communicated that, contrary to socio-religious norms, these individuals were valued and included in God's family. The Pharisees used the daily act of table fellowship to reinforce and symbolize that only Jewish men of good health and standing were permitted to participate fully in religious life and be a part of exclusive congregations. Curtis DeYoung et al. explain: "Table fellowship symbolized those you found to be worthy of inclusion in your social circle...[The Pharisees] used table fellowship to maintain the purity of their nation as well as to model what they believed should be the exclusive, ethnocentric, identity of Israel."[23] Although this symbol was expressed in an effort to "revive a faith and nation that had been devastated by foreign domination and occupation,"[24] it was counter to the will of God. As a result, Jesus disrupted and redefined the practice of the religious leaders to communicate that the future of God's people would be one of inclusivity.[25] Marcus Borg affirms that, "Jesus did not simply accept the central role of table fellowship, but used it as a weapon...It was a political act of national significance: to advocate and practice a

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[22] Ibid.,16.

[23] Ibid.,16.

[24] Ibd.,18

[25] Ibid.,16.

different form of table fellowship was to protest against the present structure of Israel."[26] With this counter-cultural paradigm, Jesus challenged the Pharisees and proceeded to openly minister to the Gentiles (Mk. 5:1-20, 6:35-44; 7:24-30, 34; Lk. 7:1-10, 24-30; Jn. 4[27]; 12:20-26).

Advocates of multiracial congregations point out that, not only does Jesus challenge social norms through his company, but also through his teachings. For example, in Matthew 22:1-14, Jesus tells a parable in which all people were invited to a great, eschatological banquet. Jesus' understanding of this event is distinctly different from that of early Judaism. The Targum portrays it as a means to harm the Gentiles: "Yahweh of hosts will make for all the peoples in this mountain a meal; and although they suppose it an honor, it will be a shame for them, and great plagues, plagues from which they will be unable to escape, plagues whereby they will come to their end."[28] Jesus rejected this interpretation and provided a shocking alternative. Woo explains: "...Jesus rejected the first-century Jewish view of the exclusion of the Gentiles from the final banquet, and reaffirmed Isaiah's prophecy that included all people around his table.

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[26] Ibid.,18

[27] George Yancey, *One Body, One Spirit: Principles of Successful Multiracial Churches* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 48. Yancey argues that, through the narrative of the Samaritan Women, Jesus illustrates "that no human culture can be given greater weight than adherence to our faith in Christ." He explains that "the woman wants to discuss with Jesus the importance of where to worship. This is a cultural issue, which Jesus does not see as important. He states that where one worships is not worth discussing. That is merely a cultural issue. He is more interested in the woman repenting of her sins and accepting his gift of salvation." He goes on to say that, "Monoracial churches have the tendency to focus on where to worship, who to vote for, the organization for the worship service and other cultural factors that Jesus would not see as important. However, multiracial churches have a good opportunity to overcome some of this cultural baggage since no one racial culture will automatically be seen as the 'right' culture."

[28] Rodney M. Woo, *The Color of Church: A Biblical and Practical Paradigm for Multiracial Churches* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009), 53.

In fact, Jesus not only granted the Gentiles a place of honor, but he excluded in shame any Jew who would reject Jesus (see Lk. 14:24)."[29] Herein, and in Christ's ministry to come (Mk. 11:17, Lk. 24:47), we see a turn from exclusive privileges for the Jews on account of their ethnicity to a saving relationship for anyone who has faith in Jesus.

Jesus not only desired that both Jews and Gentiles follow and be reconciled to him, but his vision extended to seeing these ethnic groups function in unity. In John 17:20-26 Jesus prays that those who believe in his teachings will be one as Jesus and the father are one so that people may know that Jesus was sent by God and that, by them, people are loved. The significance of this passage cannot be understated. First, it expresses Jesus' desire for his followers to model the unity present in the relationship between Father and Son. They are to be radically united, not divided, per the pharisaical understanding of table fellowship. Advocates of multiracial congregations believe that this "unity between the Father and Son serves as a basis and a model for the unity that we are to have with the Father and with each other."[30] In addition to a call for unity, the passage also expresses that salvation is for all people. Mark DeYmaz, Pastor of Mosaic Church in Arkansas, explains this argument:

> Christ foresees that “the world will know that You love them.” Although today we take this for granted, we should remember that at the time of this prayer, the fact of God’s love for all the world was, in general, a radical concept to the Jewish mind. In that day, most Jews believed that YHWH was their God, that he loved their nation exclusively. From their perspective, then, “the Egyptians have their gods, the Hittites have their gods, the Phoenicians have their gods, and we, the Jews, have our God.”

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[29] Ibid., 53.

[30] Ibid., 40.

> In contrast, it was not God's love but God's wrath that they believed would one day befall the rest of mankind. So when Christ prays for the world to "know" God's love, he is speaking directly to the fact that salvation is not just for the Jews. And he says that all mankind will experience his love when men and women of diverse backgrounds are willing to walk together as one in Christ. In so doing, believers manifest the reality that, "He Himself is our peace, who made both groups (Jews and Gentiles) into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall" (Ephesians 2:14).[31]

He goes on to explain the role multiracial congregations have in embodying the vision Christ expresses in his high priestly prayer:

> Yes, in the twenty-first century it will be the unity of diverse believers walking as one in and through the local church that will proclaim the fact of God's love for all people more profoundly than any one sermon, book, or evangelistic crusade. And I believe the coming integration of the local church will lead to the fulfillment of the Great Commission, to people of every nation, tribe, people, and tongue coming to know him as we do.[32]

Advocates conclude their case for multiracial congregations as it relates to the life and teachings of Jesus with the Great Commission: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:18-20). Jesus' vision, and his final instructions to the church, catalyzed his followers - Jews and Gentiles, Pharisees and outcasts, women and men, rich and poor - to bring Christ's salvation to the known world. DeYoung et al. affirm: "The diverse and inclusive nature of early

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[31] Mark DeYmaz, *Building a Healthy Multiethnic Church: Mandate, Commitment and Practice of a Diverse Congregation* (San Francisco: Kohn Wiley and Sons, 2007), Kindle, 42.

[32] Ibid., 42.

congregations did not occur by accident." Rather, "this outcome was the result of embracing the vision and strategy of Jesus."[33]

The Example of the Early Church

Advocates of multiracial congregations see the composition and patterns of growth in the early church as supporting their cause. Their exploration begins with the emergence of the church on the day of Pentecost. Jews from all over the known world would have come to celebrate this pilgrimage feast thus putting the birth of the church in the context of national and linguistic diversity. DeYoung et al. explain that "the church was multicultural and multilingual from the first moment of its existence."[34] Going a step further, Ireland writes that unity was present among them, as when the tongues of fire descended upon the people, "every racial, cultural, and language barrier became irrelevant in the presence of the Holy Spirit."[35] While this scene would not have included Gentiles at the time, advocates see it as a first step towards and delightful foretaste of ethnic unity.

> Although these pilgrims shared a common Jewish religious background, there were striking cultural and linguistic differences. In one sense Pentecost brought the tower of Babel full circle as the God who scattered people into linguistic fragments was now gathering them into a unified people. However, Pentecost revealed God's plan for humanity was not merely to fix what was broken at Babel.

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[33] Curtiss Paul. DeYoung et al., *United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 22.

[34] Ibid., 22.

[35] David Ireland, *What Color Is Your God? A New Approach to Developing a Multicultural Lifestyle* (Verona, NJ: Impact Pub. House, 2000), 42.

> Instead, he would use their sin to bring about a more diverse humanity who should be bound in complete harmony through Christ alone.[36]

Following the day of Pentecost, the church in Jerusalem began to grow. In suit with the diversity in which it was birthed, it came to be composed primarily of second-class Galilean Jews (Hebrew-speaking), migrant Hellenized Jews (Greek-speaking), and Jewish priests.[37] Thus, it "bridged a divide found in first-century Judaism - culture- and language-specific synagogues."[38] Advocates point out that, despite these differences, Christians broke bread together as a sign of fellowship and readily addressed issues that could have contributed to ethnic division (E.g. Acts 6:1-6). As a matter of fact, when these issues had the potential to corrupt the leadership, God himself seemed to have stepped in.

In Galatians 2:11-14, Peter refrains from eating with the Gentiles on account of the presence of Jewish Christians thus communicating that Gentiles were second-class citizens in the Kingdom of God.[39] While Paul harshly rebukes Peter for his bad example, Yancey suggests that God then leads Peter into his encounter with Cornelius (Acts 10) so he "would not be free to introduce his desire for segregation into the growing church..."[40]

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[36] Rodney M. Woo, *The Color of Church: A Biblical and Practical Paradigm for Multiracial Churches* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009), 77-78.

[37] Curtiss Paul. DeYoung et al., *United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 23.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid., 34. Peter may have done this for pragmatic reasons so as to not pose an obstacle to the evangelism of non-Christian Jews (De Young et al., 34). However, Paul's response made clear that division of any sort was not appropriate despite good intentions.

[40] George Yancey, *One Body, One Spirit: Principles of Successful Multiracial Churches* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 49.

It was through this encounter, advocates argue, that Peter came to see that God welcomes Gentiles into the Lord's family. Recalling his experience with Cornelius' household and how they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Peter and his followers conclude:

> So if God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God's way?" When [the skeptical Jewish Christians] heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life" (Acts 11:17-18).

While Pentecost made clear that both Hebraic and Hellenized Jews were accepted by God, Peter's encounter illustrates that this inclusiveness extended to the Gentiles. Woo summarizes a lesson this passage teaches regarding multiracial congregations today:

> In the account of the Jewish apostle and the Gentile centurion, God demonstrates that He will go to whatever lengths necessary in order that the gospel may reach receptive hearts. In spite of Peter's initial resistance, God's activity to move Peter's heart proves God's patience with the majority racial group and His passion for the incoming minority group.[41]

Peter's encounter with Cornelius made clear that God welcomed Gentiles into the Christian faith, but the question remained as to whether or not they had to conform to the Jewish law for salvation. This issue was addressed at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-29, Gal. 2:1-10) and it was concluded that Gentile Christians need not be circumcised, change their diet, nor otherwise conform to the "yoke" of the law (cf. Acts 15:10) to enter into the faith (Acts 15:19-20).[42] As explained more later in this section, it was this open

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[41] Rodney M. Woo, *The Color of Church: A Biblical and Practical Paradigm for Multiracial Churches* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009), 86.

[42] Curtiss Paul. DeYoung et al., *United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 36. While Christians were required to refrain from food polluted by idols, sexual immorality, the meat of strangled animals and from blood, F. F.

acceptance of the Gentiles that set Christians apart from other Jewish sects, thus breaking them away from Judaism and codifying the inclusive nature Christ intended to characterize Christianity.

Advocates of multiracial congregations contend that, once the church was established, God used its persecution to spread the Good News to the diverse peoples of the world. Following the death of Stephen, Greek-speaking Christians were persecuted and fled Jerusalem, thus bringing themselves and the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the surrounding regions where Greek culture and Gentile populations shaped daily life. As a result, we see converts from across ethnic (Acts 8:5-6) and racial lines (Acts 8:27, 36-38) entering into the Church and actualizing the inclusive nature Christ intended. This leads supporters of multiracial congregations, such as DeYmaz, to ask why the diversity seen in the early church is not modeled in the majority of congregations today.

> When we consider these early stories of conversion featuring the Samaritans, an Ethiopian, and the Roman soldier, Cornelius, they should cause us to ask, "If God himself does not show partiality in reaching out to others, why is partiality allowed to exist within the local church today?" Indeed, if God welcomes men and women of every nation, tribe, people, and tongue into his kingdom, why is it that the vast majority of churches in the United States are not likewise welcoming diverse people into their local fellowships?[43]

Bruce explains that these restrictions may have been to increase, not limit fellowship. "These requirements may have been intended to facilitate social intercourse between Jewish and Gentile Christians. Some Gentile practices were especially offensive to Jews, and if these practices were given up, Jewish Christians would feel that an obstacles in the way of table fellowship and the like with their Gentile brethren had been removed."

[43] Mark DeYmaz, *Building a Healthy Multiethnic Church: Mandate, Commitment and Practice of a Diverse Congregation* (San Francisco: Kohn Wiley and Sons, 2007), Kindle, 17.

In the midst of a growing faith, advocates hold up the Antioch church, a multiracial congregation in Syria,[44] as a successful community that should serve as an example today. This church, located in the third largest city in the Roman Empire and home to diverse peoples such as Syrians, Romans, Greeks, Arabs, Persians, Armenians, Parthians, Cappadocians, and Jews, was the first recorded community to integrate Jews and Gentiles into a single congregation. This local diversity, intensified by the city's major commercial endeavors that channeled people from all over the globe, caused notable ethnic strife. De Young et al. write that, in Antioch:

> Ethnic strife was intense. Enslaved persons composed close to one third of Antioch's population... Race riots were common because so many people of differing ethnic and cultural groups lived together in cramped, overcrowded conditions. Sociologist Rodney Stark adds that Antioch was ' a city filled with hatred and fear rooted in intense ethnic antagonisms and exacerbated by a constant stream of strangers...a city so lacking in stable networks of attachments that petty incidents could prompt mob violence.'[45]

Amongst ethnic tension "Christianity offered a new basis for social solidarity."[46] Instead of conforming to ethnic divisions, they were united by their faith.

> The Antioch congregation lived out an inclusive table fellowship that emulated the social practices of Jesus. Each person who joined the fellowship felt affirmed for the culture of his or her background. Yet each also adopted a higher calling through allegiance to Jesus Christ. Jew and Gentile continued to embrace their culture of origin but broke with certain cultural rules that inhibited their ability to live as one in Christ."[47]

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[44] Not to be confused with Pisidian Antioch, mentioned in Acts 13:13-14, 14:24.

[45] Curtiss Paul. DeYoung et al., *United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 27.

[46] Ibid., 29.

[47] Ibid., 28.

This acceptance of different cultures caused people to struggle to classify early Christians. While the Jews accepted Gentiles into their midst, they required them to conform to Jewish law and practices. Never before had any sect of Judaism allowed Gentiles to be fully engrafted into the spiritual family, not through circumcision and dietary changes, but faith. As a result, Theologian Virgilio Elizondo rightfully asserts that Christians,

> Could not be classified according to the classification categories of either the pagans or the Jews. They were both and yet they were neither the one nor the other alone. They were the same yet they lived differently. They were bound together by a new intimacy and mutual concern that went beyond normal, acceptable behavior within the empire.[48]

As a result, at Antioch followers of Christ were given the name Christian. It was their acceptance of the Gentiles that set themselves apart from the Jewish sects that had come before. Their unity amidst diversity allowed people to recognize Jesus in their midst, "just as he said he would be (Jn. 17:23)."[49] Yancey expresses the implications that this example of racial inclusion has on congregations today:

> The lesson of Acts 11 is that ministering to people of different races in other lands is not a higher priority than serving those close to us. The church at Antioch teaches us that it is important to deal with ethnic and racial segregation within our own Christian congregations if we want to be ready to reach the lost in other lands. It is at least as scripturally important to do the former as it is to do the later.[50]

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[48] Ibid., 29.

[49] Mark DeYmaz, *Building a Healthy Multiethnic Church: Mandate, Commitment and Practice of a Diverse Congregation* (San Francisco: Kohn Wiley and Sons, 2007), Kindle, 42.

[50] George Yancey, *One Body, One Spirit: Principles of Successful Multiracial Churches* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 50.

The example in Antioch spread throughout Christianity and eventually became the standard of the early church.[51] As followers of Jesus shared the good news first to the Jew and then to the Gentile,[52] they established ethnically mixed congregations in Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, and Corinth, tracing the steps of the Apostle Paul, minister to the Gentiles himself.

The Teachings of Paul

The teachings of Paul provide the most direct theological exploration of the relationship between Jews and Gentiles. Throughout his writings he reiterates, as seen in the arguments made from the time of slavery, there is no Jew or Gentile in Christ (Rom. 10:12, 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11). Rather, we are all one: "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all" (Eph. 4:4-6). Advocates of multiracial congregations believe that this unity is made possible through Jesus' reconciling work on the Cross.[53]

Ephesians 2:11-22 states that, through Christ's death on the cross, God tore down the dividing wall between Jew and Gentile and made them into one new people. This

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[51] Curtiss Paul. DeYoung et al., *United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 26.

[52] Ibid., 29. This was done, in part, strategically as Jews would have found it difficult to join an all Gentile congregation, yet Jews were accustomed to having "God-fearers," Gentiles who were interested in the Jews moral code or monotheistic faith, worshipping in their midst.

[53] Rodney M. Woo, *The Color of Church: A Biblical and Practical Paradigm for Multiracial Churches* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009), 18. This is further supported by the biblical record in Matt 27:51, documenting that, upon Jesus' death, the Curtain of the Temple that separated the people from the Holy of Holies was torn in two from top to bottom. The veil tearing from top to bottom symbolizes that God provides access to himself through faith in Jesus Christ.

spiritual unity would have been foreign to the Jew as their tradition provided strict regulations for how to interact with Gentiles that reinforced the notion that Gentiles are the "other." This spirit was embodied in the temple courts themselves as dividing walls stood to separate the courts of the Gentiles from the inner areas reserved for the Jews.[54] The concept of the dividing wall, therefore, would have provided meaningful and familiar imagery. The implication, as Woo expresses, is that, "When the believer comes into personal relationship with Jesus Christ, not only is the believer brought near to God, but also to each other" (Eph. 2:14).[55] He goes on to explain:

> When Christ abolished [the three primary walls of division or separation in human existence: race, class, and gender] they did not cease to exist. Instead they would no longer create barriers to fellowship with one another. Thus Christianity realigned the entire worldview of the lines of demarcation that separate people and races from one another.[56]

With this understanding in mind, advocates conclude that the church must continue this ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18-21) in the context of multiracial congregations that both give expression to and provide opportunities for the reconciliation made possible in Christ.

Having been unified through the reconciling work of Jesus, Christians are called to reflect their spiritual unity by functioning as a body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-30, Rom.

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[54] Ibid., 17. At the entrance of the section of the temple that was reserved for Jews there was a sign that read, "Let no one of any nation come within the fence and barrier around the Holy Place. Whosoever will be taken doing so will himself be responsible for the fact that his death will ensue.' Within the courts that Jews could visit there were further restrictions designed to exclude women, lay people, and eventually all but the High Priest, from drawing near to the Holy of Holies.

[55] Ibid., 16.

[56] Ibid., 86.

12:3-8). The body contains people of different abilities, valued for their differences, and brought together with purpose and intention to continue the work of Christ.[57] Advocates emphasize that the ideal Paul sets forth is interconnected and interdependent; the church needs one another, and they are limiting their access to assets found across racial lines if they restrict themselves to a monoracial congregation. Although the body does describe the Church at large, advocates argue that it is advantageous for Christians to engage across racial lines on the congregational level. Ireland explains that the interaction of the varied experiences and perspectives of people of different races are valuable assets to the body of Christ.

> While there is not a strong biblical support from the premise that each race has inherent gifts that are unique to that group, I can support theologically the idea that our experiences (some unique to each race) enable us to add a dimension of perspective, value, and sensitivity to the body of Christ, that may not otherwise have been gained.[58]

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[57] Derek Chinn, "A New Philosophy," in *1+1 = 1: Creating a Multiracial Church from Single Race Congregations* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012), 71-72. Quoting theologian Miroslav Volf, Dr. Derek Chinn, professor and teaching elder at a multiracial congregation in Oregon, highlights how, in the body, differences are not overlooked or blurred together, but valued in Christ: "Baptism into Christ creates a people as the differentiated body of Christ. Bodily inscribed differences are brought together, not removed. The body of Christ lives as a complex interplay of differentiated bodies - Jewish and Gentile, female and male, slave and free - of those who have partaken of Christ's sacrifice. The Pauline move is not from the particularity of the Body to the universality of the Spirit, but from separated bodies to the community of interrelated bodies - the one Body in the Spirit with many discrete members." The Body of Christ is intended by God to be diverse, united, and integrated

[58] David Ireland, *What Color Is Your God? A New Approach to Developing a Multicultural Lifestyle* (Verona, NJ: Impact Pub. House, 2000), 33. Ireland goes on to compare this to the specialized roles and qualities in the 12 tribes of Israel. Derek Chinn, "A New Philosophy," in *1+1 = 1: Creating a Multiracial Church from Single Race Congregations* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012), 71. Derek Chinn speaks of similar benefits he's seen through the merging of monoethnic congregations into a single church: "Bringing congregations together can lead to renewal - churches create a more complex local body by adding "body parts" that were missing. The "missing" gifts given for the good of the body, in 1 Cor. 12, may be discovered anew when assemblies are combined. While these spiritual gifts may already be present within a given body, their expression may be different because of race, ethnicity, and culture.

Complementing the benefits related to people's relationship with one another, Manuel Ortiz, professor and multiethnic church planter, captures well the value of racial diversity on a congregational level as it relates to one's relationship with God.

> We limit the greatness of our Lord when we know God only as a local God who speaks our language and understands our conditions alone. The multiethnic church provides us with a more comprehensive understanding of the scriptures. It takes away our haughtiness - our beliefs that we are more important and more knowledgeable than anyone else. It teaches us to learn the Word more in depth because the insights of others help us to see things that our blinders shut out before.[59]

In consideration of these dynamics, Woo goes a step further to conclude that, like a limb detached from the body deteriorates and dies, so would the body of Christ deteriorate if it neglected to engage across racial lines.[60] Therefore, an ideal context to embody and capture the spirit of our Christian unity is the multiracial church.

SUMMARY OF THE THEOLOGY SUPPORT FOR MULTIRACIAL CONGREGATIONS

Evangelical advocates of multiracial congregations provide robust biblical and theological support for the multiracial church, offering hope that the future of evangelicals' racial engagement will be brighter than its historical legacy. Although the concept of race did not exist in the Ancient Near East in the way it does today, advocates' application of biblical principles and discussion of the implications of the relationship

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[59] Manuel Ortiz, *One New People: Models for Developing a Multiethnic Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 13.

[60] Rodney M. Woo, *The Color of Church: A Biblical and Practical Paradigm for Multiracial Churches* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009), 50-51.

between Jews and Gentiles on twenty-first century race relations provide a foundation to support their ministry today.

To summarize, the argument of advocates begins in the nature of God and humanity. They highlight the unity in diversity of the trinity, the equality implied in the image of God, the equal fallenness of humanity, and the Lord's sovereignty over the development of physical diversity. They go on to explore the prophetic utterances that point to the inclusion of Gentiles and the Old Testament law that cared for non-Jews even when they were outside of Israel. At this point, advocates' discussion turns to the relationship between Jews and Gentiles as manifest in the life of Christ. Despite socio-religious division, Jesus led a radically inclusive ministry that countered the religious traditions of his day by welcoming both Jew and Gentile. He concluded his ministry with a prayer that his followers be unified and instructs that they share his message of salvation with all the people of the world. This vision was lived out in the early church that affirmed the acceptance of the Gentiles by faith, thus setting themselves apart from Jewish sects and empowering the development of multiethnic congregations. Advocates then support this lived practice through Paul's theological presentation of the reconciling work of Jesus and unity of the body of Christ. Built upon the legacy of the abolitionists and advocates of the Civil Rights Movement, these arguments present a hopeful theology for multiracial congregations today.

III. MULTIRACIAL CONGREGATIONS AS A HOPE FOR RECONCILIATION

Be it the slaves who attended church with their masters, the inclusive congregations of the Great Awakening, or the socially progressive faith communities of Civil Rights, there have been mixed race congregations throughout U.S. history.[1] These churches have been described in many ways (e.g. multicultural, multiethnic, multiracial) and have contained varying degrees of racial integration and equality. Unfortunately, too often these communities failed to further God's egalitarian vision for the body of Christ. Despite this, as chapters one and two revealed, socio-historical shifts and the biblical interpretations of advocates of twenty-first century multiracial congregations indicate that the church is turning from the racial bigotry of the last two centuries and offering hope for social change. Whether or not the biblical vision of unity in diversity is being lived out in mixed race communities today can be determined through the sociological analyses of congregational practice. This chapter explores sociological findings on multiracial congregations while focusing on the national study of Michael O. Emerson, the largest and most recent study of its kind.[2] The purpose of this exploration is to describe multiracial congregations so the reader understands the context, social forces, processes, qualities, challenges, and benefits that are present therein. Through this exploration I argue that, although difficult to establish and maintain, multiracial congregations offer hope for reconciliation within the church of the twenty-first century.

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[1] Note that, because it would be nearly impossible to know the racial composition of these historical congregations, I use the general term "mixed-race."

[2] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).

Over the last three decades, mixed-race congregations have captured the interest of sociologists, practitioners, and theologians. Books have been written that study single congregations, compare multiple communities, give practical advice on developing diversity, and provide a theological foundation thereof.[3] Until recently, however, these studies relied on techniques such as personal observation and reflection, a non-random sample of a few congregations, use of qualitative data only, or a lack of sociological analysis, all of which posed limitations to this research.[4] In 2006, Emerson concluded a seven-year, nation-wide study that was set apart from the rest. It used quantitative and qualitative data, in-depth studies and interviews, and random samples of homogeneous and multiracial congregations and congregants. As a result, unlike its predecessors, Emerson's study within itself was able to compare multiracial congregations to homogeneous congregations and paint a picture of the constituent elements and racial dynamics within these growing communities across the United States. This chapter will explore the findings of this national study while augmenting it with some of the relevant, albeit less generalizable, research that has come before.

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[3] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 9. Such studies include Ammerman and Farnsley 1997; Anderson 2004 Becker 1998; Christersen, Edwards and Emerson 2005, Davis 1980; Fong 1996; Foster 1997; Foster and Brelsford 1996; Gratton 1989 Jenkins 2003; Kujawa Holbrook 2002; Law 1993, 2000, 2002; Marti 2005; Ortiz, 1996; Parker 2005; Peart 2000; Pocock and Henriques 2002; and Rhodes 1998.

[4] Ibid., 9.

Defining Multiracial Congregations: Integrated, but Not Necessarily Equal

According to Emerson's study, multiracial congregations are defined as those in which no one racial group makes up more than 80 percent of the congregation.[5] This definition is set apart from the similar (and, at times, indiscriminately used) terms "multicultural" or "multiethnic" because it necessarily focuses on race and implies a certain potential for cross-racial interaction. For example, a church could be considered multicultural by having West Indians, Africans, and American born blacks, yet not necessarily be multiracial. Similarly, a congregation could be home to Poles and Swedes, thus containing different ethnicities, but be of the same race.[6] Emerson chooses to focus on congregations with people of different races in particular because, regardless of ethnicity, people living in the United States tend to conform to one of the nation's major racial groups. As a result, social, political, and religious differences are most pronounced between racial lines.[7] Furthermore, in addition to necessitating the presence of different races, the defining 80:20 cut off of multiracial congregations also ensures a certain amount of potential for people to interact with and be aware of those of another race. For example, 20 percent is the point of critical mass at which the presence of a group can be "felt and filtered through a system or organization."[8] It is also the composition at which,

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[5] Ibid., 85. If a congregation does not meet the 80:20 requirement to make them multiracial but is still racially mixed, Emerson calls them interracial. This term will be used by Korie Edwards with a more specific meaning and criteria in chapter 5.

[6] Ibid., 34-35.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., 35.

if people randomly interact with 20 others, there is a .99 probability of people coming into contact with someone of a different race.[9]

It is important to recognize that, because the definition of multiracial congregations is strictly quantitative, a certain quality of community is not needed for a congregation to be classified as multiracial.[10] As a result, a church can be multiracial whether the ethnic minorities are tokens in the pews or in positions of power and influence. Therefore, the character of the community depends not on its classification, but on how the different races are engaged in and influencing the life of the congregation.

There are a wide variety of types of relationships between racial groups in congregational contexts that result in varying degrees of equality. For example, Norman Anthony Peart classifies racially "inclusive" churches (not technically multiracial by Emerson's standards, but notably racially diverse) into three different models: the assimilation model, the intentional but irrational model, and the InHIMtegration model. Although all describe racially diverse congregations, the power dynamics are distinct in each case. The first classification, assimilation, welcomes people but requires them to

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[9] Ibid.

[10] Manuel Ortiz, *One New People: Models for Developing a Multiethnic Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 88-89. Compare this to Ortiz's definition of multiethnic congregations that includes both a qualitative and quantitative dimension. After analyzing a number of definitions for a multiethnic church, Ortiz concludes that, "taken together, the definitions provided both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. The quantitative dimension primarily deals with the numerical makeup of the ethnic groups that meet together...There must be sufficient representation of any particular ethnic group in order to claim that a church is multiethnic...[At the same time] the effective (multiethnic church) is more than just a variety of cultures meeting together under one roof. The qualitative dimension is essential, having to do with the life of the church as well as the organization of the ministry." Gerardo Marti, *A Mosaic of Believers: Diversity and Innovation in a Multiethnic Church* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 5, accessed March 2015, http://www.oxfordscholarship.com.ezproxy.bu.edu/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195392975.001.0001/acprof-9780195392975. Gerardo Marti, who, unlike Ortiz, published six years after Emerson's definitive study, echoes Ortiz's sentiment by defining multiracial churches as those that "successfully integrate two or more racial-ethnic groups in the same worship service."

conform the church's dominant culture and practices. The "intentional, but irrational model" genuinely seeks to represent all people in the culture of the congregation but, at the same time, in an attempt to foster unity, avoid conflict, and perhaps put the Word before the world, they do not differentiate on the basis of race. As a result, while there is an appearance of unity, underlying prejudices and divisions remain unaddressed. The final InHIMtegration model accepts, represents, and accommodates the culture all people while recognizing differences and highlighting unity in Christ.[11] Another example is found in the work of Charles Foster who identifies four practices of negotiating power dynamics across cultures that result in distinct relationships between cultural groups that I will explore in greater detail here.[12]

The first type of relationship is that of sponsoring congregations where two separate churches of different cultures share the same building. This facilitates living *alongside* one another, but falls short of regular interaction. Any interaction that does occur is dominated by the sponsoring culture and tends to be related to the logistics of sharing space, not ministry and faith.[13] Furthermore, while each congregation engages in its own culture, there is a clear and unquestioned hierarchical relationship between the "sponsoring" and "nesting" communities.[14] The second set of practices that shapes relational dynamics are seen in transitioning congregations. These are churches that strive

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[11] Norman A. Peart, *Separate No More: Understanding and Developing Racial Reconciliation in Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 135-142.

[12] Charles R. Foster, *Embracing Diversity: Leadership in Multicultural Congregations* (Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 1997), 39-47.

[13] Ibid., 40.

[14] Ibid., 40-41.

to maintain their institutional viability and cultural perspectives in the midst of changing neighborhood demographics. These congregations see themselves as powerless in the midst of larger cultural change, assume that people prefer homogeneous congregations, and, generally, the former culture maintains dominance until the transition to a different culture has been made complete.[15] Therefore, "transitional congregations are multicultural only in the sense that for a time people from different cultural heritages coexist while they negotiate the transfer of power from one group to another."[16] The third set of practices is seen in an assimilating congregation. In these churches people of all races are welcome, but the cultural distinctives of the diverse peoples are not embraced. People are accepted personally, but suppressed culturally.[17] The fourth and final set of relationships is represented in what Foster calls the multicultural congregation. Here, cultural differences do not remain stumbling blocks; rather they are engaged and often embraced as resources to develop a new type of community. "The multicultural congregation...embodies the interplay of diverse ways of speaking, thinking, acting and believing deeply embedded in the particular cultural traditions of members...It emphasizes the interdependence of culture in the life and work of the congregation rather than dominance of one culture over the others."[18] It is important to note that, while any of Peart or Foster's models *could* be classified as multiracial if their composition met the requirements of Emerson's defining 80:20 divide, only the inHIMtegration and

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[15] Ibid., 42-43.

[16] Ibid., 43.

[17] Ibid., 45.

[18] Ibid., 47.

multicultural models reflect the biblical ideal. Again, as Peart's and Foster's distinctions demonstrate, because multiracial congregations are defined quantitatively and not qualitatively, a multiracial congregation does not necessarily reflect a racially egalitarian community.

The quality of a community will be shaped in part by why and how a congregation became multiracial, the presence of stabilizing and destabilizing forces, where a church is in its process of racial integration, and the application or lack of application of certain principles that describe the practice of a successfully integrated multiracial church. Regardless of the quality of a particular community however, multiracial congregations in general have been shown to develop the perspectives and relationships that can foster reconciliation. In the following section, I will begin to explore the variables that shape the quality of community in a multiracial congregation by first identifying the dynamics that influence whether or not a multiracial congregation forms. This will be followed by a section on how multiracial congregations contribute to racial reconciliation before concluding with a further exploration of the remaining and aforementioned dynamics that shape the quality of cross-racial relationships in congregational life. In order to argue effectively that multiracial congregations are a source of hope, there must be an honest presentation of both the dynamics that foster racial reconciliation in general, as well as the odds and obstacles that each multiracial church needs to navigate to become a racially egalitarian community.

BECOMING A MULTIRACIAL CHURCH

What Are The Chances of That?

Making up only 13 percent of American congregations, multiracial communities are few and far between. This is due in part to how, aside from the challenges of maintaining them, multiracial congregations are hard to establish in the first place. Emerson has identified some contextual factors that influence the likelihood of the development of multiracial congregations that help to explain why they are rare. First, the size of a congregation's tradition[19] has a negative correlation with the number of multiracial congregations therein. In short, the larger a tradition is, the less likely its congregations are to be racially integrated[20]

This is because individuals tend to congregate with people like themselves and the more people there are the more likely they will be able to compose homogeneous congregations. This is illustrated in the fact that Protestants, the largest surveyed group, have the lowest percentage of multiracial churches, followed, in correlation with size, by Catholics[21] and "non-Christians."[22] Therefore, the bigger tradition is not better for the

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[19] i.e. the number of people in a the tradition of which a congregation is a part.

[20] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 38.

[21] Emerson seems to speak of Catholics generally and not make distinctions along ethnic lines. Because there are so few black Catholics, I estimate that this number would decrease if he were looking at predominantly black and white (interracial, see Ch. 5) congregations.

[22] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 39-40. The exception to the correlation between multiracial congregations and size is that, within Protestants, theologically conservative churches have more multiracial congregations than mainline churches, even though the former group is larger than the later.

formation of multiracial congregations. Rather, it provides the options that allow people to comfortably worship within their own racial group.

Next, in order for a congregation to become racially diverse they must have access to a racially diverse population within their faith tradition. This variable is what Emerson calls "opportunity." [23] Unfortunately, due to the segregation within religious traditions, there is very little "opportunity." According to the index of dissimilarity,[24] all religious traditions are classified as "highly segregated."[25] Catholicism, mainline, and conservative Protestant traditions are considered to be "hyper-segregated."[26] Of these three, the Catholics are the least segregated and the conservative Protestants are the most segregated, indicating that Catholics and mainline traditions are more likely to become multiracial than conservative Protestants. Historically, ratings that approach the .9 index value that is the case for these hyper-segregated traditions "could usually only be achieved through laws, discriminatory lending and real estate procedures, threats and

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[23] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 40.

[24] Ibid., 40. The index of dissimilarity measures opportunity by considering "the percentage of one racial group or the other that would have to switch congregations to end segregation." It "is not influenced by the diversity within faith traditions. It simply asks how diverse the congregations within the faith tradition are compared to the racial diversity of the entire faith tradition."

[25] Ibid., 39-40. According to the indexes of dissimilarity, a congregation that would have to switch out over 60 percent of any given race is considered to be "highly segregated."

[26] Ibid., 41. These congregations would need to switch out 81 percent, 85 percent and 91 percent of their congregants respectively to end segregation. This means that Catholic churches have 4 percent more opportunity to become multiracial than mainline churches and mainline churches have 6 percent more opportunity than conservative Protestants. Increased opportunity, again, increases the likelihood of congregations from within that tradition becoming multiracial.

other racially unequal practices."[27] Despite this, such an appalling level of division appears to occur "naturally" within the Christian church, thus leaving very little opportunity for the development of multiracial congregations.

Although limitations are posed by the obstacles related to a tradition's size and lack of "opportunity," other areas in which one might expect resistance do not present as much of a challenge as one may think. More specifically, Emerson's research reveals that, contrary to expectations, the racial diversity of the neighborhood a congregation is in does not determine a congregation's racial make-up.[28] While it is a factor, not all diverse neighborhoods have multiracial churches and not all multiracial churches are in diverse neighborhoods. As a matter of fact, the majority of congregations are substantially less diverse than their neighborhoods.[29] White churches tended to be only one fourth as diverse as their neighborhoods and black churches were even less diverse than that. Multiracial congregations, however, tend to be 40 percent *more* diverse than the neighborhood around them.[30] Therefore, congregations cannot claim that they are not diverse on account of a lack of racial diversity in their neighborhood,[31] (though I would

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[27] Ibid. I believe an exception to this would be if people were in a community where no people of other races were present. In such a case, institutions would be almost exclusively one race, but it would be because of lack of diversity, not deliberate segregation.

[28] Ibid., 43. A neighborhood is measured as a census tract, about a 10-minute drive from the church. Emerson believes that this is a better indicator of who attends a church than the geographical boundaries of the neighborhood.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid., 44.

[31] Ibid., 45. "About 13 percent of multiracial congregations are in neighborhoods that are 95 percent or more white; about one-quarter are in neighborhoods that are 85 percent or more white; 5 percent

argue that lack of neighborhood diversity would have more of an impact on churches whose vision includes reaching their neighborhood in particular). While helpful, cultural variation is neither necessary nor sufficient to develop and maintain a multiracial congregation.[32] Rather, people can come from outside of a neighborhood to make a congregation diverse.[33]

Other factors that predict the level of racial diversity within a congregation are worship style, age, and geographic setting. After running a multivariate analysis that allowed Emerson to consider a variety of factors simultaneously and determine which ones really made a difference in relation to others, it was found that multiracial congregations tend to have a more charismatic worship style (regardless of tradition),[34] be younger (the presence of people over the age of 60 was associated with less racial

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are in majority black neighborhoods and an additional 15 percent are in majority Latino neighborhoods. Using the general heterogeneity index of the neighborhoods in which multiracial congregations are located, 15 percent of these congregations are located in neighborhoods with racial diversity as limited as those found in the average neighborhood of white congregations."

[32] Ibid.

[33] Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21st-century Model for Church and Ministry Leaders*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013), pg. #. A survey was conducted by Dr. Win Arn that discovered that "20 percent of people five from a few to 5 minutes to get to church. Forty percent will drive from 6 to 15 minutes. 23 percent will drive from 16-25 minutes, and 17 percent will drive more than 25 minutes. Thus most (83 percent) will drive up to but not beyond 25 minutes to get to church."

[34] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006),., 47, 48, 50. Charismatic worship style is operationalized by combining four indicators: saying "amen"; raising hands; jumping, shouting, or dancing spontaneously in the worship service during the last week; and speaking in tongues in the last twelve months. Interestingly, despite the expectations, Pentecostal churches are no more likely to become multiracial and they are actually less likely than mainline Protestants to be so, possibly due in fact to the part that the two largest denominations within the Pentecostal tradition, the Assemblies of God and the Church of God in Christ, are racially segregated.

diversity),[35] and be found in urban areas.[36] Contrary to the belief that class similarities are needed to bring racially diverse people together, it was found that multiracial congregations are more economically diverse as well.[37] Surprisingly, elements that did not predict whether or not a congregation is multiracial include theology, the percentage of immigrants in a community, and region of the country.[38] It is important to note that, by theology, Emerson means where a congregation lies on the theological spectrum, ranging from theologically conservative to theologically liberal.[39] His study did not ask questions about people's theology specifically nor how it informs their view of diversity.[40] In light of the last chapter, I hypothesize that if people were to be asked about their theology as it relates to race, there would be a positive correlation between congregations who hold beliefs similar to those expressed in chapter two and those who practice more egalitarian

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[35] Ibid., 121. Specifically, on average, whites in multiracial congregations are younger than whites in uniracial congregations and only half of the percentage of white seniors found in uniracial congregations attend multiracial congregations. Average age differences do not exist between people of color in uniracial or multiracial congregations.

[36] Ibid., 50-51.

[37] Ibid., 51, 123. Interestingly, whites who attend multiracial congregations are either more likely to be "highly educated and committed to multiracial congregations for ideological reasons," or poorer whites who attend the congregation due in part to their geographical proximity or social ties to the congregation.

[38] Ibid., 50-52.

[39] Penny Edgell Becker, "Making Inclusive Communities: Congregations and the "Problem" of Race," *Social Problems* 45, no. 4 (1998): 452, 464, 467, accessed February 2015, www.jstor/stable/3097207. This is affirmed in Penny Edgell Becker's study of two congregations that, though on opposite sides of the theological spectrum, utilized similar strategies of racial integration in response to changing demographics within their community to develop successful multiracial congregations.

[40] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 234.

power dynamics. This is supported by the fact that, as readers will see, having such a theology serves to stabilize racially integrated religious organizations.

Emerson concludes his discussion of formative contextual factors by saying that elements like religious tradition, congregational characteristics, and neighborhood diversity shape and help account for nearly one half of the variation in the level of racial diversity in a congregation. He transitions by stating that the other half can be explained by the primary impetus for becoming multiracial and the environment from which a congregation draws their minority population.[41] These two factors are closely related to how a multiracial congregation is developed and are combined to help identify different "founding types" that in turn shape the congregation's chances for long term "survivability." In the following section, I will describe the three impetuses and environments that shape multiracial churches and how these contribute to a congregation's future.

The Beginning

The way in which a multiracial congregation is founded impacts how likely it is to remain multiracial. The formation of a multiracial congregation is first shaped by what motivates a church to become more diverse. Emerson identifies three primary impetuses for becoming multiracial:[42]

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[41] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 52. By "minority population" it refers to those who are not a part of the racial majority of a particular congregation.

[42] Ibid., 53-54.

1) Mission: The goal of becoming multiracial is directly or indirectly incorporated into the mission of the church.
2) Resource Calculation: A need for new resources leads a congregation to explore new opportunities so they can meet their needs. This exploration contributes to increased diversity.[43]
3) External Authority Structure: Congregations are told to become multiracial in order to meet denominational goals.

In order for these impetuses to produce a multiracial congregation there must be "an available population of racially different persons from which to draw new members - that is, there must be population opportunity."[44] Although such people do not have to come from the *neighborhood*, if racial diversity is not present within a reasonable radius, a multiracial congregation cannot be formed. This may be the case, for example, in a rural community or exclusive suburb. The next factor in forming multiracial congregations, therefore, considers the drawing in of racially different members. This generally happens through one of three ways:[45]

1) Proximity: People come from the surrounding neighborhood, perhaps as the result of community outreach.

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[43] Becker, Penny Edgell. "Making Inclusive Communities: Congregations and the "Problem" of Race." *Social Problems* 45, no. 4 (1998). Accessed February 2015. www.jstor/stable/3097207. An example of two such congregations, City Baptist and Good Shepard Lutheran Church in Oak Park, IL, can be found in Penny Edgell Becker's Study *Making Inclusive Communities: Congregations and the "Problem" of Race*.

[44] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 54.

[45] Ibid., 54-55.

2) Culture and Purpose: People are attracted to the culture and purpose of the congregation. They may have become aware of it through evangelization conducted by the congregation that reached out to people beyond the immediate neighborhood.
3) Preexisting Organizational Packages: In this case, two existing congregations merge, thus gaining an increase of membership. Unlike with the other means, outreach is not a factor.

In reflecting upon these impetuses and means, it should be noted that they bear resemblance to the purposes of multiethnic church development identified by Ortiz in a 1994 study on multiracial congregations.[46] These purposes are sharing the good news with all people, correcting injustices through pursuit of the biblical ideal, responding to the movement of the Holy Spirit, and reacting to changing demographics.[47] Although Emerson and Ortiz's findings are notably different in some regards, the elements of having a multiethnic vision, associated theological ideals, and reaching out to the local community can be seen in both studies.

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[46] Manuel Ortiz, *One New People: Models for Developing a Multiethnic Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 15-16. This study, sponsored by the Association of Theological Schools, had three primary components that share both similarities and differences to Emerson's approach. The first component of the study involved Ortiz surveying 201 denominational executives and missions personnel, seminary professors teaching practical theology and missions, and personal contacts about how they would define multiethnic ministry and what they would recommend as models to further investigate. The second component examined current immigration flows, their composition, and their destinations using 1990 census data and sociological studies. The third component involved reviewing the literature on multiracial congregations with a primary focus on missions and local church case studies. From this material Ortiz selected10 multiethnic and/or multi-congregational churches that he studied through on-site interaction and examination, phone and on-site interviews, and the review of literature that related to the churches he evaluated.

[47] Manuel Ortiz, *One New People: Models for Developing a Multiethnic Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 44-58.

Emerson concludes that the motivation for developing a multiracial congregation and the means of attracting diverse members combine to create seven types of congregations.[48] For a list of these multiracial congregation types, organized by the primary impetus, see the appendix. The type of congregation a multiracial church is contributes to the likeliness of it remaining multiracial. For example, congregation types that were formed with a missions impetus are more likely to be sustainable. The opposite is true for those that were formed by external authorities.[49] Closely related to this is the fact that churches in which change originates from within the congregation are more likely to remain multiracial than those from whom change originates partially or completely from without.[50] Congregations that formed through the merger of two or more congregations will encounter significant difficulties as well. In addition, in light of changing neighborhood dynamics, churches are more likely to remain multiracial if they draw members from broader geographic areas. If a congregation only relies on the immediate neighborhood, its diversity will only last as long as the diversity of the neighborhood itself.[51] Therefore, while there are many ways that a multiracial congregation can be formed, some motivations and methods that contribute to their

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[48] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 56-61.

[49] Ibid., 61.

[50] Ibid., 61-62. More specifically, to name the categories themselves: "congregations that become multiracial out of their sense of mission (internal locus) will, on average, be more likely to sustain their multiracial composition than those that become so out of resource calculation (a mix of internal and external locus), which in turn will be more likely to sustain their multiracial compositions than those that become so from an outside authority structure (external locus)."

[51] Ibid., 62.

development, such as limited resources, forced merger, or only reaching out to the immediate neighborhood, pose a threat to multiracial congregations' long-term success.

With that having been said, forming multiracial congregations is not impossible. In 2006, when Emerson's study was published in *People of the Dream*, he estimated that 7 percent of congregations were multiracial based on data from a 1998 survey.[52] In an article published in 2013, however, he reports that in 2010, 13.7 percent of the over 350,000[53] congregations in the United States were multiracial.[54] This near doubling of multiracial congregations in twelve years indicates that the obstacles Emerson identified need not hinder the growth of multiracial congregations. While developing and maintaining these communities is not easy, the fact that they are a growing element of the American religious landscape gives us reason to believe that the perspectives and relationships transformed through these communities offer hope for racial reconciliation.

How Multiracial Congregations Contribute to Racial Reconciliation

The Draw of Diversity

As previously established, a congregation becoming multiracial is dependent upon it attracting racially different individuals. Exploring why people are attracted to multiracial congregations generally, and to the diversity of these communities in particular, begins to shed light on the benefits of multiracial congregations. To explore

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[52] Ibid., 36.

[53] "Fast Facts about American Religion," Fast Facts about American Religion, How Many Religious Congregations Are There in the United States?, accessed March 10, 2015, http://hirr.hartsem.edu/research/fastfacts/fast_facts. html#numcong.

[54] Michael O. Emerson, "A New Day for Multiracial Congregations," *Reflections: A Magazine of Theological and Ethical Inquiry*, Spring 2013, accessed December 9, 2013, http://reflections.yale.edu/article/future-race/new-day-multiracial-congregations.

the issue of what attracts people, Emerson focused on Wilcrest Baptist Church, one of the nations' most diverse congregations pastored (at the time of the study)[55] by Rodney Woo in Houston, Texas.[56] While not necessarily generalizable by virtue of the fact that Wilcrest was exceptionally, Emerson’s insights help readers understand the dynamics of one successful multiracial congregation on an in-depth level.

When people were asked why they were drawn to Wilcrest, answers given ranged from worship (40 percent), personal relationships (23 percent), location (22 percent), diversity (18 percent), friendliness (15 percent), and programs (11 percent). Among people of all races, worship was the most common answer given, with worship being understood as including the music, preaching, and pastor.[57] As Nancy Ammerman's book, *Pillars of Faith* reveals, worship is the number one function of religious congregations. It is what makes congregations unique and draws people in.[58] At Wilcrest, worship is diversified through a variety of music styles, media such as skits and videos, testimonies,

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[55] "Staff," Wilcrest Baptist Church, accessed March 10, 2015, http://www.wilcrestbaptist.org/. In 2011, Jonathan Williams became the Sr. Pastor at Wilcrest Baptist church and he still serves in this position today.

[56] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 36-37. On the heterogeneity index, .5 indicates substantial racial diversity. .5 ("the probability that any two randomly selected people are racially different" (36)) indicates that 50 percent of the congregation is one race and 50 percent of the congregation is another. As a point of comparison, public schools in the United States, at the time of Emerson's writing (2006), had a heterogeneity index of .48. Only 2.5 percent of congregations in the U.S have heterogeneity indexes above .5 as the mean of racial diversity in the United States is .08 and the median is .02. Wilcrest has a heterogeneity index of .7, which is "impressively racially diverse and highly unusual among congregations" (37).

[57] Ibid. 106.

[58] Ibid.

baby dedications, and altered preaching styles.[59] The second and third most common reasons given for being drawn to Wilcrest were personal relationships and location, followed by the interest of this paper: diversity.

Upon further research, Emerson found that four elements attracted people to diversity: curiosity, consistency, acceptance, and rise of status.[60] The implied presence of these elements in particular begin to illuminate the value of the diversity in multiracial congregations. While it is true that it is a minority of people who are originally attracted by a multiracial congregation's diversity, there is evidence that people who stay in multiracial congregations often do so on account of such diversity.[61] There is something valuable in diversity; something that attracts, something that transforms, something that lays the foundation for racial reconciliation. Consider for example, curiosity. Even if people were not initially interested in diversity, it piques their interest when they see people of different racial groups, groups that may be unlikely to interact voluntarily in larger society, worshiping together. One woman, after having been invited by her friend, was so intrigued by the multifarious community that she returned on account of it:

> It just blew me away to see that worship service. There were Africans with their traditional clothing, youth with hip hop clothing, Mexicans, whites, South Americans, Asians, American blacks, blacks from the Caribbean and they were all speaking English with accents or in their native language. You know, what really caught my attention was seeing this mass of people talk to each other as if they

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[59] Ibid., 107.

[60] Ibid., 108.

[61] Ibid., 112.

> had all grown up together. I had to come back to see what was goin' on here. I had never seen anything like it before.[62]

While at first glance, this may not seem like a significant benefit, I argue that it is valuable in that it can spark peoples' imaginations. It helps them to see first-hand that it is possible to maintain a voluntary interracial community with a measure of equality. It is this thought, planted in the mind, that can grow to challenge prevailing assumptions. This curiosity that can lead people to consider what is possible and become dissatisfied with the status quo. As people entertain this thought they become more aware of their race and the racialized world around them. Although only an initial step, a single step has the potential to begin a transformative journey.

People who experienced diversity in other areas of their life were attracted to Wilcrest because they sought to be consistent in their lifestyle and engage diversity in the religious sphere. For example, people who live in diverse neighborhoods or encounter diversity on their job may want this dynamic to extend into their weekly worship. These individuals coming to Wilcrest are what Emerson calls sixth Americans. When immigrants come to the United States with a particular nationality and associated culture, overtime they tend to conform to one of the five major racial groups as a means of adapting to social expectations and to receive the associated benefits.[63] Sixth Americans, on the other hand, are those who, although part of one of the five races, do not conform to normal social patterns, but instead operate outside of their race in most social situations.

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[62] Ibid., 109.

[63] Ibid., 99.

Their primary relationships are socially diverse. As a result, Emerson explains, for sixth Americans, attending a multiracial congregation is "a natural extension of how they live their lives."[64]

The presence of sixth Americans is valuable because such people, consciously or not, are modeling to an extent Jesus' example of engaging diversity. They have the potential to provide others in the congregation, some who may not be attracted by, directly interested in, or holistically living out diversity, with real-life examples of what this looks like in practice. They also demonstrate how diversity can be a part of people's public (i.e. work) and private lives (e.g. an area of life, like faith, that an individual chooses voluntarily). With these exemplars, congregants move from imagining possibilities to seeing them in action. Similarly, by engaging diversity in a faith community, exemplars may learn not only how their preferences have foundations in the faith, but how to engage diversity more genuinely and intimately.

The third reason people came to Wilcrest was because they are looking for acceptance. This is especially true for those from other countries who affirm that, in multiracial congregations, they are more likely to be accepted as they are. According to Woo:

> [Immigrants] communicate to me that they feel accepted as they are. The congregation does not ask them to assimilate into a dominant culture, but rather wants to celebrate and learn from their cultural backgrounds. Worship is enriched in this acceptance. I have been told that we communicate acceptance in many ways, from reading scripture and praying in multiple languages, to have a

[64] Ibid., 109.

> diversity of music, translating our services into Spanish, and trips to [immigrants] home countries in which we ask them to lead.[65]

This same sense of acceptance can extend to non-immigrants under different circumstances; people may feel accepted in a multiracial context where, in other areas of society, they are not. For example, people who have been divorced, are single parents, alcoholics, drug addicted, released inmates or come from neglectful or broken homes, may feel that, if a congregation can accept people of other races, they might be open enough to accept them.[66] Woo explains that he sees this broader acceptance as a natural extension of the church's commitment to welcome people of every race.

> As a congregation, it is difficult to maintain integrity if we accept all races and cultures, but dismiss others who come to the church with their lives fragmented and in need of God's grace. Acceptance of individuals who are different, then, becomes a permeating norm of our multiracial congregation. We do not stop believing in right and wrong. Rather we accept that we are all fallen people who need the support of each other and of God to grow.[67]

The fact that people are drawn by acceptance implies that it is demonstrated in this exemplary congregation. This is significant because, while interactions across racial lines can be intimidating and require great vulnerability, this finding suggests that, in healthy congregations, the risk of interracial engagement is accompanied by an encouraging measure of safety. This safety has the potential to create a space for people to explore and be themselves. Furthermore, in this environment of acceptance, it is possible for people to learn that they, as racialized beings, are and can be

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[65] Ibid..

[66] Ibid.,

[67] Ibid.

accepted. There is also the potential for people, through others, to encounter the grace and radical inclusiveness of Jesus. There is the potential for humanization and life.

The final reason people are attracted to Wilcrest is because attending an interracial congregation can provide an increase in economic or social status. Especially those adjusting to a new country or region may find that attending a multiracial congregation empowers them to develop their connections, gain access to resources, and enhance their educational or employment opportunities in a way that is not otherwise easy to do.[68] For example, at Wilcrest, a professor used his connections to help people continue their education and a medical doctor helped someone receive treatment that they would have otherwise not known how to get. Others have taught English classes through the congregation and helped non-native speakers navigate social systems. Furthermore, when immigrants lead mission trips to their home countries they give white people the gift of learning what it is like to not be in the racial majority or have social control. Emerson concludes by saying that this rise in status works to not only help those who were looking for it, but benefits other members of the congregation as well.[69] Social capital as a benefit will be addressed more independently (and a bit more abstractly) below, but for now let it suffice to say that it provides hope for personal and communal improvement.

Having explored why people are drawn to diversity it is important to note that, while many people *come* to multiracial congregations, others were a part of a

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[68] Ibid., 110.

[69] Ibid.

congregation *before* it became multiracial and are there because they chose to stay. Emerson's survey reveals that this is true for a little less than half of whites, just under a third of blacks, and a few Hispanics and Asians.[70] It was these people who, although likely not sixth Americans at the time of the church's racial transition, did not leave their congregation and adapted to the change. In doing so, many developed new relationships and worldviews. One Asian woman from Southern California shares about her experience attending a church that changed from being primarily Korean to multiracial:

> I didn't want our church to change. I liked that it was Korean. I felt safe, comfortable. But despite my thoughts, it did change. I am so thankful, because I have changed, for the better. I cannot believe how I used to think. I didn't know what I was missing. I have so many new friends that I never would have had, and I see a God who is wider and higher and deeper and more powerful than I ever thought was possible.[71]

Here we see someone initially resistant to change who was transformed through a multiracial congregation. The hope in diversity provides fertile ground for racial exploration and reflection and leads the way for more concrete transformations. Such transformations include increased diversity in relationships, changed social and political perspectives, preference for genuine integration, and increased social capital.

The Increase of Diverse Relationships on All Levels of Intimacy

Multiracial congregations offer hope for racial reconciliation because they have been shown to increase the level of diversity of people's relationships on all levels of intimacy. Those who attend multiethnic congregations have significantly more diverse

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[70] Ibid., 111.

[71] Ibid.

relationships in the category of spouse, best friends, church friends, general friends, and social networks compared to people who attend uniracial congregations or do not attend a congregation at all.[72] For example, 92 percent and 98 percent of those who attend uniracial congregations or no congregations respectively are married to a person of the same race. This is the case for only 73 percent of married couples in multiracial congregations.[73] Similarly, 56 percent of people who attend multiracial congregations say that their two closest friends are of the same race. This is a significant difference compared to the 88 percent of people who made this claim in uniracial congregations and the 78 percent of people who do not attend.[74] Furthermore, people not only have more diverse relationships *when in* multiracial congregations, but as they attend more multiracial congregations the diversity of their social network continues to increase.[75] Therefore, people who are attending their second multiracial congregation have more diverse relationships than those who are attending their first.[76] As Emerson went on to explore less intimate relationships he found that, while 86 percent of people in

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[72] Ibid., 95-98.

[73] Ibid., 96.

[74] Ibid., 96-97.

[75] Ibid., 97-98.

[76] Ibid., 98, 218-219. To copy Emerson's explanatory footnote #27, "For example, 84 percent of people who have never been in an interracial congregation say that all or most of their friends are the same race as them. For those who have been in an interracial congregation in the past but are not currently, this percentage drops from 84 to 64. For those currently in an interracial congregation, but had not been in one before, the percentage saying that all or most of their friends are of the same race as them drops further to 44. And for those in an interracial congregation now and in the past, only 25 percent say that all or most of their friends are of the same race" (218). Note that Emerson does not mention the length of time people were at any given multiracial congregation, though it does appear as if he has collected data that may allow him to conduct this analysis (218-219).

homogeneous congregations say that their circle of friends within their congregation are all or mostly of the same race, this is true for only 25 percent of those in their multiracial counterpart. Although the lack of multifarious relationships in uniracial congregations are naturally shaped by the dearth of racially different people, the diverse relationships present in multiracial congregations cannot be explained by increased diversity within itself.[77] Emerson argues that, as with integrated schools, people can be around those of different racial groups yet not necessarily become friends with them. These notably different relational trends continue for a general circle of friends and one's social networks. Emerson summarizes, "In short, on any ring of social ties, people in mixed-race congregations are, on average, considerably different from other Americans."[78] Furthermore, these differences are true for blacks, whites, Asians, and Latinos (there wasn't enough data to test Native Americans), with the greatest increase of diversity in relationships among whites.[79] These changes in diverse social networks speak powerfully to the potential that multiracial congregations have to transform one's relationships.

With that having been said, it must be acknowledged that, although there is a correlation between attending multiracial congregations and having diverse social

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[77] Ibid., 97.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid., 97, 102. With that having been said, it is interesting that the diversity of the relationships of white people increased much more than the same factor in non-white people. For example, 42 percent of white respondents said that *most or all* of the racial diversity within their friendships came after they began attending a multiracial church. This is much higher than the 27 percent of African American and Latino respondents and 14 percent of Asian Americans who agreed to the same statement. Emerson believes that this reflects racial opportunity and the fact that whites, being the majority, have the most opportunity to live their life in a segregated fashion if they choose whereas people of color are less likely to have this option.

networks, when exploring causation, evidence supports that diverse friendships in the lives of those who attend multiracial churches came both before *and* after attending such a congregation. Most people started with *some* multiracial relationships and then these relationships increased after they began attending.[80] Regardless of one's race, people had more diverse relationships after attending a multiracial congregation. Specifically, more than 8 out of 10 people said that at least some of their relationships with people across racial lines were developed after coming to a multiracial congregation.[81] Both past experience and current participation in multiracial congregations may have contributed to this.[82] On the other hand, people in multiracial congregations are more likely to have had exposure to multiracial community,[83] *may* have had more diverse social ties than average before entering into a multiracial congregation. However, when they joined a multiracial congregation their number of diverse relationships began to increase all the more.[84]

Regardless, Emerson concludes (and I affirm) that people who attend multiracial congregations "appeared to be a group of Americans different from the others. On almost

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[80] Ibid., 101.

[81] Ibid., 102.

[82] Ibid., 101-103.

[83] Ibid., 90. People are more likely to attend a multiracial congregation if they have a measure of exposure to a multiracial community. For example, some factors that generally increase all people's likelihood of attending a multiracial congregation include being in an interracial marriage, currently living in an interracial neighborhood, or being part of a multiracial congregation in the past. Whites' chances were increased if they lived in an interracial neighborhood in the past or if they attended an interracial school when they were younger. Non-whites were more likely to attend a multiracial congregation if they were of a higher socioeconomic status and less likely if they are immigrants or from the American South. This last example is related in part to the social capital non-whites receive from attending a multiracial congregation.

[84] Ibid., 103.

any and every measure of racial diversity in social relations, they are unique for their diversity."[85] People who attend multiracial congregations, Emerson argues, are primarily sixth Americans. Contrary to those who conform to their racial category and live within the confines of their own race, sixth Americans counter this tendency. They do not live in a "racially homogeneous world with some diversity sprinkled in. [Their] world is a racially diverse world with some homogeneity sprinkled in."[86] In essence, due in part to sixth American's participation in multiracial congregations, they live a counter-cultural paradigm that challenges the status quo. In doing so, they not only transform their own relationships, but make strides to challenge the path of least resistance.[87] In producing such people, multiracial congregations are forming individuals who are taking necessary steps towards racial reconciliation.

Transforming Social and Political Views on Issues Related to Race

The development of diverse relationships is accompanied by the transformation of race-related social and political views that have the potential to facilitate racial reconciliation. Having compared whites and non-whites in uniracial and multiracial congregations on 36 measures of attitudes related to social and political issues, Emerson found that, while there was a remarkable amount of similarity overall, differences existed, not surprisingly, in issues related to race and immigration. Compared to whites in uniracial congregations, whites in their interracial counterpart are...

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[85] Ibid., 98.

[86] Ibid., 99.

[87] See Ch. 5, pg. 240.

> less supportive of the statement that the number of immigrants should be reduced, less supportive of the statement that there is too much talk today in the United States about racial issues, less likely to be upset if there child were to marry someone of another race, and less likely to prefer living in a neighborhood that is 75 percent their own race and 25 percent of other racial groups.[88]

Non-whites, on the other hand, are "more supportive of the statement that religious congregations should actively seek to become racially integrated than those in uniracial congregations, and like whites, less likely to prefer living in a majority 'own race' neighborhood."[89] In alignment with Asians and Latinos (who would generally affirm this regardless of congregational context), compared to blacks in uniracial congregations, blacks in multiracial congregations are also less supportive of the statement that the number of immigrants should be reduced.[90]

In addition, despite the deeply engrained individualistic perspective of white evangelicals,[91] whites who attend multiracial congregations are less likely to believe that the best way to improve the United States is to change individuals.[92] Related to this, Edwards affirms that whites who attend interracial congregations are more likely to recognize racial inequality, the social and systemic causes thereof, and be more supportive of racial equality.[93] One element that remained the same between whites from

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[88] Ibid., 125.

[89] Ibid., 127.

[90] Ibid.

[91] See chapter 5, pg. 237 for more information.

[92] Ibid. 127.

[93] Korie L. Edwards, *The Elusive Dream: The Power of Race in Interracial Churches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 99.

multiracial and uniracial congregations, however, is their lack of support of affirmative action policies.[94] It would seem as if, despite their more liberal social and political views, even whites from multiracial congregations are hesitant to give up their privilege so a person of color can be given an equal chance.

Overall, these transformed perspectives indicate that people who attend multiracial congregations are coming to realizations that counter deeply rooted beliefs that oppose racial reconciliation and providing people with the knowledge needed to cooperate across racial lines.[95] As with the increased diversity in relationships, the question becomes, however, "does the positive correlation between attending a multiracial congregation and more liberal social and political views imply causation?" Does attending a multiracial congregation shape people's views, or are people with these views more likely to attend a multiracial congregation? As with the question of social networks, the answer is both. Some people hold these attitudes before they come and others' perspectives are transformed through their participation.[96]

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[94] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 128.

[95] Megan E. Footit, *Transforming Perspectives: Teaching Unto Cross-Cultural Engagement and Cooperation in the Body of Christ*, Unpublished Research Paper (2012), 14 -18. In an unpublished paper I wrote in 2012, I interviewed thirteen practitioners in multiracial ministry to better understand how the church could foster transformation unto cooperation across ethnic lines. When I asked them what material they feel needs to be communicated in order to foster such cooperation they responded with the following: 1) A clear definition of the goal that people seek 2) the biblical mandate for Christian unity 3) the necessity of broadening one's perspective 4) and the reality of the long and difficult journey towards reconciliation.

[96] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006),127.

Developing a Preference for Authentic Integration

One perspective that is particularly problematic within race relations in the United States extends beyond how people view race to expectations they have for the racial other. Too often, whites especially expect people from other cultures to give up their culture and assimilate to their norms.[97] Multiracial congregations offer great hope regarding this issue. Emerson's data supports that those who attend multiracial congregations for two or more years are less likely to promote assimilation within their own congregation. This is true of whites and non-whites alike.[98] In a nationwide random sample and through personal interviews, people were posed with the following question:[99]

> A) Some people say that we are better off if the races maintain their cultural uniqueness, even if we have limited personal relationships between races.
> B) Others say that we should create a common culture and close interracial friendships, even though the races may lose their cultural uniqueness.
>
> Which one do you prefer?

If people interviewed on the phone said that they fell somewhere in the middle (14 percent did), they were offered the following response as well:

> Do you lean more towards the first option, the second option, or are you right in the middle?[100]

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[97] See Ch. 5, pgs. 231-232 to learn more about white normativity.

[98] Ibid., 115.

[99] Ibid., 114.

[100] Ibid., 115-116.

Emerson explains that those who support cultural pluralism usually prefer the first option (A). The opposite (B) is the case for those who advocate for assimilation. Although the interracial relationships found in multiracial congregations may lead one to expect that members thereof would be more likely to prefer assimilation, this is not the case. Rather, whites who have attended multiracial congregations for more than two years were *more likely* to choose the first answer (supporting pluralism) than other whites. This same is true of non-whites. While 6 out of 10 African Americans and Latinos from a uniracial congregation prefer the second option, this number drops to 2 out of 10 among the same population in an interracial community. African Americans in interracial congregations are also more likely to support the third option (advocating for a combination approach) than African Americans in a uniracial congregation (30 percent cp. 8 percent respectively).[101] Asians in multiracial congregations (although no different from uniracial congregations in their support of assimilation) are more than two times the number of Asians in uniracial congregations to prefer the pluralist approach (15 percent vs. 1/3 (33 percent) for uniracial and multiracial congregations respectively).[102] Emerson concludes, "Something is unique, then, about African Americans and Latinos in interracial congregations, and that uniqueness is in the direction opposite what is expected if interracial congregations are assimilation machines."[103] Later in his discussion, Emerson

[101] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006),115.

[102] Ibid., 116.

[103] Ibid.

mentions Asians, in addition to Americans and Latinos, as well.[104] In sum, interracial congregations seem to foster cross-cultural relationships without requiring assimilation.

Although the majority of people from multiracial congregations lean towards a pluralist approach, the tension between embracing one's own culture and being part of an organization with shared goals was a reoccurring theme throughout Emerson's interviews. One black woman from a multiracial congregation in the North East who Emerson identified as representative of those that were interviewed said:

> I think there should be something that brings us all together, but I don't think I need to leave something behind in order for me to come together with people. I need to be able to be who I am in all my culturalism and everything, all that, all that I am, I need to continue to be that way but that doesn't mean I can't hang out with another culture and enjoy people and have a connection with the people.
>
> *If we should bring the races together what do you think should bring us together?*
>
> Christ absolutely. Because he's the only thing that doesn't discriminate. Anything else, there would be some type of bias.
>
> *If you have Christ as a common culture, where can you have your distinctiveness?*
>
> Our heritage, our traditions. The way we cook, the way we dance. The types of music that we like to listen to...And just my blackness, no matter how black I want to be and how loud I want to be, I just want to be accepted and be proud to accentuate that.[105]

Similarly, opposed to the idea of a cultural melting pot, interviewees from interracial congregations expressed a recognition of the value of cultural uniqueness in corporate learning and action. They held a positive view of all cultures as well. For example, a Hispanic male from Houston wrote:

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[104] Ibid.,

[105] Ibid., 117-118.

> I believe that the races should keep their uniqueness. That's what makes [attending a multiracial congregation] great. I think that if you have a given racial background and uniqueness and so does your [for example] co-worker, you can learn to work together. It makes the overall process a lot richer than if you try to force people into one common race or culture.[106]

Another woman, focusing on how her view of all cultures has changed, writes:

> All cultures are good and every one of them has bad things as well as good things. You need to learn to adapt without losing the culture that you know. I guess what I am trying to say is that it is a matter of respecting the differences between cultures. It is good to maintain the values of every culture because there are very nice things in each culture.[107]

Based on these interviews, Emerson identifies positive outcomes that result from engaging in a multiracial church: people placing a positive value on others' differences and seeing them as assets to reach a higher goal, an increased desire to encounter differences as a means of self-enrichment, and under healthy conditions, "learn[ing] how to live in a multiracial and multicultural group."[108] Furthermore, rather than integration leading to assimilation "integration helped people grow more secure in and proud of their cultural identities."[109] People's experiences, therefore, not only make them less likely to conform to one of the five racial categories, but it decreases their likeliness of expecting

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[106] Ibid., 118.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Ibid., 119. I argue that this is a valuable lesson, especially in light of the increasing diversity in America. "U.S. Census Bureau Projections Show a Slower Growing, Older, More Diverse Nation a Half Century from Now," United States Census Bureau, December 12, 2012, A More Diverse Nation, accessed April 29, 2015, https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/population/cb12-243.html. The U.S. census predicts that, by 2043, whites will be the racial minority in the United States. Hispanics will be the largest group, but there will be no racial majority.

[109] Ibid., 119-120. Emerson explained this counter-intuitive result with the work of Elaine Howard Euckland (2004) among second-generation Koreans in Korean congregations and multiracial congregations. This study illustrates how the subjects could "construct cohesive identities while living in multiple worlds."

others to do the same. This respect for one's own and other cultures is a vital tool in racial reconciliation.

Developing Social Capital

In addition to changing perspectives on race and the expectations people have for one another, multiracial congregations empower people of color through providing them with social capital. This is important because it empowers and works to provide equal footing for people of color who begin at a disadvantage on account of the color of their skin. Emerson explains that social capital can be seen as "resources that accrue from social networks."[110] Social networks are understood as "the webs of interpersonal relationships possessed by each individual."[111] He goes on to explain that there are two types of social capital: bonding social capital, developed through micro-bonds "between individuals within well-established groups," and bridging social capital, "bonds that form between people across groups."[112] The former focuses on developing relationships *within one's own* group and the later on developing bonds with groups that are *not* one's own. Due to the nature of these different types of social capital, developing one often puts restrictions on the other. For example, developing in-group bonding is associated with bias and prejudice in favor of one's own group and can contribute to out-group antagonism. On the other hand. developing bridging capital that requires one to look outside of one's own group naturally threatens the well-being of the internal

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[110] Ibid., 92.

[111] Ibid.

[112] Ibid., 93.

organization.[113] As a result, it is often difficult to garner both types of social capital at the same time.

The exception to this limitation is when social capital is developed in the context of bridging organizations: groups whereby developing bonding social capital simultaneously builds bridging social capital. This occurs in the case where developing relationships within a group also extends one's relationships outside of that group, *such as in the case of multiracial congregations.*[114] The result of such bridging organizations is not one culture nor many separate cultures, but a single culture that reflects the diversity of the organization. The organization's identity is shaped by the diversity within.[115] Furthermore, multiracial congregations are further distinguished in their networking ability in that they serve as what is called a "connected community." This is a community where people within the community tend to be connected to voluntary associations and organizations outside of that group. Therefore, as people develop relationships within the congregation, they may actually be increasing their connections outside of it (assuming that people are developing networks across racial lines).[116]

Multiracial congregations provide a unique space where, not only are connections made, but common obstacles have been removed to provide people with a theoretically ideal situation to garner social resources. Having this opportunity can help people begin

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[113] Ibid.

[114] Ibid., 94.

[115] Ibid.

[116] Ibid., 94-95.

to overcome some of the socio-economic discrepancies between races.[117] This is supported in the fact that non-whites have higher levels of education and income than those in uniracial churches. However, causality in the area of social and economic well-being, like relationships and political views, is due in part to events that occur both before and after involvement in a multiracial church.[118] As a result, while multiracial congregations do not contribute to improved social status per se, they can contribute to the social resources that lead to progress. Working towards the equal distribution of resources is a valuable step towards righting past wrongs and fostering the justice and equality that is needed for genuine racial reconciliation.[119]

This section has argued that multiracial congregations contribute to racial reconciliation in that the diversity therein provides a fertile environment for racial reflection and learning. It also increases diversity in relationships on all levels of

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[117] For a list of discrepancies see Johnson, Allan. *Privilege, Power and Difference*. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2006, pgs. 25-27.

[118] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 122-123.

[119] By "genuine racial reconciliation" I aim to capture something that goes beyond two people "being okay" with an ignorant racial comment or people making their peace after a less qualified co-worker of color got the job. In these cases, the problem may have been reconciled between two individuals, but in a sense, this reconciliation is incomplete. This is because, despite the peace or healing that may have been received, neither person is fundamentally reconciled with the larger social realities that caused this discord. For example, in an extreme, but very real case, a mother may have come to forgive the cop who killed her son out of fear and stereotypes that were born from racism. However, I doubt she will ever be okay with the racial profiling and inequitable circumstances that put her son in the situation that took his life in the first place. Therefore, by genuine reconciliation I am referring to something that is both personal and systemic, deep and wide: something that facilitates not only *shalom* in interpersonal relationships, but between people and systems, and between the systems themselves. Reconciliation is not complete until it permeates every level of society. As a result, I see justice and equality as prerequisites for this deepest sense of reconciliation. Social capital can contribute to this. Cross-racial relationships and transformed perspectives are necessary as well. With the resources present in multiracial congregations, movement towards genuine reconciliation is possible. I also acknowledge, however, that, while this goal is well worth striving for, it may not be actualized until Christ comes.

intimacy, changes social and political perspectives, directs preference towards genuine integration, and increases social capital for racial minorities. Taken together, these realities offer hope that multiracial congregations are vehicles for social change.

THE JOURNEY TO AN EGALITARIAN MULTIRACIAL COMMUNITY

Stability and Instability in Maintaining a Multiracial Congregation

Through bearing great potential for reconciliation, multiracial congregations are not only difficult to develop, but they are also difficult to maintain. In *Against All Odds*, Brad Christenson, Edwards, and Emerson identify a number of stabilizing and destabilizing forces that impact racial integration in voluntary religious organizations.[120] This study speaks to the dynamics that are integral to such entities and serve as both challenges and assets to the racial integration therein. As a result, the internal organizational and religious forces that impact voluntary religious organizations will be explored in the following section. This is done in an effort to foster an accurate understanding and facilitate the navigation of the complex social dynamics in the voluntary religious organization that is the multiracial church.

Internal Organizational Factors

Internal organizational dynamics tend to be unstable in voluntary religious organizations because, generally, there is a higher rate of turnover among the numerical

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[120] Brad Christerson, Korie L. Edwards, and Michael O. Emerson, *Against All Odds: The Struggle for Racial Integration in Religious Organizations* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 7. These conclusions are drawn based on six case studies that include four congregations, one Christian college, and one Christian student group. Participation in these organizations is voluntary and these organizations vary in size and ethnic composition. Note that two of the four congregations were Crosstown Community and Wilcrest Baptist Church that have been mentioned throughout this text.

minority.[121] Christenson, Edwards, and Emerson identify four destabilizing forces and three stabilizing forces that contribute to this reality. The first destabilizing force is the niche edge effect,[122] the tendency of people who are *not* core members of an organization (people who do not belong to the largest groups, have the most influence and power, or share a visceral connection with the identity and mission of the organization) to leave at a higher rate than other members.[123] In the case of multiracial congregations, this means that people who, racially, are in the numerical minority are more likely to leave. A study conducted by Brandon Martinez and Kevin Dougherty suggests that this increased likeliness of departure could be contributed to by a feeling that numerical minorities do not belong.[124] The next destabilizing factor is the niche-overlap effect: the tendency that,

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[121] Note that the numerical minority is not necessarily the same as American racial minorities. For example, if a congregation is predominantly black, a white person in that context would be considered the numerical minority.

[122] Brandon C. Martinez and Kevin D. Dougherty, "Race, Belonging, and Participation in Religious Congregations," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 52, no. 4 (2013): 715, doi:10.1111/jssr.12073. Martinez and Dougherty describe a niche: " According to [organizational ecology], organizations that provide a similar product or service (such as religion, beverages, or automobiles) comprise an organizational population. Organizations within a population compete with one another for resources, be it members or consumers. These competing organizations draw their resources from particular parts of the environment known as niches. For example, Baptist churches and Jewish synagogues serve different theological niches within a religious environment. A Southern Baptist church and a National Baptist church similarly serve different racial niches."

[123] Brad Christerson, Korie L. Edwards, and Michael O. Emerson, *Against All Odds: The Struggle for Racial Integration in Religious Organizations* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 152.

[124] Brandon C. Martinez and Kevin D. Dougherty, "Race, Belonging, and Participation in Religious Congregations," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 52, no. 4 (2013): 720-721, doi:10.1111/jssr.12073. Martinez and Dougherty report numerical minorities feeling lower levels of belonging than members of the majority group: "Three-quarters of members in the largest racial group (75.5 percent) report having a strong sense of belonging to their congregation, as compared to 70.6 percent of congregants of other races" (120). "The odds of feeling a strong sense of belonging for those in the largest racial group are 1.236 times greater than the odds for those of other races in these congregations." Furthermore, "members outside the largest racial group experience the steepest decline in belonging as the size of the majority race increases." (721). This was correlated with lower levels of participation: "Similarly, more members of the congregation's largest racial group report having close friends in these

even if a numerical minority has ties to an organization, they'll still be more likely to leave because they are being drawn by external groups with which they have stronger connections.[125] In the case of a multiracial church, this means that, among other things, people of the race that is in the numerical minority will be more likely to leave to attend a racially homogeneous congregation. These two factors are more influential than the positive benefits that can be produced through contact with people of another race under favorable circumstances.[126] This is a natural consequence of multiracial congregations seeking to bring together people who might otherwise attend a racially-specific religious group in a racially divided world.[127]

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congregations (69.0 percent) than those from other racial groups (57.9 percent). The mean for self-reported attendance is higher for those in the largest racial group (4.90) than for those outside this group (4.85). Although the difference is small, it is statistically significant. Being in the numeric majority race in a congregation is associated with attending "usually every week," while those of other races attend slightly less often. More dramatically, over half of those in the largest racial group (51.0 percent) are involved in congregational group activities whereas just 39.7 percent of other races are" (720).

[125] Brad Christerson, Korie L. Edwards, and Michael O. Emerson, *Against All Odds: The Struggle for Racial Integration in Religious Organizations* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 152.

[126] Ibid., 73-74; "Part III: Exclusion and Racial Justice," in *Ecclesiology and Exclusion: Boundaries of Being and Belonging in Postmodern Times*, ed. Dennis M. Doyle, Timothy J. Furry, and Pascal D. Bazzell (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012), 122-123. Contact theory suggests that developing relationships under the following circumstances has been shown to transform racial attitudes for the better: 1) People must engage in non-superficial contact that allows them to get to know someone as a friend 2) The contact must be supported by authorities that both groups acknowledge. 3) Contact must take place between social equals 4) Participants must be in a cooperative, non-coerced environment with a common goal. Though some studies question the extent of these positive effects (Cohen, 1984, Hewstone 1986, Jackman and Crane, 1986, St. John 1975) they are outweighed by studies that affirm interracial contact is related to an increased positive racial attitudes (Dixon & Rosenbaum 2004, T.F Petigre and Tropp 2000, Stein, Post, & Riden 2000). In addition Emerson 2006, Irvine 1973, Parker 196, and Yancey 1999 & 2001 provide evidence that interracial contact in religious institutions in particular have a significant effect on people's racial attitudes.

[127] Brandon C. Martinez and Kevin D. Dougherty, "Race, Belonging, and Participation in Religious Congregations," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 52, no. 4 (2013): 720-721, doi:10.1111/jssr.12073. "There are two primary approaches organizations take to obtain resources; they operate as either niche generalists or niche specialists. The approach of niche generalists is to widen their appeal to attract resources from multiple niches within a population. This allows them to target a broad

The third factor that contributes to a lack of stability is a lack of representation of the minority group. For racial transition not to occur, more stabilizing factors like increased growth and representation of non-core groups, must be present. The fourth factor is that the costs of maintaining an interracial religious organization is born disproportionately by members of numerical minorities. Because, by definition, there are fewer numerical minorities, it is more risky and more difficult for them to find meaning and belonging in a multiracial organization. This is because they are more likely to have to develop relationships across racial lines.[128] Furthermore, it is especially important to minimize the costs for the numerical minorities of multiracial congregations who are also bearing the costs of being a racial minority in society at large.

The cost of being a numerical minority in a multiracial religious organization can be decreased by four stabilizing realities. These realities are leaving the congregation, forming subgroups (such as a Spanish-speaking Bible-studies or black campus ministries),[129] having more than two racial groups,[130] or increasing the representation of

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audience and better withstand environmental changes. Niche specialists utilize a more narrow approach. They focus their efforts on a specific segment of the population in hopes of maximizing their return on the resources within that segment. Niche specialists typically enjoy a competitive advantage over niche generalist organizations (Hannan and Freeman 1977). By serving one niche well, niche specialists have a loyal resource base. Niche generalists may have trouble competing in a niche occupied by niche specialist organizations. The ability to attract and retain loyal members, clients, or consumers can be difficult for an organization that does not specialize. This is primarily on account of niche edge and niche overlap effects" (Popielarz and McPherson 1995).

[128] Brad Christerson, Korie L. Edwards, and Michael O. Emerson, *Against All Odds: The Struggle for Racial Integration in Religious Organizations* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 157.

[129] Ibid.

[130] Ibid., 159. Case studies suggest that if there are more than two groups, the cost on any numerical minority is decreased, but Christenson, Edwards, and Emerson hold this statement tentatively until more evidence can be found.

the numerical minority group in the areas of raw numbers,[131] worship styles, leadership, or organizational practice.[132] Case studies suggest that "the acceptance felt by numerical minorities is related to the structural inclusion they witness, such as the vision statement of the organization, the worship styles, leadership, representation, and other structural arrangements."[133] Furthermore, these efforts to include people are more influential than instances of kindness or discrimination inflicted by an individual. "What matters more than what people say in one-on-one interactions is what the organization does or does not structurally do to include people."[134] As a result, upon reflection of these dynamics, multiracial congregations have the potential to successfully navigate the complexities of racial integration. Although the niche edge effect, niche overlap effect, lack of group representation, and disproportionate social cost born by numerical minorities work together to destabilize voluntary religious organizations, this can be counter balanced. This occurs through the stabilizing presence of minority groups of "adequate" size, more

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[131] Brandon C. Martinez and Kevin D. Dougherty, "Race, Belonging, and Participation in Religious Congregations," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 52, no. 4 (2013): 716, doi:10.1111/jssr.12073. Citing a study conducted by Scheitle and Dougherty (2010) Martinez and Dougherty suggest that when the racial majority group of a multiracial congregations is at 60 percent there is a level of stability because this is the point at which the length of membership between numerical minorities and majorities is the same: "Using multilevel modeling and a cross-level interaction in a nationally representative sample, [Scheitle and Dougherty] found that those who belonged to the largest racial group did in fact have longer membership durations than those in smaller racial groups. This difference in membership duration grew with the size of the numerical majority, *but it was the same for both groups when the racial majority group was at 60 percent. This indicates that there is a point when racially mixed congregations can achieve stability*. Perhaps this is the same point at which group members possess equality in the power structure of the congregation. Existing research is largely silent on what this tipping point of congregational equality may be" [emphasis mine].

[132] Brad Christerson, Korie L. Edwards, and Michael O. Emerson, *Against All Odds: The Struggle for Racial Integration in Religious Organizations* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 158.

[133] Ibid., 159.

[134] Ibid.

than two minority groups, and diverse representation in leadership, worship, and other structures. Therefore, through an awareness of the aforementioned forces and strategic action, the leadership of multiracial congregations can craft communities that are more likely to succeed in achieving racial integration.

Internal Religious Dynamics

In addition to internal organizational factors, religious organizations produce dynamics unique to communities of faith that serve to both stabilize and destabilize these institutions. The first dynamic is religiously charged ethnocentrism. In religious organizations, people tend to view their life through a religious lens. As a result, cultural differences are often given absolute and transcendent meanings that they do not have within themselves.[135] Christenson, Emerson, and Edwards offer the example of a debate over the time-orientation of the worship service at Messiah Fellowship Church in Los Angeles. Herein, whites argued that the lax timing of service is not only inconvenient to them, but disrespectful towards God. The African Americans and Filipinos, on the other hand, felt that a rigidly timed service stifles the movement of the Holy Spirit. This example is indicative of how, in religious organizations, cultural elements take on a sacred significance:

> [Cultural] values become associated with the sacred, and as a result going against them becomes more than simply a disagreement over human preferences. It becomes a violation of the sacred, as witnessed in the language used to describe those who show up late: they were viewed as irreverent, as disrespecting God. Whether God wants everyone at church exactly on time or wants a highly organized, efficient bureaucracy is clearly not addressed in the historic documents

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[135] Ibid., 173.

> of the Christian faith. Yet they become part of the Christian faith for those whose culture holds these values to be important.[136]

Another destabilizing force is the belief that unity within the body of Christ comes through emphasizing commonalities rather than differences.[137] This is essentially a color-blind ideology that implies that differences must be suppressed for unity to be achieved. Although this ideology was not intentionally promoted by the leadership of any of the churches interviewed, it was clearly seen among congregants through comments like, "God doesn't see color" and "our identity is in Christ, not in our ethnicity."[138] People who held this view, white and non-white, tended to avoid discussions about race and, in the context of one Christian college, people were labeled as divisive and thus unchristian for trying to address the subject. Having a theology that addressed multicultural issues, however, such as those mentioned in Chapter 2, made people more likely to discuss race-related issues, which had a stabilizing effect on the organization. Christenson, Edwards, and Emerson suggest that "interracial congregations that actively promote theological justifications for multiculturalism are more stable than those that do not."

The second stabilizing religious factor is that members of interracial organizations consistently expressed that they experienced a profound sense of spiritual enrichment from their religious participation in a racially diverse congregation. For example, people said that multiracial congregations were more "biblical" than homogeneous

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[136] Ibid., 174-175.

[137] Ibid., 175.

[138] Ibid. It is suggested that this ideology is held by whites due in a large part to the fact that they have an individual oriented theology. This is discussed further in this thesis in Chapter 5, pg. 237.

congregations, representing the diversity of Heaven on Earth. Others described multicultural worship as being more "full" or "pure," "emotionally uplifting," and "beautiful."[139]Interestingly, many of those who expressed this sense of enrichment were the same people who had either expressed frustration about another element of the organization or who had been experiencing relational isolation therein. Furthermore, those who were experiencing high levels of frustration during the study said that they would never return to a homogeneous religious organization. Those who had left due to frustrations were either attending or looking for another interracial religious organization as well.[140] As a result, despite the destabilizing dynamics of sanctified cultural preferences and a color blind ideology, having a theological foundation for interracial communities and the enrichment received from worshiping in an interracial context seems to have a stabilizing and long-term transformative impact on individuals, even in the presence of frustrations and isolation. Therefore, there is hope that, even in the midst of conflict and dissatisfaction, stabilizing factors can be introduced that help overcome obstacles and create an interracial religious community.

Phases of Congregational Transformation

Multiracial congregations have great potential for reconciliation, but this reconciliation will not be achieved unless multiracial congregations intentionally work towards an egalitarian community. As explained, a congregation's classification as multiracial does not necessitate an egalitarian community or even a certain level of racial

[139] Ibid.

[140] Ibid.,178.

integration. These elements come not when the congregation *becomes* multiracial, but as it *progresses* on the journey of community transformation. Emerson himself said that, in visiting congregations that were identified as multiracial according to his standard, some "were simply in the process of switching from one group to another.[141] And others simply failed, not surviving as multiracial congregations."[142] Therefore, while the results of Emerson's study suggest that, collectively, multiracial congregations offer hope for racial reconciliation, each congregation must determine the type of interracial community it will be.

The following section explores two models that chronicle the journey congregations take in moving from having people of different races in their pews to becoming an egalitarian community.[143] Both models focus on the transformation of power dynamics and indicate that power must be redistributed to produce a genuinely equalitarian community. In essence, these models help to explain the movement that might take place as people progress towards the preferred paradigms for congregational relationships described earlier by Peart and Foster.

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[141] James H. Davis and Woodie W. White, *Racial Transition in the Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980), 68-79. For information about patterns of transitions in churches affected by demographic change see Davis and White pg. 68-79.

[142] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 37.

[143] Sheryl A. Kujawa-Holbrook, *A House of Prayer for All Peoples: Congregations Building Multiracial Community* (Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 2002), 234. Other models include Bailey W. Jackson and Evangelina Holvino's "Developing Multicultural Models" and Crossroad Ministries six-stage "Continuum On Becoming An Anti-racism Multicultural Church." James H. Davis and Woodie W. White, *Racial Transition in the Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980), Ch. 1. For a list of concerns that have been voiced by black and white clergy and laypeople during times of racial transition see Chapter 1 of *Racial Transition in the Church* by Davis and White.

The first model, presented by Alan Parker, identifies five phases that facilitate the breakdown of racial hegemony and redistribution of power so all people can shape the life of the community.[144] These phases were developed through his dissertation on three congregations in South Africa.

1) **Status Quo**: People of different races attend, but there is minimal impact on the congregation's life, practice, and identity. People from outside the majority may feel like tokens. They are likely marginalized and not genuinely appreciated or known. Racial hegemony maintains the status quo.
2) **Assimilation and Hegemony**: The congregation becomes more aware of and makes room for diversity, but new faces are expected to conform to the way things are. For example, someone from outside the majority may be invited to preach, but they must conform to the existing preaching style. People have friendships across racial lines, but social interactions take place according to the majority's rules and on the majority's turf.
3) **Limited Integration:** Culture shock occurs as different perspectives and practices become more integrated into the life of the congregation. This contributes to people leaving or only participating in activities with which they are comfortable. Individuals who are not a part of the majority begin to move into higher levels of leadership.

[144] Alan Parker, "Towards Heterogeneous Faith Communities: Understanding Transitional Processes In Seventh-Day Adventist Churches In South Africa" (PhD diss., University of Stellenbosch, 2004), 187-192, accessed 2014, https://scholar.sun.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10019.1/5493/parker_towards_2004.pdf?sequence=1. Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 171.

4) **Integration and Disintegration**: As multiple races shape the congregation there is a sense of uncertainty about the future. The existing hierarchy breaks down and things can be redefined. The community finds new ways of doing things that brings their diverse components together.

5) **Stabilization and Reorganization**: The congregation is re-established and adopts new narratives, structures, power relations, and rituals. From a collage of influences, a new identity and practice is formed.

These phases describe the journey a congregation may take to the "stabilization and reorganization" that best represents the egalitarian unity in diversity described in the Bible (see Ch. 2). The second model, proposed by Sheryl A. Kujawa-Holbrook, suggests a slightly different, yet complementary five-stage journey to this biblical ideal:[145]

1) **The Exclusive Congregation:** Herein one racial group dominates over another and racial groups are intentionally excluded or segregated on all institutional levels. Leaders in this stage either believe that one race is inferior to the other or that to challenge the hegemony would be damaging to themselves or the congregation.

2) **The Passive Congregation:** In this stage, the congregation functions as a private club, selectively admitting people from the minority culture that "have the right credentials and do not threaten the established order."[146] This is because

[145] Sheryl A. Kujawa-Holbrook, *A House of Prayer for All Peoples: Congregations Building Multiracial Community* (Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 2002), 20-22.

[146] Ibid., 21.

congregants fear that if outsiders are welcomed into the church they will have to be accommodated, thus threatening the long-standing cultural forms.

3) **The Compliant Congregation:** Congregations in this place value multiculturalism in theory, but functionally requires people of other cultures to assimilate to the majority norms. Although diverse people and even staff members may be welcomed, the culture remains the same at large. This model avoids conflict for the sake of "unity" and puts the burden to change on the minority group.

4) **The Redefining Congregation:** Members choose to intentionally shape a congregation to reflect its antiracist analysis and identity. "By this stage congregations are prepared to recognize and acknowledge: (1) that racism is inherent in all institutions; (2) that racism is instrumental in both past and current institutional contexts; (3) the need for a commitment to change; (4) the need to put mechanisms in place to facilitate change; and (5) that action is a necessary step in the process of change."[147] Herein, congregational practice is analyzed and cultural difference is addressed in an effort to create a multicultural community. The congregation keeps itself accountable to communities of color and is committed to working against racism within and outside of its congregation. Organizing structures, policies, and practices are transformed.

5) **The Transformed Congregation:** In this stage, the congregation upholds a "future vision of a new reality where racial oppression no longer sets limits on

[147] Ibid., 21-22.

> human growth or potential."[148] It is a thoroughly multicultural organization that reflects the contributions and interests of diverse peoples and embraces their full participation in the congregation. This also involves the development of networks and alliances to actively eliminate oppression in the larger community. As the congregation does so, they teach others to do the same.

With these models in mind, Christians who aim to embody the biblical ideal should not be satisfied with simply having 20 percent of people that are outside of the dominant race in their congregation. Rather they should strive to develop the quality of the community in order to faithfully manifest God's intention in their congregational context. While this journey is not easy and involves significant shifts in mindsets and power dynamics, multiracial congregations have the potential to persevere. The ways in which participation in these diverse organizations prepare people to engage in egalitarian relationships and the positive influence stabilizing factors can have over threats, indicates that congregations committed to embodying the biblical ideal can make progress towards this already-not-yet reality.

Principles That Can Contribute to the Development and Maintenance of Successful Multiracial Congregations

The quality of the community in multiracial congregations can be developed through adherence to six principles. These principles are modified based on those

[148] Ibid., 22.

identified by George Yancey as helping to develop and maintain successful multiracial congregations.[149]

Intentional Engagement: Intentional engagement is needed to counter people's natural tendency to only to associate with people like themselves.[150] It is needed to create an environment in which people of diverse cultures feel welcome, cared for, and safe. This must be a priority of the leadership and be clearly communicated to the congregation. It should be formalized through elements like the congregation's vision statement, annual goals, programs, and policies that promote equality and awareness.

An Overarching Goal: Congregations must pursue a goal that is greater than increasing their diversity per se, yet to be accomplished, requires the development of a multiracial community. While this may seem counter-intuitive, it keeps moving people forward, even after challenges overcome the excitement for diversity. It provides both motivation and means for reconciliation as well. This overarching goal should be connected to the mission and life of the congregation. According to Emerson, they may include worship, serving God and the community, and integrity between lifestyle and beliefs.[151] In the case of Good Shepherd Lutheran and City Baptist, when they chose to

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[149] George Yancey, *One Body, One Spirit: Principles of Successful Multiracial Churches* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003).

[150] Gerardo Marti, *A Mosaic of Believers: Diversity and Innovation in a Multiethnic Church* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 130, accessed March 2015, http://www.oxfordscholarship.com.ezproxy.bu.edu/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195392975.001.0001/acprof-9780195392975. Sheryl Kujawa-Holbrook expounds by saying that "Multiracial communities are not organic; that is, without intervention we instinctively build our congregations according to assumptions of racism and racial division rather than on a vision of justice and reconciliation.

[151] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 112-113. In support of this, Emerson

reach out to their local community in response to the need for increased membership, they aimed to have their church reflect their neighborhood in both demographics and values. They developed metaphors that reflected their new identity and framed their multiracial missions focus: being a "Community in Christ" and "New Testament Church," respectively.[152] These metaphors were drawn from their own religious traditions and they seemed like a natural extension of who these congregations were.[153] It is suggested that these visions that were larger than becoming diverse within itself helped them actualize this reality.

Sensitivity: Congregations must create a safe and open space where people can express themselves, feel valued and respected, and contribute to the community. This requires an awareness of different cultures and the power dynamics between them. A safe space is created through actions like providing bilingual signage, ensuring that everyone has equal opportunities to volunteer, being mindful of how one discusses divisive issues, and creating a space for people of all communication styles to share.

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gives an example from the U.S. Army. Historically, the army has been "riddled with racial bias and inequality for most of its existence."[151] Believing that this racism was hindering the Army's ability to defend the nation, the Army promoted candidates of color to officer positions and then required that treating people free of racial bias as an "absolute requirement for advancement in one's career," stressing that this was necessary to reach the greater goal of defending the nation. Emerson affirms that, not unlike the army, multiracial churches throughout his study, "did not have the a vision to become multiracial for the sake of becoming multiracial. If that had been the sole motivation, it is doubtful that these congregations would have experienced much success. Rather, a congregation must have a higher goal that, to be met, requires being multiracial."

[152] Penny Edgell Becker, "Making Inclusive Communities: Congregations and the "Problem" of Race," *Social Problems* 45, no. 4 (1998): 465, accessed February 2015, www.jstor/stable/3097207.

[153] Ibid., 452.

Accommodation: Congregations must be willing to change beliefs and practices that, as effective as they may be in a monoracial community, do not work in a multiracial setting. This means a willingness to re-examine traditions and consider the needs of every individual.

Diverse Leadership: The leadership of multiracial congregations must be personally committed to racial equality and reflective of the diversity they seek.[154] This occurs when leaders intentionally train people of diverse backgrounds, allowing each member to be seen, heard, and empowered with real influence. Diversity in leadership not only provides differing and valuable perspectives but communicates to people of the same race that the congregation is a place where they are valued and could lead. Emerson affirmed that, of the 19 multiracial congregations he interviewed, 17 of them had diverse staff. He avers that, in his experience, without diverse leadership it is difficult to maintain multiracial congregations. [155]

Diverse Worship: Worship, understood broadly, is the primary purpose of religious congregations and is instrumental in fostering racial integration.[156] While there is disagreement over how worship contributes to the development of multiracial congregations, scholars and practitioners aver that worship makes a difference. Yancey believes that multicultural expressions of worship foster diversity within themselves and

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[154] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 88. In general, based upon Emerson's in-depth study of multiracial congregations, the leaders of multiracial congregations were often of mixed racial background, interracially married, grew up in a mixed-race environment or had other cross-race experiences, equipping them to lead a multiracial congregation.

[155] Ibid., 89.

[156] Ibid., 35, 106.

thus a worship style that "includes the cultural elements of more than one racial group" should be practiced.[157] His rationale is that when people see an expression of worship that reflects their culture they feel welcomed and respected. Furthermore, if people do not feel comfortable expressing themselves in worship, they are unlikely to stay.[158] As a result, Yancey suggests that distinct racial elements in the worship, such as reading scripture in different languages, singing songs from a variety of cultures, or engaging different preaching styles, be intentionally incorporated and balanced to welcome diversity. Diversification also extends to details like reconsidering the way money is given or the cultural orientation of vestments, uniforms, and decor.

Gerardo Marti, on the other hand, concluded from a study of twelve successfully integrated multiracial congregations that, while having an intentionally diverse worship style *can* lead to success, there are four worship styles found in these contexts, not all of which are musically diverse but all of which contribute to congregational diversity.[159]

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[157] George A. Yancey, *One Body, One Spirit: Principles of Successful Multiracial Churches* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 67, 78.

[158] Ibid., 78. "When a church limits its style of worship to only one racial culture it is sending out signals about who is supposed to be comfortable at its service. There is a subtle message that visitors to that church must either accept the racial and cultural environment of that church or find another place of worship."

[159] Gerardo Marti, *A Mosaic of Believers: Diversity and Innovation in a Multiethnic Church* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 132ff., accessed March 2015, http://www.oxfordscholarship.com. ezproxy.bu.edu/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195392975.001. 0001/acprof-9780195392975. The four categories that Marti presents describes the four types of expression he found in successfully integrated multiracial congregations. These categories were determined through an analysis and combination of the variables of racial awareness and music variety within these worship contexts. The four categories are Traditionalists, who maintain a consistent style of music, Professionalists, who introduce various styles in pursuit of professional excellence, Assimilationists, who express limited diversity in worship style because they believe in a universal quality of music to which all people can connect, and pluralists, who prepare diverse worship sets to appeal to people of different racial and ethnic communities. It is the pluralist style to which Yancey, along with the majority of resources on increasing diversity within a congregational context, ascribe.

Therefore, Marti makes a nuanced argument by stating that diverse expressions of worship,[160] and even music itself, is not as important in a person's decision to join a church as often anticipated.[161] Rather, more specific elements *within* worship contribute to diversity: the ostensible diversity of worship leaders,[162] and the space the music creates for people to develop meaningful relationships across cultural lines.[163] In consideration of Yancey and Marti's work, I conclude that whether it is the style of worship itself or the elements which are brought together in worship, worship is a key part of developing a successful multiracial church.

In addition to the aforementioned principles, I also suggest that, because benefits that can contribute to racial reconciliation emerge from participation in a multiracial congregation, the more opportunities people have to worship, fellowship, or otherwise participate in spiritual practices together, the more likely they will be to have a successful multiracial community. This is supported by the aforementioned research of Marti who views worship as a shared practice that increases diversity by virtue of the fact that it

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[160] Ibid., 10. Note that when Marti speaks of worship, unless he specifies otherwise, he is referring to musical worship.

[161] Ibid., 80. "Music is not 'part of' the culture of a church or 'embedded within' the culture of the church but is a practice that constitutes any congregational community. Yet music rates low in comparison with other factors in the decision to join or leave a church including sermons, pastoral personality, children's programs, church location, theological tradition, and, most importantly, a feeling of warmth and belonging."

[162] Ibid., 158. "While neither styles of music nor philosophical orientation toward approaching the relationship between race and music are consistent among all multiracial churches, what is consistent is an emphasis on having diverse bodies among people involved in the worship services. *The priority for visible color stimulates diversity by actively recruiting and accentuating obviously diverse people on the platform*.

[163] Ibid., Ch. 8 abstract. There can be no precise formula for successful multiracial worship; instead, music and worship create spaces of interracial/inter-ethnic interaction at??? worship practices, both on and off the platform, effectively promoting cross- racial bonding in successfully multiracial churches.

creates a space in which people can develop meaningful relationships. I hypothesize that, be it musical worship, prayer gatherings, Bible studies, service activities, shared meals or leisurely outings, connecting with others in the context of a spiritual community provides a safe and holy space in which the inherently loving and relational Creator can make people into the likeness of God.

Collectively, these principles provide valuable tools that can guide the practice of multiracial congregations to a more egalitarian life together.

Summary of Why Multiracial Congregations Offer Hope for Reconciliation

Multiracial congregations are communities where people of diverse races come together to worship the Lord. Home to no more than 80 percent of any single race, multiracial congregations create an unusual space where people of different races can develop voluntary and meaningful relationships. With that having been said, this potential does not necessitate racially egalitarian power dynamics. Rather, multiracial congregations fall on a spectrum of integration ranging from hegemonic to equal. Where a church falls on this spectrum is influenced by factors such as how a church became multiracial, the presence of stabilizing and destabilizing forces, where a church is in its process of racial integration, and the application or lack of application of certain principles that describe the practice of a successfully integrated multiracial church.

Regardless of the quality of a particular community however, multiracial congregations in general have been shown to develop the perspectives and relationships that can foster reconciliation. This begins with the illuminating curiosity, exemplary lifestyles, welcoming acceptance and supportive social networks that can be found in the

midst of diversity. It is furthered through an increase of diverse relationships on all levels of intimacy that can lead people to live life across racial lines and challenge the status quo of racial segregation. These collective experiences contribute to transformed social and political views as they relate to race and a preference for authentic integration (vs. assimilation). Finally, dynamics that build social capital both within and between groups can provide opportunities for racial minorities to garner social resources that are foundational for genuine racial reconciliation.

The journey towards a racially egalitarian congregational community, and ultimately, racial reconciliation, is a long and costly process. Though not easy, paths have been marked out and qualities have been identified that lead to a successfully integrated multiracial church. Exemplary congregations have been noted and research reveals that positive change is happening. It would seem, therefore, like the God who created humanity in a state of *shalom*, the Christ who prayed for the unity of his followers, and the Savior who reconciled humanity to God and one another through the cross, is also using the multiracial church as means for this vision to be actualized. If people were to faithfully live out the vision that has been cast by the Faithful One himself, they may just find themselves being agents of reconciliation.

IV. WORSHIP EXPRESSION IN THE BLACK CHURCH TRADITION AND CHALLENGES ADHERENTS ENCOUTER IN MULTIRACIAL CONGREGATIONS

> What people think about God cannot be divorced from their place and time in a definite history and culture. While God may exist in some heavenly city beyond time and space, human beings cannot transcend history. They are limited to the specificity of their finite nature. And even when theologians claim to point beyond history because of possibility given by the Creator of history, the divine image disclosed in their language is shaped by their place in time. Theology is *subjective* speech about God, a speech that tells us far more about the hopes and dreams of certain God-talkers than about the maker and creator of Heaven and Earth. - James Cone[1]

Imagine with me two congregations. The first is a predominately white congregation in a rural community. The atmosphere is casual, the worship is steady, the sermon is a rational exposition of biblical text and the overall tone is one of order and dignity. Compare this image to that of a predominately black congregation in an urban community. Hands are lifted, hips sway, and exclamations of praise punctuate complex rhythms and tight harmonies. A passionate word goes forth during which people dialogue with the pastor and one another, being made aware of how God's word speaks into their daily experience.[2] Although distinctly different, both examples represent equally valid and God-honoring expressions of Christian worship. While usually occurring in separate congregations on account of a history of racial division in the United States, both expressions may be present in multiracial congregations. As a result, it is necessary to be

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[1] James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 37.

[2] Because this paper is focusing on evangelical churches, these churches should be understood as evangelical. Also, as a reminder, for the purpose of this paper, I define a black person as someone of black African-American descent. This includes, but is not limited to, West Indians and South American blacks who were carried from Africa through the Atlantic slave trade. I also use the terms black and African Americans simultaneously.

aware of the differences therein to foster a mutually respectful, edifying, and genuine worship experience for people of these different traditions.

This chapter aims to explore the black worship tradition and the challenges adherents may encounter in a multiracial congregation. More specifically, it focuses on musical worship and preaching. While both black and white traditions must be understood to facilitate worship most effectively in a multiracial congregation, I chose to focus on the black church[3] because it is a narrative that is lesser known by people who are not black in a white-dominated society. While blacks are generally aware of white culture because they have had to learn to engage with white society, whites (and to a certain extent, other people of color) have had the option of not learning about the traditions of their brothers and sisters who are black. With that having been said, because churches historically have been one of the most segregated American institutions, I would encourage blacks to not assume that they are familiar with white worship traditions by virtue of their familiarity with white society. Despite what either party believes they know, assumptions and stereotypes should be submitted to examination through research and experiences in congregations racially different from one's own.

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[3] Charles Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African-American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 1. Lincoln and Mamiya use the term "the black church," generally, "as a king od sociological and theoretical shorthand reference to the pluralism of black Christian churches in the United States." For the purpose of their study, however, the use a more specific definition, referring to "those independent, historical, and totally black controlled denominations, which were founded after the Free Society of 1787 and which constituted the core of black Christians."; Note that, in the academy, there is a debate as to whether or not the black church exists, or exists as it has been known throughout U.S. history. While I find this discussion to not reflect the concerns and conversation on the ground, I direct readers interested in pursuing this area of inquiry to chapter two of the following: Savage, Barbara Dianne. In *Your Spirits Walk Beside Us: The Politics of Black Religion*, 68-120. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008.

This chapter begins with a brief discussion of how enslaved Africans came to Christianity and developed independent religious institutions. It continues with an exploration of worship expression in the black church tradition through a description of common themes and elements evident in African American music and preaching. By exploring worship expression, aspects of this tradition are explained in part through the community's African roots and experience of corporate oppression. Thereafter, this chapter explores one challenge and introduces another that individuals from the black church tradition may experience in multiracial congregations: being utilized to diversify worship through the use of essentialism and stereotypes, and being subjected to white hegemony. These problems are connected to my description of the black tradition in that being informed of the tradition is instrumental in being able to recognize when these problems exist.

African Roots and Slave Masters' Christianity: A Brief History of the Formative Influences on the Development of a Distinct Black Church

The racial division seen on Sunday mornings is not a twenty-first century phenomenon. Rather, it is the result of deeply rooted racial division in American history. When African slaves were brought to this nation's shores, they came with their own unique religions. Although the institution of slavery strategically divided tribes and families in an effort to dismantle African culture and tradition, it could not remove the faith that had been imparted to an enslaved people in their native land. Pedrito Maynard-Reid affirms:

> Western sociologists, historians and theologians long have accepted and perpetuated the myth that black Africans came to America bereft of a meaningful

> past, lacking a significant religious experience. The fact is, many of the distinctive practices and experiences that informed the black church and its worship today have been passed on from generation to generation by the spiritual ancestors who brought them on the Middle Passage from Africa.[4]

It is these shared roots and a common experience that have played a significant role in the formation of the black worship tradition today. [5]

Despite both the justification of slavery as a means to spread the "good news" and European attempts to require that all slaves become Christian prior to their importation,[6] whites by-in-large did *not* share the gospel with the enslaved before the mid-eighteenth century.[7] This oversight allowed Africans to continue the practice of their beliefs as much as they were able in light of their new context and prohibitions against African faith. The

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[4] Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid, *Diverse Worship: African-American, Caribbean & Hispanic Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 53.

[5] It should be noted that though I and others often refer to a shared African root, this "root" is the product of diverse cultures. Slaves were taken from lands such as what are now the modern day countries of Senegal, Gambia, Northern Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo, Ghana, Nigeria and Gabon, thus representing a wide variety of peoples and cultures. Therefore, the expressions within the African tradition were not monolithic, but diverse.

[6] Carter Godwin Woodson, *The History of the Negro Church* (Washington, D.C.: Associated Publishers, 1921), Kindle, location 87-109. Throughout history, imperial conquest has been justified by what, in my opinion, is a gross misapplication of the Christian faith. For example, Woodson writes that Columbus was "decidedly missionary in his efforts and felt that he could not make a more significant contribution to the church than to open new fields for Christian endeavor." This same sentiment of believing that conquest could be a means of spreading the faith was seen throughout the slave trade. Woodson goes on to explain that "the sovereigns of Europe" initially stipulated that before slaves were imported to New World they would have to first "embraced Christianity." In time, however, due to the pressures of capitalism, Spain and France declared that Africans enslaved in America should merely be "early indoctrinated in the principles of the Christian religion." They found that to be sufficient, indicating that economic interests, more so than evangelism was slavery's driving force.

[7] Gayraud S. Wilmore, "Historical Perspective," in *The Cambridge Companion to Black Theology*, by Dwight N. Hopkins and Edward P. Antonio (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 21; Carter Godwin Woodson, *The History of the Negro Church* (Washington, D.C.: Associated Publishers, 1921), Kindle, loc. 127 - 312, Although there was no systematic evangelization of slaves until the mid-eighteenth century, the first recorded baptism took place in Virginia in 1624 (Wilmore). This testifies to the work of early missionaries (see Woodman Ch. 1) who reached out to the slave well before the country had the stability to focus on such evangelism.

withholding of Christianity can be explained by two factors. First, the general instability in early America made it difficult for colonists to invest in issues that did not meet their immediate needs. Second, there was a common belief that if slaves came to the Christian faith they would have to be set free by the white slaveholders as it would be wrong for them to enslave fellow Christians. To ease this concern and facilitate "evangelization," states declared that slaves would not have to be freed upon their conversion. In the states, this was first seen in Virginia in 1667 through the declaration that “the conferring of baptisme doth not alter the condition of the person as to his bondage or freedom.”[8] The evangelization of the slave was furthered when preachers and missionaries encouraged masters to allow them to minister to the slaves, explaining that having them conform to the Christian faith would be in the master's best interest. More specifically, upon converting, slaves were required to renounce their African religion and offer their allegiances exclusively to Christianity. This included conforming their worship and practice to that of the white missionaries. The cultivation of Christian character and the biblical teachings on submission and obedience to one's master (E.g. Eph. 6:5; 1 Pet 2:18, Col. 3:22, Titus 2:9-10) was expected to aid in the domination of slaves as well. Therefore, despite missionaries' intentions, evangelism served the purposes of cultural assimilation and hegemony. After conversion, blacks who were allowed to attend church did so with their master in a predominately white congregation in which the slaves were required to sit in separate galleries, dehumanized, as they were indoctrinated with a white interpretation of the "good news." Although exposed to the white Christian faith, it was

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[8] Ibid., 21.

an exposure blacks would have seen as riddled with contradictions and tensions. The white man preached of the love of God and freedom in Christ, but the black community did not see that love and freedom thus extended.

Despite white people's efforts to control blacks and bring them under the yolk of white conformity, slaves came to express their own culture through the music, movement, and other liturgical elements in secret meetings. These gatherings constituted what came to be referred to as the "invisible institution."[9] This institution was what Gayraud Wilmore called a "proto-church," a fusion of Christianity and African religions.[10] For example, missionary reports and slave narratives describe the use of conjurers and medicine men, the use of charms and talisman and ritual drums and dancing in slave quarters even after conversion. Wilmore connected these practices with "survival strategies." Indeed, "selective elements of African religions were not easily exterminated." W.E.B. Du Bois explains that the black church was an institution that emerged gradually:

> It was not at first by any means a Christian Church, but a mere adaptation of those heathen rites which we roughly designate by the term Obe Worship, or "Voodooism." Association and missionary effort soon gave these rites a veneer of Christianity, and gradually, after two centuries, the Church became Christian,

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[9] Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid, *Diverse Worship: African-American, Caribbean & Hispanic Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 54-55. Slaves would go to great lengths to hide their gatherings from the master. These gatherings were more successful in rural areas than in urban ones on account of the lower population density. For a description of a meeting of the invisible institution as well as the clandestine activities surrounding it see Maynard-Reid, 54-55.

[10] Gayraud S. Wilmore, "Historical Perspective," in *The Cambridge Companion to Black Theology*, by Dwight N. Hopkins and Edward P. Antonio (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 21, 22.

> with a simple Calvinistic creed, but with many of the old customs still clinging to the services.[11]

The first Great Awakening (1730s - 1740s) served as a turning point in the history of the conversion of slaves to Christianity. The mass conversion of blacks was made possible because of revival preacher's emphasis on conversion as an emotional experience that God desired for every individual. It was not, as it had been understood, an experience that needed to be prefaced by the correct understanding of doctrine.[12] Rather it was open to everyone. As blacks heard the good news from those who welcomed them to salvation, many were attracted to the faith. Christianity was appealing because it spoke about a God who loved all people, suffered for and with them, and ushered in justice, freedom, and *shalom*. In addition, blacks were drawn to the emotional expression characteristic of the revivals (seen largely among the Methodists and Baptists) that were not necessarily demonstrated by earlier missionaries (e.g. Anglicans) and were reminiscent of African faiths. As a result, many members of the black community came to faith. Blacks' expression of this newfound faith, however, would be limited until they formed their own institutions.

Following the First Great Awakening itinerant black preachers were allowed to minister,[13] black churches were formed under the auspices of white denominations, and,

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[11] W.E.B Du Bois, "Chapters 1-6," in *The Negro Church*, 21st ed. (Atlanta: Atlanta University Press, 1993), 5, accessed February 2015, http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/negrochurch/menu.html.

[12] In this case, some missionaries and preachers didn't even bother to share the "good news" with slaves because they thought that they didn't have the intellectual faculties to understand it.

[13] Melva Wilson. Costen, *African American Christian Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 71-69. Some black preachers were allowed to preach and Euro-American congregations. Such

eventually, independent black denominations were formed.[14] Notable mentions include the first slave congregation, formed on a plantation in Luneberg (Mecklenburg), VA in 1758, the First African Baptist Church formed between 1773 and 1775 in Silver Bluff, SC,[15] the first black congregation formed under the auspices of the Episcopal church in 1794, and the establishment of the first independent black denomination, African Methodist Episcopal, in 1816.[16] Through these mediums, a distinct form of Christianity was developed within the black community that transcended denominational lines.[17]A form profoundly shaped by historical context and shared experiences:

> Styles of worship and theologies of worship are determined largely by the context in which the faith is experienced. The form of this experience will vary widely depending on what the group under discussion brings to the faith. A people's mode of worship, religious practices, beliefs, rituals, attitudes and symbols are inevitably and inextricably bound up with the psychological and physical realities of their day-to-day existence...When the Christian faith flowed through the

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preachers were made "official" through the conference of a license that would allow people to preach in a certain geographical location, and/or for a limited period of time. Many talented and respected preachers, however, did not have licenses and were allowed to serve as "exhorters." These preachers included women, who even from an early stage, contributed to the spiritual leadership in the black church. Female preachers include Jarena Lee (b1783), Rebecca Cox Jackson (1795-1871), and Amanda Berry Smith (1837-1915).

[14] Carter Godwin Woodson, *The History of the Negro Church* (Washington, D.C.: Associated Publishers, 1921). For narratives on slave preachers see Woodson, Ch. 3. Ch. 4 and 5 address the development of the black church.

[15] Carter Godwin Woodson, *The History of the Negro Church* (Washington, D.C.: Associated Publishers, 1921), Kindle, location 527-548. Note that the church in Silver Bluff, SC was scattered during the Revolutionary war. A portion of people from this church founded a Church in Savannah, GA that was organized under the leadership of George Liele. This congregation, First African Baptist Church, claims to be the oldest Black Church in America. Woodson believes, however, that the Silver Bluffs church reestablished at another meeting place under a new name in Augusta, and thus they are the oldest black church in America. Other congregations vie for this title as well.

[16] Melva Wilson. Costen, *African American Christian Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 71-72.

[17] Charles Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African-American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 9; Melva Wilson. Costen, *African American Christian Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 68. This includes denominations that are historically black as well as black congregations that are part of Euro-American denominations.

> contours of the souls of black folk a new interpretation, a new form, a new style of worship emerged. It reflected the cultural and historical background of transplanted Africans...The black people responded to the Christian faith in the Black people's way and not the way of their oppressor. They shaped, fashioned and recreated the Christian religion to meet their own particular needs...When the white preacher, as a tool of the slave master, stressed the demands of God for the Africans to be slaves and for the slaves to be obedient to their masters, the African in America heard the clear call of a righteous God for justice, equality, and freedom.[18]

This expression of faith still offers a shared tradition to the black community.

THE PRODUCT OF RACIAL DIVISION AND AN ENDURING HOPE: A DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT YET INTERNALLY DIVERSE BLACK CHURCH

In C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya's foundational text, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, they describe this distinct form of Christianity as the black sacred cosmos:

> The black sacred cosmos or the religious worldview of African Americans is related both to their African heritage, which envisaged the whole universe as sacred, and their conversion to Christianity during slavery and its aftermath. It has been only in the past twenty years that scholars of African American history, culture, and religion have begun to recognize that black people created their own unique and distinctive forms of culture and worldviews as parallels rather than replications of the culture in which they were involuntary guests...While the structure of beliefs for black Christians were the same orthodox beliefs as that of white Christians, there were also different degrees of emphasis and valences given to certain particular theological views...The direct relationship between the holocaust of slavery and the notion of divine rescue colored the theological perceptions of black laity and the themes of black preaching in a very decisive manner, particularly in those churches closest to the experience.[19]

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[18] William Bobby McClain, *The Soul of Black Worship* (Madison, NJ: Multi-Ethnic Center for Ministry, Drew University, 1980), 5, 1.

[19] Op. cit., 2-3.

Over twenty years later, Jason Shelton and Michael O. Emerson confirmed this reality through their analysis of two national surveys[20] and thirty interviews regarding distinct race-based beliefs and practices.[21] They found that, although whites and black agree with the basic tenets of the Nicene Creed and view God as equally important in their lives,[22] it would seem as if black's experience of oppression, now and in the past, has had a significant impact on their faith-based beliefs and actions:

> The legacy of race-based oppression and privilege has helped to fuel differences in black and white Christians' religious sensibilities (i.e. the scope and context of faith-based actions and beliefs). As a result, African Americans remain strongly committed to a unique form of Protestantism that was born out of - and continues to protect them against - the historical consequences of racial stratification in the United States. Identity politics - that is, political beliefs and actions that are associated with a group of people that someone identifies with - drives significant racial differences among everyday black and white Protestants with respect to their faith-based thoughts and practices. Blacks and whites not only approach faith matters differently, but faith matters differently to blacks and whites. This is mainly because African Americans tend to lean on their faith as a supernatural call for help to protect against the consequences of historical and contemporary racial discrimination and inequality.[23]

As Lincoln and Mamiya described, and Shelton and Emerson affirmed years later, different traditions are deeply shaped by different experiences. It is out of these realities

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[20] Jason E. Shelton and Michael O. Emerson, *Blacks and Whites in Christian America: How Racial Discrimination Shapes Religious Convictions* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 10. The two national surveys are the 2006 Portraits of American Life Study (PALS) and the 2006 General Social Survey (GSS). The PALS served as Shelton and Emerson's primary source of data.

[21] Ibid., 17. The thirty Christians represented the three largest African American denominations. Fourteen in-depth interviews took place with high-raking clergy. The remaining participants were engaged through focus groups.

[22] Ibid., 51-53, 55.

[23] Ibid., 4-5.

that different cultures,[24] socio-economic dynamics,[25] and systemic realities[26] were birthed, all of which contribute to sustaining religious differences.

At the same time, as distinct as the black church is from its white counterpart, it is not a monolithic institution. There is great diversity within the black church:

> ...African Americans do not have a uniform style of worship. Although worship in black indigenous churches around the world (whether in Africa, the United States, or the Caribbean) has distinctive elements in common, 'different situations and circumstances under which exposure to Christianity took place for each congregation, denomination, (history and theological orientation), geography, and social life-styles are significant determinants of worship.[27]

In *African American Christian Worship*, Melva W. Costen expounds upon this sentiment

> No one pre-determined set of ritual actions can be packaged to meet the needs of all worshiping African American communities. For an onlooker to discredit

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[24] Ibid., 59. "While the primacy of culture remains open for debate, scholars generally agree that culture provides meaning for people's lives by supplying the lenses that individuals use for interpreting the social world and for forming an awareness of their place within it. Moreover, for members of racial, ethnic, and religious minority groups, culture also provides a framework for understanding one's social heritage - a constellation of group-specific outlooks, attributes, artifacts, traditions, and shared history that provides a framework for interpreting the meaning of one's group membership, as well as its social boundaries."

[25] Ibid., 23-24. Rev. Shannon, one of Shelton and Emerson's interviewees, suggests that, "White people are looking at their theological belief system through their economic and social eyes. Black people are doing the same thing. We are looking at our theology, our belief system, through our economic and social eyes, but we're *oppressed*. So we have heavier reliance on our theology to carry us through...But they have always had the *power*. So if you already got the power, you may not have to look at your theology and your God in the same way because you've got the power."

[26] Ibid., 65. "While structural explanations acknowledge that members of racial, ethnic, and religious minority groups enjoy participating in their particular group's culture, they also recognize that enduring commitments to one's social heritage are influenced by factors beyond personal loyalty and dedication. For instance, in addition to autonomous cultural factors (such as the basic idea that most racial, ethnic, and religious minorities brought their culture with them in coming to America) the rank ordering of individuals and groups, dynamics of oppression and privilege, disparities in life-change opportunities, and wide distinctions in social status are all relevant to explaining why cultural differences persist between majority and minority groups in the United States"

[27] Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid, *Diverse Worship: African-American, Caribbean & Hispanic Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 57.

> certain actions by relegating them as 'non-black' is not fair to the communities who have struggled to determine the right praise for those who gather together regularly. Perhaps what is being encouraged by those who assume that there is an African American orthodoxy is that the community not lose touch with its history.[28]

Lincoln and Mamiya identify some of the specific differences that may be present within the black church through their dialogical model. This model holds these differences in tension, differences that are present in all black churches to varying degrees. These differences include the tensions between:

- Priestly (personal, pastoral care) and prophetic ministry (communal and political concerns)
- This world and the next
- Universalism (human experience) and particularism (black experience)
- Communal (address holistic needs) and privitistic (only address religious needs) ministry
- Charismatic [leader] versus bureaucratic organizational forms
- Resistance versus accommodation to the larger culture

Although these tensions may be found in congregations of any race, these elements speak to the dynamics that have historically been the concerns of, or of particular relevance to, the black community.

Therefore, while set apart from its white counterpart through shared experiences, emphases, and practices, the black church is a diverse and multifaceted institution. To treat black congregations as either unrelated or as a monolithic entity does not adequately represent the unity and diversity found within this tradition. In the following section, I will discuss elements of the worship tradition that are shared

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[28] Melva Wilson. Costen, *African American Christian Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 111.

among the black church. I will begin by speaking of general characteristics and values and go on to address specific practices. I emphasize that, in doing so, I am speaking in generalizations. I realize that not all congregations conform to the race-based traditions I describe. I am highlighting these differences not so as to essentialize these traditions nor pit them against one another. Rather, my intention is to facilitate an informed awareness of differences so that people can better understand and engage them in the context of a multiracial congregation. Furthermore, in my discussion of the origins of black church traditions, I recognize that, while a practice may have been formed on account of or through the experience of oppression, that does not necessarily mean that these initial explanations still serve to motivate contemporary behavior. Practices may have been imbued with new meaning or be maintained as tradition. It is not my intention to project the circumstances or effects of slavery or oppression on to the black church today. With that having been said, it is undeniable that these dynamics shape their current reality.

WORSHIP EXPRESSION IN THE BLACK CHURCH

General Characteristics and Values

Below are five qualities that I believe characterize worship in the black church based on my reading of a wide-variety of materials and my limited experiences. This reading includes (but this thesis will not discuss all of) the five "building blocks" of the Black Protestant Faith that Shelton and Emerson discovered through their aforementioned

analysis of interviews and national surveys.[29] In this chapter I argue that worship in the black church is holistic, experiential, communal and serves as a means of refuge and liberation in black people's lives. Although these qualities of the black church are presented in separate sections in the following discussion, in reality, they are intertwined. Unable to be addressed without mention of the other, throughout my discussion, themes can be found from all five.

A Holistic Spirituality: Connecting Faith to Life

The black church tradition is distinguished from its white counterpart by its holistic spirituality. Although most churches espouse a doctrine which encourages a living out of the faith, the black church emphasizes a connection between faith and all of life. As a result, worship is shaped by, and connected to, daily experiences. In his book, *Diverse Worship*, Maynard-Reid writes, "'of all the cultures which make up the pluralistic society of the United States, the African American may capture best the wholistic view of worship."[30] He goes on to affirm blacks' connection between worship and life and to explain how, as a result, the church has served many functions in black society:

> Worship for blacks in America is not merely a 'spiritual' exercise unrelated to the rest of life. Historically, church and its related activities were not disconnected from other aspects of African American's daily life. As in Judaism, where the synagogue was the center of life in its totality, the black church has 'served as a school, forum, political arena, social club, art gallery, and conservatory of music.

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[29] Jason E. Shelton and Michael O. Emerson, *Blacks and Whites in Christian America: How Racial Discrimination Shapes Religious Convictions* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 8. The building blocks are: experiential, survival (refuge), mystery, miraculous, and justice. For the sake of space restrictions and the focus of my thesis I do not mention the mystery of miraculous building blocks.

[30] Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid, *Diverse Worship: African-American, Caribbean & Hispanic Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 60.

> It was and is the place where fellowship and interaction with fellow human beings and God takes place.'

Maynard Reid explains that this perspective is rooted in part in the African worldview:

> [In their homeland Africans'] Ancient beliefs, folklore, attitudes, and practices provided a holistic view of reality that made no radical separation between religion and life. There was in the affairs of the everyday no consciousness that at one moment one was being religious and at another moment nonreligious or secular. There was no sense that certain understandings of time, space, human activities, or relations between human and divine beings belonged to science or philosophy rather than to religion; to the life of the mind rather than the life of the spirit.[31]

The black community's emphasis on the connection between faith and life is corroborated by the fact that, in Shelton's and Emerson's study, black Protestants were more likely to look to God, consider church teachings, talk to religious leaders, and consider passages from the Bible when encountering an obstacle in life[32] than their white counterparts were. This is also reflected in the celebratory nature of black worship services where black worshipers praise God for even the most basic provisions in life (e.g. breath, health, soundness of mind, etc.). It is not necessarily that black Christians are more spiritual, but that their tradition's holistic approach conditions them to see how their faith connects to life. Their worship does not end when they leave the sanctuary, but the

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[31] Gayraud S. Wilmore, "Historical Perspective," in *The Cambridge Companion to Black Theology*, by Dwight N. Hopkins and Edward P. Antonio (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 20.

[32] Jason E. Shelton and Michael O. Emerson, *Blacks and Whites in Christian America: How Racial Discrimination Shapes Religious Convictions* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 127-128.

"holistic responses that may begin in the gathered community...will continue with worshippers as they move into the world."[33]

I have seen this demonstrated in many ways in the black congregation of which I am a member. The prevalence of practical sermon illustrations, Sunday morning forums where experts address the congregation regarding issues such as health, finances, and relationships, and men and women ministry's emphasis on empowering people for holistic Christian living attest to this emphasis. In consideration of all of these practices, however, I have seen a holistic emphasis most notably through our Life Groups family. Life Groups are small groups that further discuss Sunday's sermon and consider how it applies to our lives. It provides the support and accountability needed for people to apply their faith to life. Through this community, I have seen people meet physical fitness goals, go back to school, excel in classes, navigate difficulties, get promotions, and overcome destructive behaviors. Addressing what some may consider to be secular issues is seen as a vital part of our faith.

The Experiential Element of Worship: Encountering the Presence of God

Closely related to a holistic view of worship, African Americans see worship as an experience through which they encounter God. When blacks come to church, they are less concerned with mastering a theological concept than experiencing the power and presence of God.

> Within Afrocentric worship and religious experience, the emphasis is on 'the subjective and intuitive (feeling), rather than objective, abstract, or rational

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[33] Melva Wilson. Costen, *African American Christian Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 92.

> thinking.' This is not to say that such worship is merely subjective or mindless. Rather, African-Americans who worship with their whole persons do not come to church only to learn something but also to feel God's spirit, participate in communal sharing and involve themselves physically in the service.[34]

This is what Shelton and Emerson call the "experiential building block." Through their interviews with leaders in the black church, they found that people described white worship with words like, "cognitive," "formal," "doctrinal," "academic," "intellectual" and "propositional."[35] This is contrasted by the adjectives that were used to describe black worship: "experience," "feeling," "emotion," "intense," "expressive," and "actions."[36] Rev. Boyd, a Pentecostal preacher from Texas, further articulates this difference:

> In a Caucasian church, they have a hymnal, and it's important to them that they sing all four stanzas...We want to sing in our soul, and we want to sing it until we feel it.[37] We *feel* deliverance. They *process* deliverance. So that would be a difference. That we go to God through emotions, but [whites] go to God through their cognitive thoughts.[38]

Often people respond to these feelings through hand raising, exclamation, and dancing that allows them to respond and let their feelings out.

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[34] Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid, *Diverse Worship: African-American, Caribbean & Hispanic Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 61.

[35] Jason E. Shelton and Michael O. Emerson, *Blacks and Whites in Christian America: How Racial Discrimination Shapes Religious Convictions* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 67-68.

[36] Ibid., 68.

[37] One way this contributes to a different style in worship is that, generally, blacks tend to sing the same chorus or song over and over in an effort to create the space where they can connect with and delve deeper into the presence of God. This is contrasted by a white musical style that is more likely to sing the song through more quickly and with less repetition.

[38] Ibid., 72.

Although this type of expression, at least to the white reader, may seem to be relegated to the experience of Pentecostals or Charismatics, this is not the case. Rev. Henderson, a female senior pastor from Los Angeles, explains that, in the black church, such demonstrative worship is seen across denominational lines. "Black people are more expressive in their worship - demonstrative and in raising their hands and shouting or dancing. And that's not just in a Pentecostal church. You find it in a Methodist, a Baptist...Presbyterians and Lutherans and etc."[39] This observation is affirmed by the research of Korie Edwards. Drawing upon the National Congregations Study and the interviews of 907 churches (16 percent of which were African American), Edwards concludes that ecstatic, spontaneous worship, such as shouting, jumping, or dancing, is largely unique to African American congregations. This is especially true among Protestant African American congregations as they are more than eleven times more likely than white congregations to participate in worship of this sort.[40] As a result, there does appear to be an association between race and the expression of ecstatic, spontaneous worship, although the type of congregation that participates in such worship has changed over time.[41]

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[39] Ibid., 60.

[40] Korie L. Edwards, "Race, Religion, and Worship: Are Contemporary African-American Worship Practices Distinct?," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 48, no. 1 (2009): 46-47, 32, doi:10.1111/j.1468-5906.2009.01428.x.

[41] Ibid., 47. While in the early twentieth century this style of worship was associated with smaller and less educated African-American congregations, today, participatory worship occurs in the more religiously and socio-politically progressive African American congregations. Edwards describes them as having "livelier, energetic services, indicated by their strong emphasis on music and the arts. They are more politically active and more committed to promoting racial and ethnic identification." This lively worship, creative expression, and social involvement is facilitated by having younger congregants, higher

Shelton suggests that blacks' desire for experiential worship is due in part to their view of the Bible. Black Protestants are more likely to accept a literal interpretation of the Bible: 71 percent believe that the Bible is the "actual word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word." This is compared to 41 percent of whites who affirm the same statement.[42] Shelton posits that, because blacks hold this high view of scripture, they believe that God can - and they desire for him - to work as he did in the Bible in their own lives. This is supported by a quotation from Rev. Robinson, a Pentecostal Preacher and rocket scientist.

> If [black people] read that someone was healed in the text, then they're going to ask God to heal them. That's experiential. If they see God provide for someone in the text, then that's what they expect to see in their life or experience. They've been taught this, they've seen it in the Bible, and they want to see that experience in their own life.[43]

While the experiential and expressive approach of blacks provides a significant contrast to the cognitive and reserved preferences of whites, both approaches have significant benefits and both have been subject to critique. For example, Francis J. Grimke (1850 - 1937), a pastor who assisted in the founding of the NAACP, critiqued how in some congregations "the *aim* [of black worship] seems to be to get up an excitement, to rouse the feelings, [or] to create an audible outburst of emotion" [emphasis mine]. He comments that if the pastor is not able to foster this effect, he or she are seen as a failure. The emotional experience, over instruction, becomes the goal. He goes on to

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attendance, and more wealth than congregations that do not participate in ecstatic, spontaneous worship. Nearly 60 percent of black congregations express themselves in an ecstatic, spontaneous way.

[42] Jason E. Shelton and Michael O. Emerson, *Blacks and Whites in Christian America: How Racial Discrimination Shapes Religious Convictions* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 88.

[43] Ibid., 74.

say that "Where emotionalism prevails there will be a low state of spirituality among the people, and necessarily so. Christian character is not built up in that way."[44] In Martin Luther King Jr.'s sermon "A Knock At Midnight," he also warned against emotional expression turning into emotionalism. Herein he identifies two types of churches, both of which fall short of having a vital ministry.

> [The first] one burns with emotionalism...reducing worship to entertainment, [it] places more emphasis on volume than on content and confuses spirituality with muscularity. The danger in such a church is that the members may have more religion in their hands and feet than in their hearts and souls. At midnight this type of church has neither the vitality nor the relevant gospel to feed hungry souls.[45]

Clearly, King is warning against emotionalism. At the same time, he makes clear through his description of a second type of church, one lacking in emotion, that this is unhealthy as well.

> The other type of Negro church that feeds no midnight traveler has developed a class system and boasts of its dignity, its membership of professional people, and its exclusiveness. In such a church the worship service is cold and meaningless, the music dull and uninspiring, and the sermon little more than a homily on current events. If the pastor says too much about Jesus Christ, the members feel that he is robbing the pulpit of dignity. If the choir sings a Negro spiritual, the members claim an affront to their class status.[46]

Neither Grimke nor King assert that emotion is bad within itself, but they acknowledge that it is problematic when it replaces spirituality and discipleship. Along these lines, black leaders in Shelton and Emerson's study recognized that blacks could develop a

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[44] Michael Battle, *The Black Church in America : African American Christian Spirituality* (2006), 89-90.

[45] Ibid., 90.

[46] Ibid., 90-91.

more critical view of the Bible and nuanced criteria for interpretation.[47] They also identified the need for blacks to be better trained theologically.[48]

With that having been said, white worship is also not without critique. The leaders in Shelton and Emerson's study point out that, at times, there is an inconsistency between whites' highly valued doctrinal beliefs and actions.[49] Similarly, leaders perceived that whites do not apply their faith to life as much as blacks. They also mentioned that whites use their cognitive abilities to rationalize not following certain biblical imperatives that blacks believe should not be compromised. As a white woman serving at a black church, I remember being attracted to the sincere expression of worship I encountered in the black community. I had been seeking more of God and when the pat answers and unenthusiastic examples of my white congregations fell short, the passion with which I saw the black community chase after and encounter God was what I wanted. Although, at times, I do feel less comfortable with certain types of expression on account of how I was socialized, I know that my encounters with God in the black community and the disciplines through which my congregation has sought the Lord have been instrumental in my spiritual journey.

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[47] Jason E. Shelton and Michael O. Emerson, *Blacks and Whites in Christian America: How Racial Discrimination Shapes Religious Convictions* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 89-93.

[48] Ibid., 94-95.

[49] Ibid., 75-77.

Communal Emphasis: Worshiping with the Community

A third characteristic of the black worship experience is that it is fundamentally communal. This is seen in elements such as the participatory and dialogical nature of the service, as well as the sense of family that permeates community life. For example, during the service, people may be invited to interact with their neighbor through actions such as greeting them, speaking with them during the sermon, and holding hands in prayer. There is also an active dialogue with the pastor during the sermon that will be discussed further in the section on preaching below. In addition, there is a general sense that congregants will actively engage in these and other elements of worship. Worship in a black church is not a passive experience, but something that, in the context of community, actively engages the whole person. Maynard-Reid affirms that "worship for African-Americans is not just an 'entering into oneself.' It is an encounter between God, the worshipper and the worshipping community and family."[50]

Similarly, not only are people engaging in community as a part of the worship experience, but there is a sense that the church community functions as an extended family. In Joseph Jone's PhD dissertation on the characteristics of black worship, he writes:

> The African American church is an extended family for African Americans. Therefore, when African Americans gather for worship they are having a family reunion. At church they find common ground and a sense of community. This idea of family gives a sense of personal worth and a basis for support.[51]

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[50] Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid, *Diverse Worship: African-American, Caribbean & Hispanic Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 63.

[51] Joseph Jones, "Examining the Concept of African American Worship as Pertaining to Its Characteristics" (PhD diss., Boston University, 1998), 87.

I affirm the familial aspect of the black church in my own experience. I recall how, when I first arrived, I was struck to see babies being passed down the aisles from one caring community member to the other and women seemingly naturally taking care of any child as if he or she were their own. I also noticed how the degree to which people cared for and were involved in one another's lives was greater than the more individualistic approach I had encountered in the three white churches where I had been a member previously. It seemed to me that, while it would have been easy for me to have kept to myself in these congregations, the expectation of the black church is that we are going to live life together: attending the church meant being a family.

African philosopher John Mbiti explains how this communal emphasis was present in the assumptions of traditional religions in Africa:

> Traditional religions are not primarily for the individual but for the community of which he is a part...To be human is to belong to the whole community. A person cannot detach themselves from the religion of his group for to do so is to be severed from one's roots, one's foundation, one's context of security, one's kinship and the entire group of those who make a person aware of their own existence...[52]

Maynard-Reid connects these roots to contemporary worship:

> Community is paramount in worship [today]. African culture is profoundly tribal and communal in essence. When this tribal antecedent is combined with 'the African American history of group identity as slaves and the continuing reality of racial oppression...one discovers a potent cultural undercurrent of collectivism'[53]

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[52] Jamie T. Phelps, "Communion Ecclesiology and Black Liberation Theology," *Theological Studies*, no. 61 (2000): 677.

[53] Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid, *Diverse Worship: African-American, Caribbean & Hispanic Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 61.

Although African roots may seem far removed from contemporary life and familial bonds cannot be explained exclusively through oppression, these realities have created a sacred community that is instrumental in providing the support to navigate the complexities of life. Indeed, although not exempt from shortcomings, the black church provides an example of what God intended when he called us into a spiritual family in Christ.

Worship as Refuge: Relief from an Oppressive World

The third characteristic to be acknowledged is that the worship in the black church serves as a place of refuge for the African-American community. In the midst of the oppression experienced in other areas of society, blacks can find a safe place of acceptance and equality. Maynard-Reid explains:

> Life for most African-Americans is a daily physical, economic, and emotional grind. Weekly worship is a welcome refuge - a 'bridge over troubled waters;' a place where they 'take their burdens to the Lord and leave them there,' finding instead joy, relief, solace, affirmation, escape and shelter.[54]

Jones complements Maynard-Reid's perspective by highlighting how the refuge present in the black church contributes to an elevated sense of self:

> African Americans attend worship looking for something that will give them a positive sense of self. Many come wounded and empty, looking for healing and wholeness. They come looking for a God who will listen to their problems and respond to their needs; who will lift them above the troubles of this world and given them hope for a better day; who will give them the affirmation of importance in His sight.[55]

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[54] Ibid., 64.

[55] Joseph Jones, "Examining the Concept of African American Worship as Pertaining to Its Characteristics" (PhD diss., Boston University, 1998), 53.

While this could describe people of any race, I believe that when blacks are together in the context of Christian community, it creates a sanctuary where they, as a racial minority, can experience a safe and affirming space that often eludes them in a white dominated society. While whites have the privilege of choosing to be around people of the same race most of the time,[56] this is not necessarily the case for people of color as they are required to interface with white society. Their jobs, schools, and community institutions may place them in contexts where they experience the emotional, social, and psychological burden of being a racial minority. In *United by Faith,* Curtis Paul DeYoung et al describe how the black church has (and continues) to provide a safe space separate from white society.

> Christian congregations were also among the first institutions in society where African Americans had relative freedom from the control of whites. African American congregations were places where political and social leadership developed and the interests of the black community were furthered...The African American church served as the hub of a "parallel community within a broader white society."[57]

Dale P. Andrews goes on to explain how this contributes to creating a space of refuge. The black church as a refuge is concerned with:

> ...survival, nurture, and growth of African Americans through the Christian faith. The church fulfilled the emotional, spiritual, and sociological needs of an alienated people. It provided a community that affirmed, even nurtured, black humanity and worth in an otherwise hostile and degrading social existence. This safe space was not static. Community provided proactive space for personality

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[56] Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Backpack," 1989, https://www.isr.umich.edu/home/diversity/resources/white-privilege.pdf.

[57] Curtiss Paul. DeYoung et al., *United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 107.

> development and human relations. The effect was empowerment for living anew.[58]

DeYoung et al. go on to explain that racially homogeneous congregations also serve to preserve the unique culture of people of color, honor their history, express their theology, and celebrate the symbols of their faith.[59] Indeed, there is something that is healing, life giving, and sacred for blacks within the black church community.

These elements that create a place of refuge contribute to what Shelton and Emerson call the "survival building block" of the Black Protestant faith. They write that the "black Protestant faith is critical to survival and helps individuals cope with suffering associated with everyday trials and tribulations."[60] This is corroborated by the fact that blacks find their purpose in their faith. Shelton and Emerson reveal that "the odds that black Protestants believe that there is a real purpose to their lives are up to three times that of white Protestants in general and evangelicals in particular."[61] Furthermore, African Americans who attend church more regularly believe this to a greater degree than those who attend less regularly.[62] James Cone connects this finding to the survival element of the black church:

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[58] Dale P. Andrews, *Practical Theology for Black Churches: Bridging Black Theology and African American Folk Religion* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 34.

[59] Curtiss Paul. DeYoung et al., *United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 113-120.

[60] Jason E. Shelton and Michael O. Emerson, *Blacks and Whites in Christian America: How Racial Discrimination Shapes Religious Convictions* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 8.

[61]Ibid.,113.

[62] Ibid., 115.

> Whites don't need religion to give them a purpose in quite the same way that blacks do. African Americans have so much to work against them in a society that says they don't have a purpose. So they really reach down to that deep spiritual source to give them purpose, in spite of what they have to cope with.[63]

Shelton and Emerson summarize the role of the black church as a refuge well:

> For African Americans, then, religion helps to build individual and group-based self-esteem by counteracting the historical and contemporary barrage of race-based negative images, thoughts, and practices. African American Protestants may be in such strong agreement that their lives have purpose because - given the foundational function of black religion - identity, meaning, purpose, wholeness...are stressed in churches and among black Christians.[64]

Therefore, through the creation of a safe space and the impartation of value and purpose, the black church provides a refuge to African Americans in a hostile world.

Worship unto Liberation and Justice

Closely related to the function of refuge is that of empowerment and the emphasis on justice and liberation. When slaves were first introduced to the faith, they were taught a faith that served the purpose of white domination. Jones explains:

> Whites were not going to give African Americans a message of freedom. That would have defeated their purpose. They wanted slaves, in every sense of the word, not people who were free. They wanted people who were bound, not people with a hope of being delivered. Therefore whites did not tell African Americans that Jesus suffered as they were suffering. Whites did not tell slaves that Jesus was born of poor parentage...This part of the life of Jesus was omitted because the masters knew that it was dangerous to inform the slaves that the life and teaching if Jesus meant freedom.[65]

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[63] Ibid., 114.

[64] Ibid., 114.

[65] Joseph Jones, "Examining the Concept of African American Worship as Pertaining to Its Characteristics" (PhD diss., Boston University, 1998), 49.

Upon their own exploration of scripture, however, African Americans developed a faith that countered the God of slaveholding Christianity and reflected the God of the Bible. They developed what Shelton and Emerson describe as "*a faith distinct in nature and character from the slaveholders' faith in God... [It] took on a unique essence, with attention placed on the poor and oppressed as a motivating force behind an active partnership with God to bring about social change.*"[66] Shelton and Emerson argue that, today, these roots have contributed to a distinct theology of suffering and the influence of liberation theology within some black congregations. A theology of suffering, as they understand it, addresses how the pain and suffering experienced by Christians is reconciled through their faith in Jesus. Black theology draws upon the holistic view mentioned previously to aver that the gospel should not be separated from life, but applied to alleviate social, political, economic and racial problems in society.[67]

As a result, many black congregations speak to matters of liberation and justice, especially as it relates to race, seeing them as core elements of the faith. Shelton and Emerson describe this as the justice building block, the fact that "black Protestant faith is committed to social justice and equality for all individuals and groups in society."[68] Shelton and Emerson write:

> *The black sacred cosmos* is neither apolitical or disinterested in issues relevant to race relations. To the contrary, it contains a race-based ideological viewpoint that emphasizes structural explanations for and solutions to the problems of racial

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[66] Jason E. Shelton and Michael O. Emerson, *Blacks and Whites in Christian America: How Racial Discrimination Shapes Religious Convictions* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 43.

[67] Ibid., 6.

[68] Ibid., 8.

> inequality. Thus, in addition to both being theologically broad and definitive, the black sacred cosmos also embraces people-oriented domains of Christianity that can help with solving problems in society.[69]

Shelton and Emerson give examples of how black Protestants' political views vary from white Protestants.' One example is their discovery that 42 percent of black Protestants, but only 10 percent of white Protestants, agree that the government has a specific obligation to improve the lives of African Americans on account of a national history of discrimination.[70] (Interestingly, there was more hesitation towards racial reconciliation in the black community due in part to there being different understandings of what racial reconciliation is among blacks and whites [i.e. justice and equality vs. assimilation]).[71]

These different perspectives are shaped by and affirmed in the beliefs and actions espoused by the black church. William Bobby McClain compared the preaching between the black church and the white church, asserting that black preaching generally has a more prophetic tone, shaped by their relationship to society:

> Black preaching tends to announce judgment on the nation, and to call into question the institutions in society in a prophetic fashion whereas white preaching tends to be of a pastoral nature. Part of the reason for this is that the American white Church has a different relationship to the establishment than the Black Church.[72]

Furthermore, Dale P. Andrews points out that themes of liberation can be seen in black preaching on biblical topics such as the image of God in each individual, the Exodus,

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[69] Ibid., 169.

[70] Ibid., 177.

[71] Ibid., 184-189.

[72] William Bobby McClain, *The Soul of Black Worship* (Madison, NJ: Multi-Ethnic Center for Ministry, Drew University, 1980), 23.

Jesus' suffering, suffering as a means of redemption, and the freedom and justice that will come upon Christ's return.[73]

I have seen of my own black church working towards liberation in partnership with the ministerial alliance of which they are a part. Examples of this include when they hosted a city-wide prayer vigil for the homicide of a black teenager, a community conversation on the Trayvon Martin verdict, and made public statements about police-community relations following the death of Michael Brown. On a congregational level, sermons are preached that empower people to overcome obstacles and pastoral care is made available for those experiencing obstacles that are due in part to systemic injustice.

In summary, the worship experience in the black church can be described as bearing a holistic outlook, practicing experiential engagement, valuing a communal orientation, offering a place of refuge, and pursuing liberation and justice. Together, these elements shape the black church’s practices and congregational life.

Specific Practices

Worship

Worship as Dialogical and Improvisational

Music is a core element of black worship.[74] Maynard-Reid suggests that, "In the African-American community, music is to worship as breathing is to life."[75] This has its

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[73] Dale P. Andrews, *Practical Theology for Black Churches: Bridging Black Theology and African American Folk Religion* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 42-46.

[74] Melva Wilson. Costen, *African American Christian Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 81. The importance of worship to African American worship tradition is corroborated by the fact that one of the first liturgical documents by and for African Americans was an AME hymnal created by Richard Allen in 1801.

roots in the African value of music, reflected in the old dictum that "the spirit will not descend without song."[76] Furthermore, worship was a powerful means through which slaves could communicate across linguistic barriers and in secret languages. Today, the value of worship is reflected in the fact that 2/3 of black churches have at least one choir, compared to 43 percent of evangelical congregations. The fact that blacks are more likely than whites to have a choir is true regardless of size, location, or denomination.[77] The fact that blacks value and desire to pass music down to the next generation is illustrated in the fact that they are more likely than white congregations to have children's choirs as well. This section will argue that the musical expression so valued in the black church is dialogical, improvisational, and is expressed through the mediums of gospel, spirituals, and tailored hymns that are an expression of the black community.

Drawing from the experiential and communal elements of black worship, music (along with preaching) is a dialogical experience. It is a means through which people can express themselves to God and one another.

> The dialogical nature of worship, both vertical and horizontal, makes communication through music a major element of worship. Through the texts, singers can respond to God, comment on problems and joys, voice hope in the midst of despair, and assert their humanity. Because music is also rooted in the

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[75] Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid, *Diverse Worship: African-American, Caribbean & Hispanic Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 69.

[76] William Bobby McClain, *The Soul of Black Worship* (Madison, NJ: Multi-Ethnic Center for Ministry, Drew University, 1980), 14.

[77] Nancy Tatom Ammerman, *Pillars of Faith: American Congregations and Their Partners* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 39-40.

> emotions, music can express the inexpressible and serve as a mask for realities of life.[78]

As a result, worship is not just about singing songs. Rather worship expresses and embodies the emotions and circumstances of the worshippers. As congregants lift up their praises and concerns they expect to encounter God. At the same time, each congregant also engages with the worshipping community. Together, these interactions contribute to the experience of worship. "In Africa, music making is participatory; music is not a spectator sport." Thus, through similar participation in African American churches today, "the song is shaped by the total community and is the property of every worshipper. It is more than an entertaining performance. 'It is a communal happening' in which everyone improvises."[79] On account of the dialogical nature of worship, it lends itself to spontaneity and improvisation. Worship flows according to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, teaching methods that involve vocalists listening to songs rather than using sheet music to learn a piece leave room for creativity. There is less of a sense of obligation to stick to written notes or sing a set number of alterations between the verse and chorus before a predetermined close. As a result, many songs are different each time they are sung, shaped by both vocalist and congregation.[80]

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[78] Melva Wilson. Costen, *African American Christian Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 81.

[79] Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid, *Diverse Worship: African-American, Caribbean & Hispanic Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 72.

[80] Ibid., 72.

Spirituals

Black spirituals emerged during the antebellum period of slavery and they became the "first authentic American folk song form."[81] Zora Neal Huston describes some of the distinct elements of the spiritual:

> The jagged harmony is what makes it, and it ceases to be what it was when this is absent...The harmony of the true spiritual is not regular. The dissonances are import and not to be ironed out by the trained musician...Keys change. Moreover, each singing of the pieces is a new creation. The congregation is bound by no rules. No two times singing is alike, so that we must consider the rendition of a song not as a final thing, but as a mood. It won't be the same thing next Sunday.[82]

Like other folk songs, spirituals reflect the particular context, nature, experiences, values and longings of the people who composed them.[83] For example, the earliest spirituals were part of the slave culture. They served as a means to protest the current reality of bondage and called to God for freedom.[84] They gave slaves a means to express themselves and transcend their situation as they waited for God to bring a better day.[85]

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[81] Ibid., 76.

[82] James H. Evans, *We Have Been Believers: An African-American Systematic Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 125.

[83] Melva Wilson. Costen, *African American Christian Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 84.

[84] Charles Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African-American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 352. Though often, spirituals were not exclusively eschatological. Rather, it is also believed that Spirituals had double meanings. For example, "steal away" could mean to Heaven or to the North.

[85] Ibid., 352. "...Through the singing of the spirituals the enslaved were able to release their repressed emotions and anxieties and simultaneously experience the exhilaration of being creative under circumstances of unbelievable stress. They sang, hummed, clapped, moaned, stomped, and swayed themselves into a remarkable transcendence over their oppressive condition, and so dredged up the spiritual inspiration needed to endure until God would move to change their circumstances for the better."

James Cone explains the connection between spirituals and the African-American experience:

> In Africa and America, Black music was not an artistic creation for its own sake; it was directly related to daily life, work, and play...Song was an expression of the community's view of the world and its existence in it. [Thus] in the spirituals, black slaves combined the memory of their fathers with the Christian gospel and created a style of existence that participated in their liberation from earthly bondage.[86]

Therefore, spirituals cannot be understood independent of the context in which they were birthed. As a matter of fact, Lincoln and Mamiya suggest that spirituals may have been sung as a part of an oral history, reflecting the historical developments and self-image of the black community over time.[87] Regardless of their use historically, they capture a wide-range of emotions, serving as a beautiful testament to the struggles and joys of the black community.

> Properly understood, Spirituals are the ageless psalms of a people in exile who poured out their praise, prayers, thanksgiving, and lament to God, in the midst of harsh struggles. They are analogous to theological documents, carefully and thoughtfully presented in simple and often symbolic language of a particular people.[88]

Birthed in the antebellum period of slavery, spirituals provided beautiful songs through which the black church could give voice to their journey, feelings, and beliefs.

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[86] Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid, *Diverse Worship: African-American, Caribbean & Hispanic Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 77.

[87] Charles Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African-American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 349. Those told by oral tradition were "constantly recomposed and rearranged so that a single spiritual may eventually have numerous musical and textual variations," thus reflecting the improvisational and flexible nature of black music.

[88] Melva Wilson. Costen, *African American Christian Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 85.

Gospel Music

gospel music is the "northern counterpart to black spirituals."[89] It arose out of the exodus from the South when blacks arrived in the North and found themselves challenged by the reality of continued inequality and ghettos. It emerged at the turn of the twentieth century through the compositions of Charles Albert Tindley, the composer who penned the tunes that would become "We Shall Overcome" and "Stand by Me." The industry was most influenced, however, by Thomas A. Dorsey, the "Father of Gospel" who is credited with establishing the name of the genre itself.

gospel music was different from the musical expressions that had come before. Lincoln and Mamiya distinguish it from white music by its "body rhythm, call and response, and improvisation.[90] It was distinguished from spirituals in that "the immediate" was emphasized more and it was more optimistic than the earlier black musical form. While gospel music has been critiqued as "mere entertainment" and for having its roots in secular musical forms, it still expresses a set of religious beliefs. "Black Gospel expresses a theology - but not a theology of the academy, seminary or university. It is not a formalistic theology, writes William B. McClain; it is a *theology of*

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[89] Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid, *Diverse Worship: African-American, Caribbean & Hispanic Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 81.

[90] Charles Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African-American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 359.

experience."[91] Note how McClain's description of the theology of experience reflects holistic concerns and touches upon the themes of refuge and liberation:

> Theology of a God who sends the sunshine and the rain, the theology of a God who is very much alive and active and who has not forsaken those who are poor and oppressed and unemployed. It is a theology of imagination - it grew out of fire shut up in our bones, of words painted on a canvas of the mind. Fear is turned to hope in the sanctuaries and storefronts and burst forth in celebration. It is a theology of grace that allows the faithful to see the sunshine of his face - even through their tears. Even the words of an ex-slave trader become a song of liberation and an expression of God's amazing grace. It is a theology of survival that allows a people to celebrate the ability to continue the journey in spite of the insidious tentacles of racism and oppression and to sing "It's another day's journey and I'm glad about it."[92]

Hymns

While blacks sang most of the same "white" music between 1607 and 1790, in time these hymns, many of which came from Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley, were modified so black people could make them their own.[93] In addition, they produced black-metered hymns. This was a "newly shaped folk form" that was "influenced by the a capella 'call-and-response' techniques used both in spirituals and the 'lining tradition' of early Euro-Americans."[94] In these metered hymns, a person would feed the congregation a line in a "singsong" fashion and then the congregation would "flow in" and sing the

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[91] Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid, *Diverse Worship: African-American, Caribbean & Hispanic Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 82.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Joseph Jones, "Examining the Concept of African American Worship as Pertaining to Its Characteristics" (PhD diss., Boston University, 1998), 80.

[94] Ibid., 78-79.

same line with a modified tune. The leader would then feed the congregation the next line and, again, the congregation would respond in turn.[95]

Taken together, the dialogical and spontaneous nature of worship, expressed through spirituals, gospel music and modified hymns, has created a distinct form of worship in the black church. This reflects the communal and experiential nature of the black worship experience. Furthermore, the black theologies expressed through spirituals and gospel music touched upon holistic concerns and reflected themes of refuge and justice. The dialogical and spontaneous nature that is found in the music of black churches is evident in the preaching as well.

Preaching

If music is a "core element" of black worship, preaching is its focal point.[96] Preaching in the black church, like worship, is a dialectical experience through which people engage with the preacher who delivers a "word from the Lord." Maynard-Reid explains that, in the black church tradition, preaching is more than delivering a sermon: "It is an event in which the congregation and musicians are caught up with the preacher in a highly emotional and cognitive drama directed by the spirit."[97] This sophisticated practice is influenced by several key aspects: the role of the preacher, the dialogical nature of preaching, and the styles and element therein.

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[95] Ibid., 79.

[96] Charles Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African-American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 347.

[97] Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid, *Diverse Worship: African-American, Caribbean & Hispanic Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 86.

The Role of the Preacher

Unlike a white congregation, where the preacher may focus on stimulating one's mind, the preacher of a black church is seen as a conduit through which God speaks to his people. Reminiscent of the African medicine men (who often became the earliest preachers),[98] with "knowledge of the word, a divine listening ear, and a 'feel' for the gathered community," the pastor assumes the responsibility of hearing from God and sharing a word with the people.[99]

Not only is the preacher responsible for taking the time to hear from God, but he or she must also present the message in a way that connects to people's experiences. Rooted in the biblical text, exegesis must be subjected to an experiential hermeneutic that connects the word to people's emotions and the realities of daily life. In this sense, preachers assume the role of a prophet, speaking God's word into the present situation.[100]

> The black preacher presents and interprets biblical stories into the language and experiences of black people. A black hermeneutic guides this process by interpreting the Bible in terms that can be readily grasped and applied. The ministry and mission of black churches have been grounded in the story of God's involvement in humanity. God's activity in human history on behalf of the oppressed and disadvantaged constitutes the formative properties of black biblical hermeneutics. The primary task for the black preacher then is the revelation of God's interests and activity in the hearers' immediate lives. This task becomes an adventure in the exploration of Scripture and its application in black life. The

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[98] Ibid., 82. Other similarities between pastors in the black church tradition and medicine man include the fact that they both resided over the major life events of the community, such as birth, death, marriage, coming of age, sickness, and conflict. With this, and a shared role as a leader, seer, and medium the role of the pastor carried on many of the roles of the medicine man, while also adding more diverse responsibilities such as politician and prophet as well.

[99] Melva Wilson. Costen, *African American Christian Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 91.

[100] Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid, *Diverse Worship: African-American, Caribbean & Hispanic Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 89.

> process of interpretation therefore recreates a sacred story in African American life.[101]

Due in part to the difficulty of this task, black preachers are often given honor, authority, and respect by congregants unlike that given to pastors in white congregations.[102] Examples of people who communicate well the biblical text through an experiential hermeneutic include Martin Luther King Jr. and Jesse Jackson. They are praised for "consistently packag[ing] sophisticated theological and political concerns in a charismatic, colorful fashion so that their audiences not only learns something important intellectually that relates to their faith but also *feel* God's spirit active in their midst."[103]

The Dialogical Nature of Preaching

Since connecting the biblical text with people's experience is of such importance to blacks, even with a high view of scripture, black preachers do not as tether themselves to the biblical text as their white counterparts do. Rather, the text is a starting point from which they craft their message, shaped also by the leading of the Holy Spirit, experiences of the congregation, and reactions of the crowd. The sermon, therefore, serves as a dialogue between God, the preacher, and the congregation. As the pastor preaches, congregants respond with "Amen's" "Preach it!" and "Hallelujah's". While not unique to

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[101] Dale P. Andrews, *Practical Theology for Black Churches: Bridging Black Theology and African American Folk Religion* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 19.

[102] This can be seen through elements like the close attention preachers receive from the ushers, the assistance of "armor bearers," and special celebrations on pastor's birthdays and anniversaries communicating that they are a person of God who is worthy of respect.

[103] Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid, *Diverse Worship: African-American, Caribbean & Hispanic Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 89.

the black community, this verbal affirmation plays an important role in the dialogue.[104] Stacey Floyd-Thomas, et al, describe this interaction. Note how the following quote highlights the experiential nature of worship, crafting a sermon that the people connect with and through which they encounter God. Elements of the application of faith to the holistic realm of black experience is also present.

> The African American sermon is designed with participation of the hearers in mind. The time for preaching is a time of invitation to experience revelation and to experience the Spirit of God. The preaching event is a communal activity wherein the preacher seeks to engage the hearer to elicit participation and experience. The reasoning is that preaching needs to address the concrete realities and culture of Black life. It is through concrete relevance that that the preacher creates occasion for dialogue.[105]

Thus the participation of the audience shapes the word that goes forth. Albert J. Raboteau explains how this dialogue also shapes the flow and energy of the sermon:

> Congregational response is crucial to the delivery of the sermon. If response is weak or irregular, it will keep the preacher off stride. Conversely, if the preacher's sense of timing is poor, he will fail to rouse the congregation, and the sermon will fail. There is, then, a reciprocal relation between preacher and congregation in the composition of the sermon. Ideally, the preacher's delivery will ignite the

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[104] Korie L. Edwards, "Race, Religion, and Worship: Are Contemporary African-American Worship Practices Distinct?," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 48, no. 1 (2009): 47, 33, doi:10.1111/j.1468-5906.2009.01428.x. While spontaneous physical worship does appear to be unique to black congregations, for verbal affirmation this is not the case. While African American congregations in historically black denominations did express verbal affirmation more frequently than whites, over 75 percent of white conservative Protestant congregations also express themselves in this way. This is explained by black's and white's shared roots in revivalist religion. This is corroborated by the fact that whites who participate in verbal affirmation also bear qualities associated with revivalism such as inerrancy in the Bible and conservative Protestant beliefs that emphasize evangelism, individual choice, and salvation to a greater degree than Catholics of liberal Protestants. Blacks who have shared roots in revivalist religion share such conservative beliefs, complemented with a emphasis on social justice.

[105] Stacey Floyd-Thomas et al., *Black Church Studies: An Introduction* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 212.

> congregation's vocal response, which will, in turn, support and push him further.[106]

Jones states that this collaborative interaction creates a special relationship between preacher and congregation.

> When there is a sincere dialogue between the African American preacher and the congregation, there is a special fellowship. It is almost like singing a song with all parts blending. It creates harmony and causes the congregation to listen more attentively.[107]

He suggests that it brings the best out of the preacher as well.[108] Therefore, "while authentically biblically based, the messages live and breathe with the community."[109]

Styles and Elements of Preaching

Drawing upon his or her gifts and the disposition of the congregation, the preacher may utilize different linguistic devices or preaching styles common in the African American tradition to engage the congregation. For example the "four R's" rhetoric, repetition, rhythm and rests (dramatic or rhythmic pauses) may be utilized in black preaching to communicate with the people.[110] Distinct preaching styles, like

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[106] Joseph Jones, "Examining the Concept of African American Worship as Pertaining to Its Characteristics" (PhD diss., Boston University, 1998), 68.

[107] Ibid., 65.

[108] Ibid., 6.

[109] Melva Wilson. Costen, *African American Christian Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 85.

[110] Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid, *Diverse Worship: African-American, Caribbean & Hispanic Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 94; Stacey Floyd-Thomas et al., *Black Church Studies: An Introduction* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 212.Stacey Floyd-Thomas et al. also identify memorization, storytelling, poetics, aesthetics, argument, artistic structures such as refrain or phrasing, meter musical or sonorous techniques, exhortation, and demonstration as employed in black preaching.

whooping or chanted sermons, may be seen as well. Whooping is "a sing-song style of preaching" that Jones argues is born from the African custom of singing almost everything: in the absence of writing, stories and messages were passed on through song. [111] Similarly, a chanted sermon is one "composed on the spot in rhythmic metrical speech. The meter is not based on accent but time. It is based on the length of time between regular beats."[112] The result is God's word coming forth in a rhythmic cadence characteristic of the black church.

Black preaching, therefore, is a practice unlike that demonstrated in white congregations. It is an event through which the fruits of the pastors' seeking of the Lord are born into the context of the congregation. Through their responses, the community members shape the word that comes forth, producing the poetry and prose of black expression. This collective action allows the community to encounter God in a way that speaks his word fresh into their daily experiences. Like a sacrament, God's power and words of grace are conferred through the preacher, giving strength to live the Christian life in the midst of obstacles and oppression.

Challenges Encountered by Adherents of the Black Worship Tradition in Multiracial Congregations

Historically, the worship of black congregations and individuals has produced a rich tradition shaped by the culture and experiences of African Americans. While the religious traditions of diverse peoples have the potential to clash whenever communities

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[111] Joseph Jones, "Examining the Concept of African American Worship as Pertaining to Its Characteristics" (PhD diss., Boston University, 1998), 68-69.

[112] Ibid., 67.

encounter expressions different from their own, adherents of the black church face unique challenges in this regard when participating in multiracial congregations. The first obstacle I will address, related to essentialism and stereotypes, is described in the work of Gerardo Marti. The second obstacle, white hegemony, which I will address only briefly in this chapter (but which is the subject of chapter five), is described in the work of Korie Edwards. This section of my paper will address these challenges in an effort to raise people's awareness of how these counterproductive dynamics may be present within multiracial congregations.

The Problem of Presence: Essentialism and Stereotypes as a Means to Diversify Worship

The Ideal of Black Worship

The first challenge encountered by adherents of the black church tradition is rooted in the misperception that African American worship represents an ideal form. While upholding a specific worship style as exemplary is not a bad practice, it can become problematic when it is taken to an extreme. It contributes to people drawing upon essentialism and stereotypes in order to achieve "black worship," attract more blacks, and lead the whole congregation towards a more "genuine" and diverse experience.

"Naturally Better": Biological Theories as a Slippery Slope

To understand this dynamic, two reasons behind this idealism must be explored. First, this idealism is supported by the belief that blacks are naturally more spiritual.[113]

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[113] Gerardo Marti, *Worship Across the Racial Divide: Religious Music and the Multiracial Congregation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 31. This is connected to the belief Marti debunks

Based on interviews with twelve successfully integrated multiracial congregations, Marti found this sentiment to be prevalent therein. For example, one white female said, "“Black people are very spiritual. They are more spiritual than we are....” A white male commented that blacks "Are not afraid to say 'Amen' or ‘Praise God’ or a ‘Yes, Lord’ or raise their hands or say ‘Alleluia,’ *it just comes naturally”* [emphasis mine][114] Others, although less directly, commented on the soulfulness[115] of black worship and associated it with being black. They expressed a sense that the soulfulness, birthed from the black experience, provided blacks with unique access to God that makes them ideal and desirable worshippers. Marti concludes that: "African Americans by virtue of skin color—even before people hear them sing—become imbued with authority on worship and connection to God in multiracial churches."[116]

While some may feel that this serves as a shining complement, what people may not realize is that this idea is rooted in nineteenth century race theory and the undergirding belief that, biologically, people of different races are fundamentally different. During American slavery, this belief was used to support the inherent

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regarding how races are so radically distinct that certain types of music naturally attract people of certain races. This belief in the racialized nature of music is contrasted by another popular view that music connects with a common core shared by all of humanity and thus transcends racial boundaries. Marti concludes that neither belief is correct and poses an alternative theory suggesting that no single type of worship - be it in pursuit of meeting racial interests, or achieving a universal sound - creates the environment that fosters multiracial worship.

[114] Ibid.,54.

[115]Ibid., 54. According to C. Eric Lincoln "Soul is an ethnic concept, a product and a creator of black culture. it is the art, the music, the religion, and the style of black people....Whatever else it is, soul is the essence of the black experience - the distillate of the whole body of events and occurrences, primary and derivative, which went into the shaping of reality as black people live it and understand it. It is the connective thread that runs through the totality of the black experience, weaving it together, making it intelligible, and giving it meaning."

[116] Ibid., 55.

superiority of whites over blacks and the view that blacks are subhuman. While framed in the positive in the twenty-first century, this seeming complement is a slippery slope that may have unintended consequences.

The Fruit of Suffering: Intimacy with God and a Special Gospel Grace

The second belief that contributes to the ideal of black worship is that black people's ability to sing gospel music is connected to the conference of a special grace that God has given black people. This grace is given so they can endure oppression and it draws them closer to God. [117] In Marti's interviews, he encountered a number of people who called blacks' ability to sing gospel music "a gift." It was seen as something they possess, independent of training, because it had been given to them from God. For example, one man says "[black people] have a beauty in their worship...They've got rhythm, and I call it a gift because it seems to be poured out liberally on them...There is just a gift that...comes out of pain, the roots of the gospel music, the pain and suffering that brings forth depth of character."[118] Interestingly, Marti points out that this view is not expressed in isolation. Rather, it seems that whites, Asians, Latinos, and even blacks themselves connect the force of African American musical expression with black people's suffering.[119] As seen in the preceding sections, there is a measure of truth in these

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[118] Ibid., 56.

[119] Ibid., 56. I thought that these, and other quotes used to support Marti's argument up to this point, were not as directly connected to his conclusions as I would have liked. While interviewees would be unlikely to have the vocabulary or understanding needed to express their actions in relation to the conclusions Marti draws, I am a bit concerned, (basing my concern only upon the examples given), that

statements as slavery and oppression shaped and is reflected in the black worship tradition. It is important to distinguish, however, between that and a *superior* gift that is found *within black people* by virtue of their people's suffering. Marti takes the time to clarify that, *while blacks have remarkable talent in performing gospel music, this is shaped by their culture and socialization, not biological links.* The next section will explore how, regardless of how it is explained, the close association between black people and gospel talent can contribute to using blacks to achieve the goal of diverse worship.

The Utilization of Black Worship Leaders to Diversify Worship

As discussed in chapter three, multiracial religious organizations are inherently unstable and it takes intentional efforts to maintain a racially diverse community. Furthermore, of all of the racial groups in multiracial congregations, it is most difficult to maintain the presence of members of the black community.[120] Marti found that, within multiracial congregations, it is believed that gospel music attracts blacks to the service and thus helps maintain greater diversity.[121] (In a separate study, he did confirm that black people are drawn to multiracial congregations by black worship and, over time, they become incorporated into the congregation through an emphasis on a transcendent

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Marti may be stretching what people said to conform to his conclusions. It is likely that he has information and insight that supports his conclusions not presented in the body of the text.

[120] Ibid., 53.

[121] Ibid., 53.

identity).[122]On account of this perception, multiracial congregations began to feature gospel music so as to attract members of the black community. Marti identifies this as "a form of instrumentalism as the music is intended to achieve a particular effect."[123]

At the same time, interviewees expressed a common belief that blacks are best able to sing gospel music. Therefore, black worship leaders become hailed as the key to diversify multiracial congregations. Because worship leaders are often held responsible for diversifying worship and pressured to "provide results" despite the fact that many have not been trained on how to actualize this goal, many see the addition of black worship leaders as a "result," moving the congregation one step closer to a greater goal. [124] In this process, the richness of the black worship tradition is often lost as it is pursued primarily as a means to an end. Marti writes:

> The history, variety, and ambiguity of 'black music' is utterly lost on church leaders and attenders today who radically simplify the style of music to fulfill an imperative of what 'should' be included in their church services. In conversations among church leaders, gospel music is perceived to be a unique vehicle for accomplishing racial integration in churches.[125]

While hiring a black worship leader to share his or her worship tradition with a congregation can be a healthy diversification of musical worship (one that can be mutually enriching and edifying), it becomes problematic when tainted by ulterior

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[122] Gerardo Marti, "The Religious Racial Integration of African Americans into Diverse Churches," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 49, no. 2 (2010): 231, doi:10.1111/j.1468-5906.2010.01503.x.

[123] Gerardo Marti, *Worship Across the Racial Divide: Religious Music and the Multiracial Congregation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 53.

[124] Ibid., 62-63, 69. 101, 104.

[125] Ibid., 68.

motives. Too often, when this is the case, the worship leader is expected to "act black" when leading worship in order to appeal to the black community. Thus, *there is an amplification of stereotypes and essentialism.* Once this purpose is served, however, blacks are expected to conform to the larger congregational culture. Marti writes that "The irony of black worship performance is that when African Americans are on the platform, they are encouraged to 'sing like black folks,' but when they are in the pews they are encouraged to fit in."[126] *Thus this double standard encourages black expression only when it serves as a means to an end.* This is corroborated by the fact that congregations Marti interviewed seemed to monitor the black worship leaders to make sure that the worship wasn't "too black" and thus threatening their idol of diversity. For example, in one congregation the pastor explicitly avoided calling his predominately black, black-led, gospel-singing choir a "gospel choir" "due to the stigma of 'gospel' being associated with 'black.' "It's not a gospel choir" he explained, "we particularly stay away from the word 'gospel.' We don't want to give people the impression that we are trying to turn that service into a gospel, black-oriented, music-style service."[127] The pastor went on to explain that while he had wanted to incorporate more black culture into the service at one point, "some of the church councilmen said we are trying to get away from that because we don't want to be known as a black church that has black music and black preaching."[128]

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[126] Ibid., 69.

[127] Ibid., 72.

[128] Ibid., 72.

While I can understand how this pastor would be concerned that, if a service appeared "too black" it could turn away non-blacks and similarly threaten the congregation’s diversity, I am more concerned that this double standard manipulates black people and black culture as a means to an end. Although this may seem like a minor offense to some, or perhaps justifiable in pursuit of a greater goal, let me point out, that such objectification and utilitarian thinking undergirded slavery. I say that not as a harsh rebuke, but as a warning. The church in America must learn from its past and guard against a new form of oppression creeping into our pursuit of racial diversity.

While I was assured by the fact that many worship leaders said that worshipping God came before the goal of diversity, caution should still be taken. As a result, pastors of multiracial congregations should reflect on their worship practice and their relationship with their black worship leaders and congregants. How do African-Americans in the congregation feel about the way black worship is utilized? Are they willing to conform to the aforementioned trends, seeing it as a part of the pursuit of the multiracial vision, or do they feel that they are the survivor of unintended spiritual manipulation? If leaders are unwilling to have these conversations or make changes when wounds are revealed, it is an indicator that the biblical ideal of diversity may have become an idol for them. Marti concludes:

> All combined, the beliefs surrounding black gospel music has the potential of creating conditions for separation and difference rather than unity and togetherness...Insisting on gospel music inadvertently exaggerates, rather than ameliorates, one of the fundamental sources of racial divisions in America—beliefs of racial essentialism.[129]

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[129] Ibid., 72.

No One Worship Style Fosters a Successfully Integrated Multiracial Church

Marti's research goes on to reveal that, despite people's efforts to produce "black worship," the pursuit of a particular worship style is actually unnecessary to achieve a successfully integrated multiracial church. While a service that highlights a variety of cultural expressions *can* contribute to the development of a diverse community, no single worship style is key to its success. Rather, there are four styles found in and believed to contribute to successfully integrated multiracial congregations. The musical style of *Traditionalists* maintain a consistent style in conformity with their traditions, *Professionalists* introduce various styles in pursuit of professional excellence, *Assimilationists* express limited diversity in worship style because they believe in a universal quality of music, and *Pluralists* prepare diverse worship sets to appeal to people of different racial communities.[130] Therefore, Marti makes a nuanced argument that because no single style is the common element of success, a diverse expression of worship is not as important as often anticipated.[131] *Rather, more specific elements within worship contribute to diversity: the ostensible diversity of worship leaders, and the space the music creates for people to develop meaningful relationships across cultural lines.* Marti explains that just as visible diversity in leadership works to actively recruit and accentuate diversity,[132] so also the social action of preparing for and participating in

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[130] Ibid., 132.

[131] Ibid., 80.

[132] Ibid., 158.

worship leads to cross-racial bonding on and off the stage.[133] He clarifies that, while "the push for black inclusion through hiring black staff and forming gospel choirs inadvertently serves to diversify the congregation," contrary to the common belief, "it is not music but rather recruitment and participation in musical structures that fosters relationships, community, loyalty, and a sense of connection—the bonds that create a sense of what 'church' is together."[134] Therefore, when it comes to the recruitment of black worship leaders, doing so is productive to the degree that it contributes to the development of diverse relationships. Relationships, not music style, is key. *Therefore, there is no need to highlight stereotypes and essentialism in order to maintain the diversity of a multiracial congregation.* On the contrary, doing so can be counterproductive. Diverse relationships should be pursued instead.

The Problem of Absence: White Hegemony

Marti's research revealed that the *presence* of distinctly black worship was connected to the utilization of stereotypes and essentialism to reach a greater goal. In the end, this utilitarian approach was found to be counterproductive and unnecessary for the development of a successfully integrated multiracial church. A second obstacle to adherents of the black worship tradition which will be addressed in-depth in the following chapter is white hegemony. White hegemony considers the circumstance under which there is an *absence* of the expression of the black church tradition because it is being suppressed by the dominant white culture. While Marti argued that the presence of

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[133] Ibid., Ch. 8 abstract.

[134] Ibid., 178.

these qualities within themselves do not contribute to diversity, the absence of them in multiracial congregations with black constituents *may* indicate that there is a problem of power and relationship. Based on my preceding presentation of black worship, the reader is now more able to identify what qualities and practices have historically been associated with the black church. This includes a holistic worldview, experiential worship, an emphasis on justice, distinct music, and a dialogical preaching style, to name a few. With this multifaceted awareness, the reader may better identify when these qualities are present or absent in a multiracial church. Being able to do so is the first step in determining if white hegemony is present; furthermore, this identification can ultimately aid in working towards equality in the body of Christ.

Summary of The Black Worship Tradition and The Dangers of Essentialism

The black church has a rich heritage that has been shaped by its socio-historical context. It is a beautiful expression of the black community that offers an invaluable perspective on God and how the Lord can be worshipped by the body of Christ. Though remarkably diverse in areas such as culture, ritual, and expression, the black church has general characteristics and values that can be found throughout:

- A holistic spirituality that connects faith to life
- An emphasis on expression and experiences through which people encounter the presence of God
- An emphasis on engaging with one another in worship and living life in community

- Providing a place of refuge where blacks can experience acceptance and relief
- Worship as a means of empowerment unto liberation and justice

Within this framework, specific practices such as dialogical worship and preaching, gospel music, rhythmic preaching styles, and the elevation of the pastor contribute to a dynamic expression of the faith.

As Marti's research revealed, however, this complex tradition can be glossed over, devalued, and disrespected as a means to an end. Ironically, this occurs when multiracial church leadership seeks out black worship leaders in an effort to attract more blacks and diversify the congregation. Despite good intentions, this can result in blacks being essentialized and stereotyped. Furthermore, the double standard to which black worship leaders may be held is dehumanizing as well. Therefore, the very efforts that may be utilized to foster diversity can actually work against it. If people do not become aware of these counterproductive consequences, the church may actively reinforce the stereotypes and deal the disrespect that contributes to the divisions they are seeking to combat. Instead of providing the opportunity for people to encounter God in meaningful ways and expand their view of the Lord through participation in a black style of worship, the tradition is cheapened by black essentialism. As a result, people may pass judgment on an oversimplified form of such worship, limiting what they can learn and the way they will see their black brothers and sister in Christ.

V. WHITE HEGEMONY: THE UNINTENDED COUNTERPRODUCTIVE CONSEQUENCES OF WHITENESS

Multiracial congregations have the potential for both racial reconciliation and perpetuating dynamics that sustain the racial divide. They are ripe for reconciliation on account of their shared beliefs and acknowledgement of the reconciling work of Jesus (see Ch. 2). Their sociological dynamics that empower whites to become more aware of racism, blacks to gain social and economic capital, and all participants to increase the number of relationships with people of another race provide further hope for reconciliation as well (see Ch. 4, pgs. 115-135).[1] With that having been said, in some cases, multiracial congregations also perpetuate black essentialism and white hegemony. This chapter builds upon Chapter Four's discussion of obstacles to racially egalitarian worship by exploring the ways in which white hegemony is present in congregations that are predominantly black and white. It goes on to explain how the nature of whiteness sustains such hegemony and introduces models of white identity development as tools that can help abate this power dynamic.

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[1] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 99. Whites that attend multiracial congregations are more likely to recognize racial inequality, the social and systemic causes thereof, and be more supportive of racial equality. Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 95-98, 101. Blacks who attend multiracial congregations gain social and economic capital, and both blacks and whites increase the number of relationships with people of other races on all levels of intimacy.

DEFINING WHITE HEGEMONY

Hegemony is the dominance of one group over another.[2] Politically hegemonic relationships are often seen in national politics, such as the relationship between the United States and Iraq. Similarly, in biblical times Judah made an alliance with Egypt and gave them tribute in exchange for protection (E.g. Isa. 30:1-3, 2 Chron. 36:2-4). Racial hegemony is similar, but it exists between the dominant race and those that are socially subordinate. White people exert racial hegemony in America. This is a result of their ability to leverage social and historical influences to put themselves in positions of power over non-whites. According to sociologist Korie Edwards, white hegemony is "a form of rule where whites dominate society with the consent of racial minorities. Racial minorities acknowledge whites' dominant status as legitimate and affirm (if only passively) the culture and structures that sustain it." [3] Hegemony, therefore, implies that people are not in equal relationship with one another but subject to the dominant social influence. While commonplace in the United States, racially hegemonic relationships are not in alignment with the radical equality advocates of multiracial congregations believe God intended for people to experience with one another as members of the body of Christ.

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[2] Korie L. Edwards, *The Elusive Dream: The Power of Race in Interracial Churches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 127. Edwards explains that, while "hegemony is often used to describe how an entire society is controlled...hegemony is the outcome of many micro-level projects taking place across society." A church could be such a micro-level project.

[3] Ibid., 122. Edwards attributes this to America's democratic system, that offers an illusion of power; the American dream, that tells people that success is on account of personal efforts, not structural realities; and colorblindness that discourages the acknowledgement of racial differences.

The Presence of White Hegemony in Interracial Congregations

In *The Elusive Dream,* Edwards makes the provocative case that interracial congregations, congregations in which "African Americans and whites are the two primary groups in the church,"[4] have been found to yield to white hegemony:

> The interracial, religious, and cultural practices and organizational structures of interracial churches will be more representative of the preferences and desires of whites than of the racial minorities in these organizations. And the racial identities, racial attitudes, and religious perspectives of people who attend interracial churches will not challenge, but may even reinforce whiteness in these organizations... (Therefore) whiteness plays a critical role in how interracial churches are organized, ultimately producing churches that reflect a congregational life more commonly seen in white churches than in others.[5]

While Edwards chose to focus on the relationships between blacks and whites and defined interracial congregations accordingly,[6] she

> Suspect[ed] that similar racial dynamics will be evident in Christian interracial organizations of other racial compositions where whites have a presence. Whiteness is a ubiquitous force in the United States. And its ultimate outcome,

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[4] Ibid., 142, 153-154. Edwards defined an interracial church, more specifically, as "one where African Americans and whites each comprised between 10 percent and 90 percent of the adult church attendees, and where Latinos and Asians each comprised less than 10 percent of the adult church attendees" (142) "On average, whites, African Americans, Latinos, and Asians comprised 64 percent, 33 percent, 4 percent, and 1 percent of [the] interracial churches [that Edwards analyzed through the National Congregations Study] respectively" (154). "Supplementary analyses based upon [a multiracial] 80:20 cutoff to distinguish interracial and racially homogeneous were also conducted" (142). More specifically, Edwards goes on to explain that, if she were to use the 80:20 cut off to define interracial congregations that would have left her with less than 20 congregations that fit this criteria after accounting for missing data; a number insufficient for her analysis (153). She found, however, that in comparing congregations with the 90:10 and 80:20 cut off, the findings are consistent (153-154). Therefore, while interracial congregations are not technically multiracial, the dynamics present in interracial congregations as it relates to worship practice and social and civil engagement is the same. This indicates, Edwards concludes, that the overall pattern of hegemonic influence is robust (154).

[5] Ibid., 6.

[6] See Introduction, pgs. 5-8 for this reasoning.

> white hegemony, can persist regardless of which racial minority group is subjected to it.[7]

Drawing upon the National Congregations Study (NCS), a nationally representative, congregational-level data set, Edwards compares the practices of white, black,[8] and interracial congregations to illustrate that blacks are more likely to conform to white practices in interracial congregations after controlling for characteristics like age composition, religious tradition, and whether or not a congregation is charismatic. For example, when it comes to worship practices, black churches are 8.6 times more likely to participate in hand raising and 4.7 times more likely to participate in verbal affirmation than their white counterpart.[9] Despite this, interracial congregations' participation in these practices is no different from white congregations. Likewise, although black churches are seven times more likely to have a choir during worship and "far less likely" to have a time of greeting during services than interracial congregations, again the practice of interracial congregations' is no different from that of their white counterpart.[10] The factors for which the behavior of interracial congregations did fall between the average activity of black and white churches is, as one may expect, spontaneous worship practices (i.e. dancing, jumping or shouting) and the length of the service.[11] Taken together,

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[7] Ibid., 135-136..

[8] Ibid.,189. Edwards uses the term "black" and "African American" interchangeably to refer to "people of African descent who live in the United States." I also uses this language for the purpose of consistency.

[9] Ibid., 22.

[10] Ibid., 22-23.

[11] Ibid., 22.

however, Edwards concludes, "interracial churches are not inclined to adopt the worship styles and practices that are commonly observed in African American churches. They adopt those that are more common to white churches."[12] Blacks are conforming to the preferences of whites.[13]

This submission on the part of blacks is significant because worship is intimately tied to one's identity. This single practice has meaning that extends far beyond the practice itself. Knowing this helps the reader imagine the tension that can arise surrounding worship, especially in interracial congregations. Edwards explains that during worship,

> Congregations engage in their most dramatic rituals, their most intentional presentation[s] of their sense of identity'...Worship services are the most central in the sense that people are proclaiming who they are, not only to themselves, but also to others. They tell us what the people who participate in these rituals and practices are about. They tell us who belongs and who does not. They tell us what is allowed, what is praiseworthy, and what is unacceptable.[14]

It could be argued therefore, that when blacks yield to whites in this arena, they are suppressing a part of their identity. At Crosstown Community Church, a multiracial congregation in the Midwest where Edwards conducted an in-depth case study,[15] 60

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[12] Ibid., 2.

[13] Ibid., 135-136.

[14] Ibid., 20.

[15] Ibid., 16-17, 24. Crosstown Community Church: Crosstown community church was a conservative Protestant church in a Midwestern city that drew its congregants from two neighborhoods, one that was a predominantly white, but diverse and upper middle-class and the other of which was predominantly working-class and African American. The congregation was composed of approximately 200 people, 65 percent of whom were African American, 30 percent of whom were white, and 5 percent of whom were Latino and Asian. The Senior Pastor was also an African American from a Pentecostal background, though his "sermon delivery style was not reflective of the rhythmic, climactic, and sometimes spontaneous style common among African American preachers" nor did it facilitate any form of "call and response."

percent of African Americans expressed dissatisfaction with worship. Although they said that they "enjoyed the worship style and music during the worship services," when asked in a separate question about what frustrated them, 60 percent indicated worship.[16] People complained that its level of enthusiasm and congregational participation was less than satisfactory. Indeed, although blacks are yielding to white preference, many are not and cannot be satisfied with a form of expression that is not true to themselves.

Beyond the service itself, while congregations do not differ significantly on their level of community involvement,[17] there are discrepancies in civil and social engagement. For example, black churches are more likely[18] to be involved politically (i.e. encourage voter registration, facilitate political discussions, and host candidates) and are 2.6 times more likely than interracial churches to have race-related discussions. Despite this, interracial congregations were found to be no more likely to engage in these activities than white churches.[19] Interracial congregations are also 7 times less likely than black churches (although 66 percent more likely than white churches) to celebrate their cultural heritage.[20] In sum, as with worship, blacks in interracial congregations conform to the preference of whites when it comes to certain forms of social and civil engagement. Although some may excuse this as having benign results, Edwards explains why black conformity can be damaging to their culture, race-related concerns, and community:

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[16] Ibid., 26.

[17] Ibid., 40.

[18] Ibid., 40-41. Black churches scored one full point higher than multiracial congregations, who score no higher than whites, on a scale from 1 - 8.

[19] Ibid., 41.

[20] Ibid.

> For the African-American community especially, churches are both places of worship and places of social, cultural and political significance. Unlike other American institutions, such as the workplace, schools, and housing, religion provides African Americans with an institutional vehicle through which they can preserve their culture and influence the world in which they live. However, a national comparison of churches' participation in racially salient social and civic activities suggest that, when blacks and whites attend the same church, the congregation is less apt to leverage the church for these extrareligious purposes. These results reinforce the notion that white normativity and privilege affect the congregational lives of interracial churches. Moreover, they suggest that African-American members of interracial churches pay the added cost of becoming less effective at preserving their culture, addressing race-related concerns, or creating social change for their respective communities.[21]... If secular society does not provide opportunities for people of color to equally stake their collective interests in civic society and to celebrate their cultures , the evidence from the NCS suggests that racially diversifying churches, as they are currently structured, could be a detriment to their capacity to do so.[22]

In the last chapter, I presented multiple types of interracial congregations and established that being an interracial congregation does not necessitate a racially egalitarian community. This may lead some to wonder if white hegemony and its consequences are only present in interracial congregations that are not striving to create such a community. Unfortunately, this is not the case. On the contrary, white hegemony and its related consequences has been found to exist *even in the presence of a multiracial vision, non-white leadership and other qualities that are believed to contribute to a "successful"[23] multiracial church.[24]* In describing her visits to interracial congregations, Edwards writes,

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[21] Ibid., 51.

[22] Ibid., 53.

[23] Other qualities, as mentioned in Chapter 4 (pgs. 148-154), include intentional engagement, sensitivity, accommodation, diverse worship, and (as I suggest) corporate participation in spiritual practices.

> As I continued to visit churches across the country, I noticed a pattern. Nearly all the churches, *regardless of their specific racial compositions,* reminded me of the predominantly white churches I had visited. Generally, the churches were racially diverse at all levels. Whites and minorities were in the pews and in leadership. There were sometimes cultural practices and markers that represented racial minorities in these congregations, such as a gospel music selection, a display of flags from various countries around the world, or services translated into Spanish. Yet the diversity did not seem to affect the core culture and practices of the religious organizations. That is, the style of preaching, music, length of services, structure of services, dress code, political and community activities, missionary interests, and theological emphases tended to be more consistent with those of the predominantly white churches I had observed [emphasis mine]. [25]

This was made evident at Crosstown Community Church. Crosstown had a multiracial vision,[26] a black senior pastor from a historically black, Pentecostal denomination,[27] and a congregation that was 65 percent black.[28] It made intentional efforts to add gospel music and praise choruses to worship services[29] and directly addressed race in sermons and seminars.[30] Even in this prime environment, white hegemony prevailed. Edwards concludes,

> Crosstown confirms that you don't need racists to reproduce white hegemony. Other research has demonstrated this as well. However, this study extends our understanding of this phenomenon by revealing the processes that dictate how

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[24] Ibid., 8, 136.

[25] ibid., 8.

[26] Ibid., 136.

[27] Ibid., 58.

[28] Ibid., 66.

[29] Ibid., 59.

[30] Ibid., 46-49.

> whiteness prospers in an environment that portends to be racially diverse, inclusive, and egalitarian.[31]

Indeed, potential for reconciliation is stifled by unintended,[32] counterproductive consequences.

Cultural and Historical Differences that Contribute to White Hegemony

The struggle of maintaining a congregational culture in which both blacks and whites can equally express themselves is due in part to the distinctly different cultures that developed from each people group on account of historical segregation. According to Emerson, blacks and whites are the two indigenous cultures of the United States[33] They are a unique combination of ethnic and national cultures that have been birthed in the socio-historical context of the United States through people from across the globe melding into one of America's five racial categories.[34] Because of the historical separation of blacks and whites, however, these cultures have "developed, nourished, and [been] institutionalized" separately.[35] Furthermore, they have often been developed in

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[31] Ibid., 136.

[32] See chapter five, pgs. 237-243 discussing the unconscious nature of whiteness.

[33] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 134. Emerson clarifies that, while Native Americans and Native Mexicans in the U.S are "indigenous" to the land, they are not indigenous to the United States as a national entity because they were present before the founding of the nation.

[34] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 98-99, 135. Emerson explains that, "Immigrants come to the United States as ethnics, as people of a particular nationality or region. But they learn in the United States that for political, social, cultural, and even religious reasons, they are to meld into a racial group. They are expected to do so and they garner and advantages by doing so. For these reasons, Hollinger writes, there is not one, but five melting pots, corresponding to the major 'racial groups' in the United States."

[35] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 135.

opposition to one another, in that to "act white" is not to "act black" and therefore to be black is the opposite of whiteness.[36] Philosopher George Yancey adds, "At the heart of whiteness is a profound disavowal: 'I am not that!' In other words, whiteness is secured through marking what it is not."[37] As a result, Emerson explains, each group has its own distinct way of life:

> Both cultures have their main ways of interacting, their unique forms of music, their own institutions, their own unique problems, and their own values systems and ways of looking at the world; people in both interact predominantly with the people in their own racial group.[38]

Emerson goes on to say that the culture associated with white Americans is mistakenly understood as American culture due in part to the fact that, historically, there have been more white Americans and those Americans have held the central positions of power. He clarifies that black culture, however, is just as much American culture as that of whites:

> ...White U.S culture is no more American than black U.S. culture. Both have been present since the nation's founding. Both have contributed immeasurably to the nation's development. Both have developed numerous subcultures within them. Both have developed unique religious cultures. And both share and contribute to the American political, educational, economic, and entertainment systems. To whatever extent there is a single overarching American culture, it is, as scholar Cornell West and others have said, the blending of black and white cultural aspects.[39]

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[36] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 135.

[37] George Yancey, "Intro, Ch. 1," in *Look, a White!: Philosophical Essays on Whiteness* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012), 20, accessed October 2014.

[38] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 135, 136-137. For more info on how some of these differences are shaped by a racialized society see Emerson, Michael O., and Christian Smith. "Is the United States Really Racialized." In *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*, 11-17. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

[39] Ibid.137.

It is with this understanding in mind that one must consider the shadow that is cast upon the hope of reconciliation in the context of predominantly black and white congregations.

Conflict occurs as a result of these distinct cultures.[40] Conflict is seen both within and, especially, between groups as divergent worldviews, standards, and expectations collide. When people of different cultures argue over how things are done, these external issues may represent deeper, often unconscious, issues related to conflicting habitus and identities.[41] Eric H.F. Law explains that while elements of culture like language, food, art, clothing, music, and customs are most visible, they are only one aspect of culture. These external factors function as the tip of an iceberg that are connected to deeper cultural influences that consist of "unconscious beliefs, thought patterns, values, and

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[40] Michael Pocock and Joseph Henriques, *Cultural Change and Your Church: Helping Your Church Thrive in a Diverse Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 102. It should be noted that, while culture is a significant source of difference and conflict, it is not the sole culprit. Rather, there are numerous other influences on human behavior and cultural differences must not be overemphasized or oversimplified. Pockcok and Henriques explain: "Not all behavior is cultural. There are many things people do and say that are neither caused by nor related to their culture. If all human behavior were put on a continuum, that part related to culture would fall in the middle, between universal at one extreme and personal at the other...While the shared assumptions, values, and beliefs guarantees that people from the same culture will be similar in many ways, personal experience guarantees that no two people from the same culture will be identical."

[41] Ibid., 144-146. Emerson defines habitus as "a deeply seated, all encompassing set of preferred tastes, smells, feelings, emptions and ways of doing things" that is developed in a person in their childhood and difficult to change (144); Pierre Bourdieu, "2," in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 72. A habitus, as defined by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, who developed the concept, is an unconscious, internalized and established structure that is a collectively orchestrated and self-propelling reality. He writes in greater detail that a habitus is "systems of durable, transferable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring practices and representations which can be objectively regulated and regular without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor."

myths that affect everything we do and see." [42] L. L. Naylor puts this in a different way, describing cultural interaction as an unavoidable clash of deeper truths:

> As culture represents truth, when people of different cultures come together, the consequence must always be some conflict, for it is more then people coming into contact. It really means that truths come into contact and that means conflict. Each group tends to believe that its beliefs and practices are the right or more correct ones. They judge others by it and being convinced of its correctness, each group makes every effort to impose their truth on everybody else. As everybody does the same thing, cultural contact will always mean conflict.[43]

Most people are unaware of how these internal elements of culture shape their worldview and, compared to external expressions of culture, they are much more difficult to change. Therefore, people can feel strongly about a particular, sometimes seemingly minor issue, without realizing how their feelings are shaped by deeper values and beliefs.[44] Emerson explains that these conflicts are further complicated by the fact that, in religious organizations, people tend to equate cultural elements with religious absolutes:

> Religious organizations seem particularly susceptible to conflict because of the heightened tendency to hold absolute positions on the rightness or wrongness of a particular action, due to the religious nature of the organization. Conflict seems to be intensified when all the members are committed to the absolute truth of their beliefs, but the various cultural groups within the organization differ on how those beliefs are lived out.[45]

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[42] Eric H. F. Law, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb: A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1993), 5.

[43] Brad Christerson, Korie L. Edwards, and Michael O. Emerson, *Against All Odds: The Struggle for Racial Integration in Religious Organizations* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 159-160.

[44] Ibid., 4-7, 9.

[45] Brad Christerson, Korie L. Edwards, and Michael O. Emerson, *Against All Odds: The Struggle for Racial Integration in Religious Organizations* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 159-160.

Therefore, in multiracial congregations, already complicated and sensitive cultural issues take on another level of complexity, making disagreements especially difficult to work out.

In addition to cultural differences, Emerson explains that conflict arises from the use of power. Specifically, power is used to determine the practice and corporate culture of a congregation. While, in uniracial congregations, these decisions may not involve the misuse of power, in multiracial congregations, one group's intention to do something in a way in which they are comfortable may actually work to exclude people of different cultures within the congregation.[46] Because of the different habitus associated with race, this power play can mean that one race is exerting hegemonic influence over another. For example, dominant people and groups can use their power to determine the music style, the race of leadership, which teachings will be emphasized, what art to display and who will be held as an exemplar.[47] Emerson concludes by saying that "If multiracial congregations do not [provide shields against power imbalances between racial groups]...they can actually thwart progress towards racial equality."[48]

Unfortunately, addressing power dynamics is made especially difficult in a multiracial context. In addition to the numerous elements that contribute to white hegemony in general (discussed below), Law suggests that how people engage the issue

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[46] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 148.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid., 152.

of power is shaped by their perception thereof. To explain, whites come from a low power distance culture, a culture wherein they believe that they are able to challenge authorities and effectively affect change. People of color, on the other hand, come from a high power distance culture, contributing to them feeling as if they are less likely to be able to foster change.[49] Law posits that these underlying assumptions impact the way that these two groups interact with one another. For example, transferring their own experience to others, "most whites believe that inequality can be countered by simply physically including the powerless and the disadvantaged. Whites, however, often do not see themselves as having the most power and believe that everyone has equal power and opportunity to affect change."[50] As people who generally approach an interaction open to sharing their opinions and believing they can make change, whites expect that, if people of color are present, they will do the same. This, however, is not the case. Rather, people of color are painfully aware that whites have more power than themselves and this reality may shape white/non-white interactions. As a result, people of color perceive there to be far more limitations on how they participate in a conversation than whites perceive. For example, people of color may wait to be instructed or invited by whites authorities before sharing their perspective.[51] Cultural customs common among people of color, such as being accustomed to thinking and reflecting before one responds or communicating as a

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[49] Eric H. F. Law, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb: A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1993), 22.

[50] Ibid., 33-34.

[51] Ibid., 32-33.

collective community, may provide further obstacles to people's participation as well.[52] Therefore, differences in the perception of power between whites and non-whites and how this shapes expectations and behavior contributes to unequal power dynamics remaining unchanged.[53]

Drawing upon Edwards' research and the experience of Crosstown, the following section will explore how white hegemony shapes the practices of multiracial churches while also continuing to explain why white hegemony persists even in the presence of promising factors.

Congregational Dynamics that Contribute to White Hegemony

While the key qualities of a "successful" multiracial church do not prevent white hegemony, factors have been identified that are needed for hegemony to exist.[54] First, white hegemony depends on racial minorities staying at interracial congregations because they perceive it to be the best option.[55] Interviews from Crosstown revealed that, even if blacks are suppressed in some areas, because they are not satisfied with homogeneous congregations of their own ethnicity (to which they have easy access), they choose to stay

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[52] Ibid., 33-34.

[53] Ibid., 35.

[54] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006),128. White hegemony, on the macro-level of society and the meso-level of a multiracial congregation, is the product of many micro-level projects. It is these projects that, though they may function independently, work together to sustain white hegemony. In the case of multiracial congregations, these micro projects will be discussed as criteria that sustain white hegemony.

[55] Ibid., 127.

in an interracial context.[56] Second, whites need to be more likely than blacks to leave the church. This is often the case because, despite their desire to worship amidst racial diversity, their connection to a church is often "fragile and dependent upon the church's affirmation of whiteness." This is true whether or not whites are in the numerical majority.[57] Whites are especially likely to leave if their preferences are not represented in worship, if they are displeased with non-white networks and congregational participation, or if children and youth programs are not to their satisfaction.[58] The odds of whites leaving is also influenced by how they believe other whites will perceive them.[59] In brief, whites are not accustomed to having to yield their power to non-whites and, aware of their motivations or not, some choose to remove themselves from situations in which they cannot get their way rather than yield their power to develop an egalitarian environment.

> For most white Americans, however, being in a context where they are expected to accommodate the preferences and desires of racial minorities is rare indeed. Having to do so is a rather foreign experience. Whites are accustomed to being in control in social contexts. Their norms and values are in most cases accepted without challenge. These characteristics afford whites far greater opportunity, relative to racial minorities, to live in, establish, and reproduce social spaces that accommodate their preferences, culture, and superior status (Bonilla-Silva 2001; Doane 2003; Feagin, Vera, and Batur 2001; Frankenburg 1993; Omi and Winant 1997)...If the organization does not address concerns, and in fact capitulate to white people's wishes, it is easy for white people in question to find other organizations that will, and so they leave interracial churches in pursuit of this.[60]

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[56] Ibid., 127-128.

[57] Ibid., 128.

[58] Brad Christerson, Korie L. Edwards, and Michael O. Emerson, *Against All Odds: The Struggle for Racial Integration in Religious Organizations* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 168-170.

[59] Ibid., 170-171. "Maintaining legitimacy within the dominant group is of greater priority for whites than are the desires and needs of fellow non-white organization members."

[60] Brad Christerson, Korie L. Edwards, and Michael O. Emerson, *Against All Odds: The Struggle for Racial Integration in Religious Organizations* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 172.

Finally, interracial congregations must have a critical mass of African Americans that care if whites leave. In reflecting upon interviews with Crosstown, Edwards identifies one reason why these blacks saw it as their best option: for them, Crosstown is one of the "rare places where voluntary, cooperative, and friendly multiracial interactions could occur."[61] Ironically, they were yielding their desires and acting against their own self-interest in order to experience the positive relationships they should be having, and could be having, was it not for injustice! This desire for healthy multiracial relationships, among others, provides motivation enough for blacks to yield to hegemonic influence so that whites might remain. If a group as small as around 10 percent of the congregation (in the case of Crosstown) shares a similar sentiment, their complicity is enough to cause the congregation to yield to whites' preference.[62] Edwards concludes that, in light of these dynamics, maintaining interracial congregations actually requires support of the status quo.[63]

> Interracial churches work to the extent that they are first, comfortable places for whites to attend. This is because whites are accustomed to their cultural practices and ideologies being the norm and to be structurally dominant in nearly every social situation. What this means is that, for interracial churches to stay interracial, racial minorities must be willing to sacrifice their preferences, or they must have already sufficiently acculturated into and accepted the dominant culture and white's privileged status.[64]

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[61] Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006),127.

[62] Ibid., 128.

[63] Ibid., 124.

[64] Ibid., 139.

Edwards has identified six archetypes present in multiracial congregations based on her case study at Crosstown[65] that illustrate how the interactions between certain types of people can perpetuate white hegemony.[66] Three archetypes are present among each racial group. The categories for whites are organized based on how they respond when their whiteness is threatened and the categories for blacks are organized around their level of consent to whiteness.[67] The first white archetype is that of the experimenters: people who are curious about racial diversity and see it as "broaden[ing] their spiritual perspective and improv[ing] their religious experience." Despite this, they are likely to leave when their whiteness is threatened instead of working through differences. The second archetype, conditional believers, strongly affirm racial integration, have solid interracial ties in the church, and engage conflict when whiteness is threatened in core congregational activities. They even believe that racial integration in religious contexts is morally right. However, despite their ideals, they do not want to be in a multiracial congregation where blacks and whites are equally represented in practice: they enjoy feeling like they are living out their moral convictions but they are not willing to make the necessary sacrifice. As a result, if conflict is not resolved in their favor, they are likely to move on. Finally, activists

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[65] Ibid., 129. Because these archetypes were born from a single context, they cannot be generalizable per se, but Edwards encourages that these archetypes be tested in future research.

[66] Ibid., 128-135.

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are whites who are committed to racial diversity based on what they describe as a "revelation" or "epiphany" about racial inequality and justice. They have strong interracial ties among their more intimate relationships and, even if it means that congregational life does not reflect their personal preferences, they affirm the religio-cultural preferences of blacks.

Among African Americans, defectors are the first archetype. Defectors appreciate some, but not all of the distinct practices found in the black church and thus look elsewhere for an alternative. As a result, their preferred religious culture and structure is top priority; they are not necessarily interested in racial diversity nor concerned about the white hegemony in their congregational context. Whatever allows them to have their preference, let it be. As a result, they will engage conflict to defend their preferences but not necessarily to navigate racial conflict. Next, blacks may function in the role of the disillusioned integrationalist. These individuals are former defectors who have come to appreciate racial diversity and believe that whites who attend multiracial congregations are different from others. However, when they realize that whites, even in this context, do not support the preferences of blacks, they become disillusioned. As a result, they feel ambivalent about racial integration and are less likely to sacrifice their preferences unto this end. Finally, advocates are either former defectors or people raised in interracial contexts, who have limited connections to black congregations. These individuals are most comfortable in interracial environments and have strong interracial ties, thus making them most likely to yield to whites to

maintain congregational diversity. It is notable that, because advocates do not have strong connections to black congregations and prefer interracial environments, giving up distinctly black traditions may not be as much of a sacrifice to them as those who are more closely connected to this tradition.

Taken together, these six archetypes both shape and predict congregational behavior. Defectors and activists often share the goal of affirming the religious and cultural practices preferred by African Americans. Disillusioned integrationalists tend to be ambivalent and may stand on either side of the conflict. Experimenters' restlessness catalyzes the efforts of conditional believers and advocates, who work together to ensure the support of the preferences of whites. As a result, despite the good intentions of individuals, these independent dynamics interact in multiracial congregations to produce unintended, counterproductive consequences.

Within these archetypes, a common theme is heard: the decisions of both blacks and whites is shaped by what makes them most comfortable. Indeed, participating in a multiracial congregation means sacrificing one's comfortable at times and not everyone is willing to dwell in the discomfort. Christenson, Emerson, and Edwards explain:

> For those from racially and ethnically homogeneous backgrounds, the costs involved in participating in an interracial organization often included not feeling at home and having to adjust different cultural styles of expressing and living out their faith. Thus, they often valued the diversity of the church, but the value they

> placed on diversity was always counter-balanced by the cost of not feeling at home.[68]

They also go on to affirm that people who are from interracial families or community are more likely to feel at home in a multiracial congregation and thus more likely to want to remain in that community that is most comfortable for them.[69] While the predilections and personal choice described above do have a significant impact on white hegemony, its roots go farther still. In the following sections, I will explore whiteness and explain how it contributes to hegemony. I conclude by introducing models of white identity development as tools to abate white hegemony.

How the Nature of Whiteness Contributes to White Hegemony

Whiteness as a Social Construct

Race is a socially constructed reality. The meaning of one's skin color and how it shapes lived experience is not inherent in an individual, but conditioned by society. As real as it may be in the experiences of those who live under its influence, race doesn't have meaning or power outside of the social system that gave it birth.[70] This is corroborated by the fact that the definitions of races have changed over time and have been determined by the people in power. For example, Allan Johnson, author of *Privilege, Power, and Difference* explains that, in the twentieth century, the Irish, Italians, Greeks, Jews, and people from Eastern Europe were considered "non-white." As

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[68] Brad Christerson, Korie L. Edwards, and Michael O. Emerson, *Against All Odds: The Struggle for Racial Integration in Religious Organizations* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 165.

[69] Ibid., 165-166.

[70] Allan Johnson, *Privilege, Power and Difference* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2006), 18.

a result, they were subjugated like people of color. They gained privilege only when those in power expanded the definition of whiteness to include their nationality. Similarly, in an effort to maintain power by legally restricting the opportunities of blacks, whites defined blacks as anyone that had "one drop" of African blood in them. Conversely, to restrict Native Americans from claiming reparations from the Federal government, a conveniently narrow definition was given, establishing Native Americans as those with at least one-eighth of Native American ancestry.[71] Clearly, these criteria were determined in the best interest of the ruling class, not in the interest of justice. Philosopher George Yancey, in *What White Looks Like*, summarizes this well:

> To gaze upon the black in a typical social encounter, from the perspective of whiteness, often means seeing nothing but a body imprinted with culturally and historically embedded significations—although believed to be fixed, essential significations—that derive from the power of whiteness to map thoroughly the meaning of what it means to be black (and white).[72]

Ironically, although whites are the ones who construct and benefit from racial categories, they are largely unaware of their constructive power:

> Whiteness fails to call into question its own modes of socioepistemological constructivity, ways that social reality is constituted and regulated. Through this process of "white-world-making," the construction of a world with values, regulations, and policies that provide supportive structures to those identified as "white," a world that whiteness then denies having given birth to, a possible slippage between knowing and being is often difficult to encourage. In short, what whiteness knows is what there is.[73]

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[71] Ibid., 18-20.

[72] George Yancey, "Fragments of a Social Ontology of Whiteness," introduction to *What White Looks Like: African-American Philosophers on the Whiteness Question* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 12, accessed October 2014, ProQuest.

[73] Ibid., 10.

In sum, whiteness is a socially constructed ideology created and maintained (often unconsciously) by whites that sustain their own positions of power. The influence of whiteness must be acknowledged to accurately understand the complexities of race.

Dimensions of Whiteness That Contribute to White Hegemony

As a race, whites are granted power and privilege. According to the *Handbook of Multicultural Competencies*, white privilege is defined as "'...Unearned advantages and benefits' given to white individuals based on a system that was 'normed' on the experiences, values, and perceptions' of white(s)..."[74] There are three constitutive, interdependent dimensions of whiteness that Korie Edwards identifies as contributing to white hegemony. The first is white normativity, the power to define what is normal and accepted. As a result, people come to understand correct living according to this standard and devalue anything that deviates from it even though it is not inherently better nor reflective of the human ideal. For example, I grew up in a white religious education system and was trained to preach using a method developed by whites. While attending a black church, at times, I found myself wanting the sermon to be more expository and felt like it not only strayed too far from my linear way of thinking, but the biblical text itself. Upon reflection, however, I came to see the vitality, enthusiasm, participatory nature and flow of this black preaching style as an asset. I concluded that the style itself does not compromise the integrity of the biblical text. Although there are obvious benefits to this constructive power, white normativity contributes to whites not seeing the value in other

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[74] Jeana D. Dressel, Shelly Kerr, and Harold B. Stevens, "White Identity and Privilege," in *Handbook of Multicultural Counseling Competencies*, ed. Jennifer A. Erickson Cornish, Barry A. Schreier, Lavita I. Nadkarni, Lynett Henderson Metzger, and Emil R. Rodolfa (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley, 2010), 444.

cultures. As a result, they are more likely to disrespect others and less likely to be able to appreciate and utilize a way of seeing or doing things that may ultimately be best. Furthermore, they may expect people to conform to their beliefs and behaviors.

Second, whites experience structural advantage. In the United States, this is manifest in them having numerical dominance and disproportionate control and influence in political and economic spheres. "[This] institutionalization of white privilege means that whites are afforded benefits that are far less accessible to racial minorities as a result of policies, laws, and customary behaviors in a society."[75] Peggy McIntosh, in her classic work, *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Backpack,* identifies benefits she's received. These include being able to be with people of her own race most of the time, finding food at the grocery store that is familiar to her ethnic cuisine, going shopping without being followed, and finding her race widely represented in the media and in educational resources.[76] Johnson adds to this from his own lengthy list to highlight the benefits whites have in access to education, healthcare, higher paying jobs and criminal justice. Despite this, to many whites, "Racism is something that bad people do overtly, not a relationship of power. Structural and systemic systems are generally ignored."[77] Perhaps the greatest privilege, Johnson points out, is that whites can choose to not see race. They are positioned such that they will receive privileges regardless of whether they

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[75] Korie L. Edwards, *The Elusive Dream: The Power of Race in Interracial Churches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 10.

[76] Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Backpack," 1989, https://www.isr.umich.edu/ home/diversity/resources/white-privilege.pdf.

[77] Melanie E. L. Bush, *Everyday Forms of Whiteness: Understanding Race In A "Post-racial" World* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 57.

recognize their power or how they contribute to injustice.[78] Melanie Bush, in a research study on college students found that, within her population, people see being a person of color as a disadvantage, but do not see the advantage that comes with being white.

> To be white means being able to assume that race will not interfere with getting a job or taking care of business so you don't need to think about it. To [one particular student she interviewed], race is not white; it is a disadvantage, never an advantage, even in a white-dominated and white-normative society. This perspective often leads to whites' denial of their own racial identity...This masking of whiteness frames race as a process that discriminates negatively and never positively. Race prevents but never precedes admission to the "white club." To recognize enhancement would be to acknowledge privilege and suggest responsibility for addressing inequality.[79]

It is with this perspective that people can continue to be privileged, but not see that that their privilege exists.

The third dynamic that contributes to white hegemony is white transparency. This is " 'the tendency of whites not to think...about norms, behaviors, experiences, or perspectives that are white-specific.' It is a lack of racial conscious."[80] This is due in part to the fact that whiteness functions largely below whites' level of awareness. Pioneering sociologist and civil rights activist, W.E.B. Du Bois, describes whites as wearing a veil of

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[78] Allan Johnson, *Privilege, Power and Difference* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2006), 25- 27. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1995), 26. It should be noted that white privilege has disadvantages as well. Oppression impacts both oppressor and oppressed. Freire asserts that "Dehumanization...marks not only those whose humanity has been stolen, but also (though in a different way) those who have stolen it..." (26). For example, Johnson explains that racism not only makes whites uncomfortable and fearful around blacks but also causes them to compromise their moral integrity because it "requires hypocrisy towards the deeply held cultural values of fairness, decency, and justice" (62). This makes whites less equipped to engage in an increasingly diverse world and less likely to empower the insightful and talented people of color that are needed to help guide society into this new, diverse culture.

[79] Melanie E. L. Bush, *Everyday Forms of Whiteness: Understanding Race In A "Post-racial" World* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 52.

[80] Korie L. Edwards, *The Elusive Dream: The Power of Race in Interracial Churches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 10.

ignorance that needs to be removed. Blacks, he believes, also have a veil over their eyes, but it serves as a "double consciousness," allowing them to see themselves through their own lens, as well as the lens of a racialized society.[81] In her book *Revealing Whiteness,* Shannon Sullivan posits that whiteness operates as habit. Habit, understood pragmatically, is "an organism's *subconscious* predisposition to transact with physical, social, political and natural worlds in particular ways" [emphasis mine].[82] They "are manners of being and acting that constitute an organism's ongoing character" and shape the "style" with which one interacts with the world.[83] As a result, race as a habit shapes one's behavior, even when whites are unaware. To complicate this matter, the structure of society is not conducive to raising people's level of awareness.

> Because White culture is the dominant cultural norm in the United States, it acts as an invisible veil that limits many people from seeing it as a cultural system. . . . Often, it is easier for many Whites to identify and acknowledge the different cultures of minorities than accept their own racial identity. . . . The difficulty of accepting such a view is that White culture is omnipresent. It is so interwoven in the fabric of everyday living that Whites cannot step outside and see their beliefs, values, and behaviors as creating a distinct cultural group.[84]

As a result, some whites live and die without a genuine awareness of their whiteness.

Because whites are largely unaware of race, their whiteness is not a significant part of their identity. For example, Bush found that "whites reported significantly less

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[81] James W. Perkinson, "Part II: History, Consciousness, and Performance," in *White Theology: Outing Supremacy in Modernity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 91-92.

[82] Shannon Sullivan, "1-2, 6-7, Conclusion," in *Revealing Whiteness: The Unconscious Habits of Racial Privilege* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 23.

[83] Ibid., 23.

[84] Derald Wing. Sue and David Sue, "White Racial Identity Development: Therapeutic Implications," in *Counseling the Culturally Diverse: Theory and Practice*, 6th ed. (John Wiley & Sons, 2012), 616-617, accessed Winter 2014, http://site.ebrary.com.ezproxy.bu.edu/lib/bostonuniv/detail.action?docID= 10580184.

often than Blacks that they think about their racial identity and significantly more that they never do."[85] When Korie Edwards did in-depth interviews on racial identity[86] at Crosstown Community Church, she found that, while African Americans mentioned race first or second when describing themselves, whites "were not inclined to describe themselves in racial terms."[87] Even when prompted to talk about race and asked to rank it among other elements of identity, on average, whites ranked it 14 out of 18, compared to 5 out of 18 by African Americans.[88] Furthermore, while blacks could articulate that belonging to their racial group associates them to a specific ancestry, set of cultural characteristics and, primarily, subordinate social position,[89]

> Nearly all of the white participants found it rather difficult to explain what it means to be white. Any kind of lucid response often completely eluded them. Several admitted to never having thought about it before...They really did not understand what being white meant to them, or they did not understand how race was potentially consequential for their lives.[90]

Therefore, *even in a multiracial congregation where one would expect race to be more salient,* whites were unaware of their racial identity.

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[85] Melanie E. L. Bush, *Everyday Forms of Whiteness: Understanding Race In A "Post-racial" World* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 56.

[86] Korie L. Edwards, *The Elusive Dream: The Power of Race in Interracial Churches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 86. Edwards conceptualized racial identity as having three dimensions: "the salience and awareness of one's racial identity; one's feelings and ideas about what one's race means; and one's perspective on racial inequality between African Americans and whites."

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Ibid., 87.

[90] Ibid., 88.

White Transparency in America is due to two primary factors: socialization and individualism. First, people of European descent are socialized to be white from a young age. Socialization is "the process through which [people] learn to participate in social life." [91] It tells us who we are in relation to other people, what we should value and how we should act. This process is subtle, akin, Yancey suggests, to a child learning a language.[92] Even if not taught directly, children's behaviors are shaped by what they observe and how people respond. Unfortunately, the socialization of white people leads them to feel entitled and superior to people of color.[93] As a result, like a fish surrounded by the water in which it lives, it is difficult for them to see the privilege that they have always known.

Second, people in the United States are highly individualistic and this quality makes it difficult for whites to see the institutional and systemic nature of racism. Johnson explains that, because privilege is largely rooted in social systems and categories, an individualistic orientation can lead people to be blinded to the problem at hand. McIntosh affirms: "My schooling gave me no training in seeing myself as an oppressor, as an unfairly advantaged person, or as a participant in a damaged culture. I was taught to see myself as an individual whose moral state depended on her individual moral will."[94]

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[91] Allan Johnson, *Privilege, Power and Difference* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2006), 78.

[92] George Yancey, "Intro, Ch. 1," in *Look, a White!: Philosophical Essays on Whiteness* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012), 24 accessed October 2014.

[93] Allan Johnson, *Privilege, Power and Difference* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2006), 78-79.

[94] Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Backpack," 1989, https://www.isr.umich.edu/ home/diversity/resources/white-privilege.pdf.

White transparency is especially prevalent among evangelicals. Recognizing the influence of socialization and individualism, Michael Emerson and Christian Smith, in *Divided by Faith*, explain that evangelicals are blinded to systemic influences specifically on account of accountable free-will individualism, relationalism, and antistructuralism - factors that have shaped and been shaped by their theology. Accountable free-will individualism is the belief that "individuals exist independent of structures and institutions, have freewill, and are individually accountable for their own actions."[95] According to Stark and Glock, this view is rooted in their white, evangelical theology:

> Underlying traditional Christian thought is an image of man as a free actor, as essentially unfettered by social circumstances, free to choose and thus free to effect his own salvation. The free-will conception of man has been central to the doctrines of sin and salvation. For only if man is totally free does it seem just to hold him responsible for his acts...In short, Christian thought and thus Western Civilization are permeated with the idea that men are individually in control and responsible for their own destinies[96]

The second factor, relationalism, is "a strong emphasis on interpersonal relationships...derive[d] from the view that human nature is fallen and that salvation and Christian maturity can only come through a 'personal relationship with Christ.'"[97] This deeply-rooted belief goes back to shortly after the Protestant reformation and is key to evangelical beliefs. Transposing the importance of an individual's relationship with God to human relationships, evangelicals emphasize relationships such that they "limit their

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[95] Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 76-77.

[96] Ibid., 77.

[97] Ibid.

ability to recognize institutional problems or acknowledge them as important."[98] Instead they attribute racism to individual sin, such as a failure to love one's neighbor. Absent from their accounts is the idea that poor relationships might be shaped by social structures, such as laws, the way institutions operate, or forms of segregation."[99] Rather, correlated with relationalism, they hold to a firm antistructuralism. This is the third factor, the belief that structural explanations are irrelevant, wrong, and/or the product of failed relationships. While I believe that Emerson and Smith's Statement is an overgeneralization, failing to acknowledge the role of the progressive evangelical movement and select individuals, it is clear that, regardless of exceptions, whites are especially susceptible to being blinded to racism and misattributing the problem.

Furthermore, the collective impact of accountable free-will individualism, relationalism, and anti-structuralism often leads whites to assume that the obstacles people of color experience are due not to lack of opportunity, but to lack of hope and vision, supportive relationships, independence, and responsibility. For most whites, Emerson and Smith write, “the racial gap is not explained by unequal opportunity or discrimination or shortcoming of society as a whole, but rather by the shortcomings of blacks.”[100] Therefore, white evangelicals’ solutions to racism reflect these beliefs and are largely ineffective because their socio-cultural tools point them to only one dimension of the problem. This blindness leaves them largely unwilling to make the personal sacrifices necessary to reduce racism in congregations and society.

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52 Ibid., 76.

[99] Ibid., 78.

[100] Ibid., 109.

With this having been said, utilizing the evangelical tool-kit does not preclude the possibility of being aware of race and working for racial justice in one's community. For example, City Baptist, a racially diverse congregation in Oak Park, IL emphasizes individual salvation and individual responsibility for following the example of Jesus. They also believe that "the world will be changed one person at a time...through the process of individual transformation."[101] Although it may be less likely that they perceive and confront racism on account of how their beliefs reflect the accountable free-will individualism, relationalism, and anti-structuralism mentioned above, the odds have not defeated them. The church's "commitment to multicultural ministry draws into its community concerns about racism, violence, and economic deprivation."[102] For example, members of City Baptist joined in a unity walk "that brought people from several churches and other organizations together to confess their racism and celebrate their movement towards unity." They also addressed issues that are often correlated with race, such as gang violence and economic need.[103]

Oppression is Perpetuated through Inaction and Good Intentions

Whites' inability to see oppression does not preclude the possibility of them being an oppressor. On the contrary, it makes them more likely to cause harm unknowingly. According to Johnson, because oppression is rooted in social systems and socialization, it is naturally perpetuated in the absence of change. This is due to the fact that social

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[101] Nancy Tatom Ammerman and Arthur Emery. Farnsley, *Congregation & Community* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 215.

[102] Ibid., 216.

[103] Ibid.

influences encourage people to walk in what he calls "the path of least resistance."[104] This is the course society encourages us to follow by minimizing associated consequences. It is the way of the status quo. As a result, whites can perpetuate oppression simply through continuing their usual actions. Therefore, they can oppress others without being "bad people," oppressive personally, or feeling like they are contributing to the issue. Therefore, instead of acknowledging the dilemma whites find misleading excuses explaining why they do not contribute to it, such as denial, minimizing the problem, renaming it, and false justification.[105] This contributes to well-intentioned people not recognizing the problem and thus not contributing to the solution. Yancey makes clear, however, that if one is not actively fighting oppression, choosing the path of least resistance, challenging the status quo, they are no different from the oppressors themselves:

> Indeed, [those who do not fight oppression] do not challenge the white power system that continues to mark the white body as preferable, privileged, and supreme. It would be like a white spectator who watches the lynching and burning of a black body and refuses to protest...Such a white constitutes a crucial element in the equation of such a site of white supremacy. No longer distinguishable—because of his/her dead silence—from the one who tied the noose or lit the fire, such a white abdicates his/her freedom to speak out in opposition... He/she has become one with the mob...Self-consciously signing a contract is not requisite for membership in this white supremacist spectacle. It is enough that you are a white, silent witness.[106]

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[104] Allan Johnson, *Privilege, Power and Difference* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2006), 80.

[105] Ibid., 108 - 121.

[106] George Yancey, "Fragments of a Social Ontology of Whiteness," introduction to *What White Looks Like: African-American Philosophers on the Whiteness Question* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 7, accessed October 2014, ProQuest.

By not actively working against racial oppression, whites have become complicit in white supremacy through their silence. Therefore, even through inaction, they can contribute to the problem and thus bear a measure of responsibility to see justice done.

In addition to being perpetuated through inaction, injustice can be furthered through those who are trying to work against the inequalities brought about by race. This can be seen throughout society. Consider for example, a woman who claims to be colorblind. Color blindness is the belief that one's treatment of an individual should not be shaped by race. In an effort to not repeat the injustices of the past, a woman who claims to be colorblind would likely say that she "doesn't see color." While seemingly noble and perhaps motivated by a desire to judge people by "the content of their character" rather than "the color of their skin,"[107] color blindness ignores systemic injustice, positive qualities of a race, and doesn't encourage racial self-awareness.[108] "Rather than being the opposite of racism, colour-blindness has become a new form of subtle racism that masquerades as a moral stance (Carr, 1997)." [109] Similarly, consider a company that hires a Diversity Director to help create a more multicultural environment. While this may seem like a step in the right direction, an emphasis on multiculturalism can actually function counterproductively

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[107] Martin Luther King, "I Have A Dream" (speech, March on Washington, Lincoln Memorial, Washington, DC, August 28, 1963).

[108] Barbara Applebaum, "In the Name of Morality: Moral Responsibility, Whiteness and Social Justice Education," *Journal of Moral Education* 34, no. 3 (2005): 282 - 283, accessed October 2014, doi:10.1080/03057240500206089.

[109]Ibid., 285.

by focusing on superficial differences instead of the difficult issues that need to be addressed.

> Too often the notion of multiculturalism functions as an acknowledgement of some differences that simultaneously conceals others. It tends to be used to recognize only the relatively easy differences of style of dress, cultural customs, and types of food, remaining silent about the difficult differences of access to power, economic opportunities, and ontological status.[110]

Worst of all, people may come to feel that, because a diversity director has been hired, their company is on the road to recovery. They then deprioritize the problem and it is less likely to be adequately addressed.[111]

Next, consider students who take a class on social justice. Referring to her own students, Professor Barbara Applebaum writes that, despite their enrollment and implied interest in fighting injustice, when sensitive issues arose defensiveness prevented many from engaging in the learning and reflection needed to see justice done.

> Rather that being willing to engage in the different meanings of racism and their implications, many of these predominantly white students were obstinately focused on denying their complicity. They were more concerned with proving how they were good, antiracist whites than they were in trying to understand how systemic oppression works and the possibility that they might have a role in sustaining such systems.[112]

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[110] Shannon Sullivan, "1-2, 6-7, Conclusion," in *Revealing Whiteness: The Unconscious Habits of Racial Privilege* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 192.

[111] Sara Ahmed, "1, 2, 4," in *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 46-47, accessed October 2014, ProQuest.

[112] Barbara Applebaum, "In the Name of Morality: Moral Responsibility, Whiteness and Social Justice Education," *Journal of Moral Education* 34, no. 3 (2005): 277-278, accessed October 2014, doi:10.1080/03057240500206089.

Similar circumstance can be found even among white academics as they may study and teach about race, but not confront their own whiteness or racism. They see whiteness as a subject for intellectual mastery, and engage it without making changes to their lives. Yancey explains:

> I know whites...who are able to engage race and racism critically at the conceptual level, but appear to fail at challenging their own whiteness at a deeply interpersonal level...After all, there is no necessary connection between (a) the ability to reflect critically on white racism...and (b) working hard to mark and challenge one's own racist practices...Even as whites perform well academically in terms of exploiting white racism, their narcissism and hegemony remain in place, remain unexamined and yet expressed in public and private spheres.[113]

Applebaum concludes that it is the very people who think they are working against racism who can actually be perpetrators thereof:

> The subtle but lethal types of covert racism can be maintained even when whites believe themselves to be part of the solution rather than part of the problem. Indeed, it is my contention that it is especially when white people believe themselves to be good and moral antiracist citizens that they may be contributing to the perpetuation of systemic injustice.[114]

It would seem then that the well-intentioned but counterproductive members of multiracial congregations are not alone in their plight.

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[113] George Yancey, "Intro, Ch. 1," in *Look, a White!: Philosophical Essays on Whiteness* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012), 26, accessed October 2014.

[114] Barbara Applebaum, "In the Name of Morality: Moral Responsibility, Whiteness and Social Justice Education," *Journal of Moral Education* 34, no. 3 (2005): 278, accessed October 2014, doi:10.1080/03057240500206089.

WHITE IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

White Identity Development as a Tool to Abate White Hegemony

The good news is that whites can become more aware of their whiteness and how it interacts with the world around them through white identity development.
Paulo Freire, the father of liberative pedagogy, believed that education could provide a means of liberation by enabling students to realize their oppression and empowering them to change their circumstances. While whites are not racially oppressed like people of color, they do need to be liberated from a racial blindness that causes them to dehumanize both themselves and others. Freire believes that this can occur through a decodification process that raises student's awareness of their situation, and a praxis-based dialogue that imparts value and agency, allowing them to name and respond to their world. Through this process, they recognize the oppressive dynamics of their circumstance and that they are not a fixed reality, but something they can change for the better.[115]

Similarly, Law believes that making whites aware of their power and privilege is a key step towards justice. [116] What whites often do not realize is that not only do people's power vary based on race and culture, but how they interact with power and feel they can change power varies as well.[117] Therefore,

> Justice in a multicultural setting has to be approached in an 'ethnorelative' way. We begin by accepting the reality that people's power perceptions are different because of cultural differences...and there is great disparity of power between the

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[115] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1995).

[116] Eric H. F. Law, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb: A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1993), 35.

[117] Eric H. F. Law, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb: A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1993), 22, 32-35.

> two groups. Based on this knowledge, we need to create an environment that allows people to interact with equal power and therefore redistributes power equally.[118]

Law suggests that this can be done if whites are made aware of and chose to give up their power and if people of color come to see themselves as valued equals who are empowered to speak with authority. I suggest that the awareness Law believes is necessary and Freire believes is possible can be facilitated by white identity development.

White identity development is the "movement from White people's lack of awareness of themselves as racial beings towards increased racial consciousness..."[119] By raising whites' awareness of their race they can begin to develop a healthy and non-oppressive racial identity. The *Handbook of Multicultural Counseling Competencies* affirms: "being conscious of one's role in perpetuating racism or the ways in which one benefits from White privilege is an important step in achieving non-racist white identity (Ancis & Szymanski)."[120] Specifically,

> Research has found that ...(a) the less aware subjects were of their White identity, the more likely they were to exhibit increased levels of racism; (b) the higher the level of White identity development, the...more positive opinions toward minority groups...[and] (c) higher levels of mature interpersonal relationships and a better sense of personal wellbeing were associated with higher levels of White identity consciousness...[121]

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[118] Ibid, 35.

[119] Jeana D. Dressel, Shelly Kerr, and Harold B. Stevens, "White Identity and Privilege," in *Handbook of Multicultural Counseling Competencies*, ed. Jennifer A. Erickson Cornish, Barry A. Schreier, Lavita I. Nadkarni, Lynett Henderson Metzger, and Emil R. Rodolfa (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley, 2010), 445.

[120] Ibid., 447.

[121] Derald Wing Sue and David Sue, "White Racial Identity Development: Therapeutic Implications," in *Counseling the Culturally Diverse: Theory and Practice*, 6th ed. (July: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), 320.

Edwards affirms that,

> White transparency can help to sabotage anything that could potentially produce racially egalitarian communities. If whites do not recognize that, by virtue of their racial identity, they are in a superior position in the social hierarchy, they are not apt to recognize underlying ideologies that run counter to egalitarian principles...a first step in rectifying racial inequalities, therefore, is exposing and addressing those latent ideologies and interests that sustain white hegemony.[122]

The following section will explore theories on white identity development so as to introduce the process through which whites can become more aware of the largely unconscious ideology of whiteness.

Theories on White Identity Development

There are multiple models that attempt to describe white identity development. Those that have received the most attention include the work of Hartman (1982), Helms (1984), Carney and Kahn (1984), Sue and Sue (1990), and Sabnani, Ponterotto, and Borodovsky (1991).[123] Each approach varies primarily in their number of stages and the precise occurrences of each stage. Generally, the first stage, or series of stages, finds the individual viewing themselves and their race according to the beliefs and attitudes of dominant society. In the second stage, they question these attitudes and beliefs. The third movement involves engagement with people of color and rejection of racist beliefs until, in the fourth stage, they develop a positive perception of self and others. This section will provide an overview of the three most discussed and unique models (Hartiman, Helms,

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[122] Korie L. Edwards, *The Elusive Dream: The Power of Race in Interracial Churches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 136.

[123] Sabnani, Ponterotto, and Borodovsky synthesize the work of Hartiman, Helms, and Ponterotto. While well worth exploring, this was not highlighted because it focuses on the white identity development of a counselor.

and Rowe et al.), helping the reader understand how they have been shaped over time and the strengths and weaknesses of each. This can empower readers to choose a paradigm appropriate for their context. Thereafter, it will focus on the explanation given by multicultural experts, Derald Wing Sue and David Sue, who in my opinion, integrate the strengths of previous approaches.

Rita Hartiman posed the first model of racial identity development in 1982. It was developed based upon her exploration of the autobiographies of people who achieved high levels of racial consciousness. This model describes a person's movement through the stages of childhood naiveté, acceptance of racial hierarchy, resistance of the same, redefinition through questioning and self reflection, and the internalization of a new personal and social identity. Although a solid foundation, Hartiman's model has limitations. First, it was developed based upon a select sample that doesn't necessarily represent whites as whole. Next, because it was based on autobiographies one cannot know if the authors were being honest or intentionally presenting themselves in a desirable light. Finally, no empirical research has been done to confirm the validity of this model.[124]

The second and most widely accepted model is that of Janet Helms. Helms' model is set apart from Hartiman's because it acknowledges a reintegration status in which, in response to the tension between whites' perception and reality, people regress into an ethnocentric worldview. It also divides Hartiman's redefinition stage into two distinct statuses, making a distinction between initial intellectual/conceptual engagement and the

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[124] Derald Wing Sue and David Sue, "White Racial Identity Development: Therapeutic Implications," in *Counseling the Culturally Diverse: Theory and Practice*, 6th ed. (July: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), 323-324.

emotional/personal rebirth that leads to a new identity. Common information processing strategies that help reduce anxiety are identified for each stage as well. While the most sophisticated and empirically supported model today, critiques have been made, most notably from Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson. They believe that, because Helms' proposal is based on the model for racial minority identity development that assumes the presence of oppression, it is not an appropriate foundation for the oppressive group. Next, they critique that the model focuses too much on whites' perception of people of color and not on their perception of themselves, thus serving more as a model of racial awareness than a model of white identity. Finally, they assert that white identity development is not as linear as the model unintentionally implies.

As a result, Rowe et al. provided an alternative model for white identity development that focuses more on one's understanding of whiteness and the impact that has on other racial groups. In this model, white identity development is broken into two categories: unachieved and achieved. Within each category there are attitude types that reflect how people view race. These attitudes, and the model as a whole therefore, capture destinations on the journey, but not the process through which attitudes came to be. Unlike the aforementioned models, development is not necessarily sequential or predictable. People can move freely between these statuses, with the exception of the first two attitude types of those who are "unachieved”. Unachieved individuals have attitudes that either avoid race, rely on others to formulate their opinions on race, or are in a state of confusion. People who have achieved their racial identity either exert racial superiority, opposes overt racism while permitting discrimination, acknowledge injustice

but deny personal responsibility, or integrate their identity so they can rationally and morally relate to issues of race and work towards social change.

The final model, which will be explored in greater detail, is that of Sue and Sue who articulate seven stages of identity development.[125]

Naiveté Phase: This phase characterizes a young child who has not yet been socialized to understand the meanings and dynamics of race. At this time, children demonstrate a curiosity towards racial differences. This phase lasts until between the ages of 3 and 5 when they come to associate positive ethnocentric meanings to their group and negative meanings towards others. These associations are due to the influence of significant others, mass media, and misinformation.

Conformity Phase: In this phase, whites are largely unaware of their race and see their values and norms as universal. They have limited accurate knowledge about other ethnic groups and rely on stereotypes to inform their perceptions. Consciously or unconsciously, whites believe that they are racially superior and thus that it is okay to treat people of color as inferior. At the same time, they do not believe themselves to be racist. Such contradictions are common in this phase and the coping mechanisms of denial and compartmentalization work to justify these rational fallacies. At the end of the day, they see themselves as good and normal and other's behavior as problematic because it deviates from their norm.

Dissonance Phase: The dissonance phase begins when an individual faces the inconsistencies in their beliefs. An example of this is when a person discovers that, despite the fact that they think they are not prejudice, they experience fear when they find

[125] Ibid., 330-335.

out that their daughter is dating a black person or discomfort when a Hispanic family moves in next door. Jarring events, such as the killing of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Walter Scott, and Freddie Gray also makes salient the fact that, despite the common illusion, racism is alive and well. In most cases, these experiences lead people to recognize their whiteness and see conflict between their professed values and behavior. This dissonance may result in anger, depression, guilt or shame. At this point, whites either retreat into their former beliefs, often holding them more strongly, or progress in their racial identity development. Whether a person progresses or not is influenced by the support they have to move ahead from people like friends and family compared to the fear, guilt, discomfort, and rejection, pulling them back.

Resistance and Immersion Phase: The white person now sees racism and is increasingly aware of how it manifests in the world around them. Recognizing how racism operates in U.S. culture and institutions is what Sue and Sue identify as the hallmark of this phase. In addition, the individual considers how they are both privileged and racist. These experiences bear a number of results. First, they often contribute to anger towards family, friends, institutions, and social values that do not uphold America's democratic ideals. It also leads to guilt and shame towards oneself on account of one's role in racism. These feelings may also cause an individual to either serve as a paternalist protector or over identify with another racial group. Again, this will result either in people regressing to previous phases or further developing their identity.

Introspective Phase: This is a time of reflection where a person asks what it means to be white. This often leads them into dialogue with both other whites and people of color. Knowing that one will never fully understand the experience of non-whites yet

feeling disconnected from other Euro-Americans, they may experience feelings of disconnectedness, isolation, confusion, and loss.

Integrative Awareness Phase: The individual now sees themselves as a racial being, they are aware of socio-political influences regarding racism, they appreciate racial diversity, and are becoming more committed towards fighting oppression. In this phase, white identity both emerges and becomes internalized. This is manifest in their being comfortable around people of other racial groups and feeling connected with them. Most importantly, Sue and Sue assert, is the sense of security and strength needed to empower them to function in a society that is still learning to accept racially-aware white people.

Commitment to Antiracist Action: This phase is defined by action. Such action may include objecting to racist jokes, educating friends on race, standing up against racist behavior or working to change social policy. This may be a lonely and difficult journey as social forces pressure whites to return to a former phase of development. Maintaining a non-racist identity requires whites to become immunized to social pressure for conformity and build alliances with people of color and other racially aware whites.

Through this process whites can become more aware of their whiteness and take a foundational step towards working against hegemony.

SUMMARY OF WHITE HEGEMONY IN INTERRACIAL CONGREGATIONS

This overview of white hegemony and white identity development has demonstrated that many challenges arise in aligning the present praxis of multiracial congregations with the biblical vision to which many feel called. Indeed, these congregations have potential for both reconciliation and hegemony. White hegemony is

seen in interracial congregations in the fact that, despite differences between black and white churches regarding worship and social and civil engagement, significant practices in interracial churches are no different from that of white congregations. This is true even in the presence of qualities that have been identified as contributing to a "successful" multiracial church. With that having been said, white hegemony does not necessarily exist in all interracial congregations. It requires the presence of three factors to exist. First, blacks must see interracial congregations as their best option, second, whites must be more likely to leave the church, and third, there must be a critical mass of blacks who care if whites go elsewhere. When these three qualities exist, the success of interracial congregations as they are currently structured are dependent in part on blacks' being willing to submit to white hegemony.

This hegemony is sustained through three core qualities of the social constructed and largely unconscious ideology of whiteness: white normativity, white structural advantage, and white transparency. White transparency is especially notable among evangelicals. Furthermore, these three factors can be perpetuated even in the presence of inaction and, ironically, among whites who are trying to counter the racial status quo. As a result, it is suggested that white identity development be used as a tool to abate the roots and unjust power dynamics of white hegemony. For a white person, becoming aware of their whiteness is one of the first steps in fostering a racially egalitarian community.

VI. IDENTITY AS A ROOT OF CONFLICT AND TOOL OF RECONCILIATION: EXPLORING HOW RACIAL IDENTITIES MAINTAIN DIFFERENCES AND THE POTENTIAL FOR IDENTITY TRANSFORMATON THROUGH THE MULTIRACIAL CHURCH

Over the course of American history, blacks and whites have developed distinct worship traditions that may conflict and bear counterproductive consequences when engaged in the multiracial church. Despite a theology that promotes racial equality, practices that facilitate cross-racial relationships, and experiences that foster social capital, changed worldviews, and preferences for integration over assimilation, multiracial congregations struggle to actualize unity in diversity in the body of Christ. This discrepancy may lead the cynic to conclude that Christians are hypocrites, or the heckler to aver that differences cannot be overcome. I suggest, however, that this division is not merely because people lack conviction or choose not to inconvenience themselves in a consumerist age. Rather, it is because cultural differences are intricately connected to individual's identities.

In this chapter, I explore the connection between worship tradition and racial identity by considering how the identity may be influenced through their participation in a multiracial church. The second half of my chapter specifically considers how the identity of a white person could be shaped through his or her participation in a predominantly multiracial church. Though I chose to focus on Euro-Americans on account of how the ideology of whiteness is central to the reproduction of white

hegemony and I desire to better understand and challenge this set of beliefs,[1] I hypothesize that my conclusions are not limited to Caucasians. I begin by establishing the connection between cultural differences and identity through an overview of select literature. This literature focuses on how formative influences solidify the cultural differences that inform identities, but how these same influences have the potential to change. I argue that the circumstances that contribute to such change are present in the multiracial church.[2] After a review of the literature, I present elements of multiracial congregations that may shape a person's identity and explore how, through these avenues, identities can be transformed. In doing so, I draw upon the example of a white woman I interviewed who experienced a measure of identity transformation through her participation in a predominantly black, interracial congregation. In conclusion, I suggest that genuine identity transformation - not mere re-socialization - has the potential to overcome differences and foster reconciliation between blacks and whites in the evangelical, interracial church.

Culture as Shaping Identity

A different genre of music, the level of expressiveness, preaching style, polity, and prayer: these were just some of the elements identified as differences between black and white worship traditions by a white woman who had been attending a predominantly

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[1] Korie L. Edwards, "Bring Race to the Center: The Importance of Race in Racially Diverse Religious Organizations," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 47, no. 1 (2008): 6, doi:10.1111/j.1468-5906.2008.00387.x.

[2] Because there is only a modicum of research that directly addresses the focus of this chapter, I draw on literature generally and, at times, extrapolate to make informed conclusions about a study's implication on identity formation in the multiracial church.

black, interracial church for thirteen years.[3] While racial differences are abundant and elements like cognition, social interactions, and socio-political forces have been used to explain social divides,[4] this section will explore how divisions between worship traditions are rooted in social boundaries drawn along cultural lines. As chapter four revealed, African roots and experiences of oppression contributed to a sacred black cosmos[5] disparate from the worldview of its white counterpart. These cultural differences serve as boundaries that both define and divide blacks and whites.[6] Michele Lamont and Marcel Fournier explain that culture establishes boundaries in that it serves as "institutionalized

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[3] Anonymous, "Transformation of Worship Habitus in A White Women from A Predominantly Black Multiracial Church," interview by author, March 20, 2014. Note that she attended predominantly white congregations prior to her coming to her current, predominantly black multiracial congregation.

[4] Michèle Lamont and Marcel Fournier, "Introduction," in *Cultivating Differences: Symbolic Boundaries and the Making of Inequality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 1.

[5] See Ch. 4 pg. Charles Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African-American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 2-3. "...black people created their own unique and distinctive forms of culture and worldviews as parallels rather than replications of the culture in which they were involuntary guests..."

[6] See Ch. 5 pg. 217-218 regarding how whites are defined as by what blacks are not. Noel Clycq, "My Daughter Is A Free Woman So She Can't Marry A Muslim: The Gendering of Ethnoreligious Boundaries," *European Journal of Women's Studies*, no. 19 (2012): 168, 166. In a study of the complex identities of majority and minority ethnic groups in Belgium, Noel Clycq found that the majority culture (Belgian) was invisible and even ethnic minorities accepted the dominance of Belgian ethno-identity. This was seen in the fact that minorities did not attribute gender inequality to the Belgians because of their ethnicity and yet they attributed their unequal experiences to the aspects of their identity that differed from the norm. They problematized themselves and not the majority. "Reality is represented in such a way that the 'norm' remains invisible and uncontested and that minorities' identities and actions are pathologized" (168). For example, "when Italian or Moroccan women state they were prohibited to go to higher education or follow the courses they wanted to, they said it was because their parents are Italian or Moroccan. Hereby, they legitimize the dominant negative perceptions of their cultural background and internalize these hegemonic discourses (Komter, 1989; Lukes, 2005; Prins, 2006). However, when a 27-year-old Belgian woman talks about similar restrictions, she relates this overall to the traditional times she was brought up in, but never to Belgian ethnicity. The latter remains invisible or unnoticed (Lewis, 2004) (166).

repertoires."[7] It provides an established inventory defined by symbolic and socially constructed boundaries from which people can draw to inform their actions and beliefs. When people from different cultures elicit resources from varied repertoires they assume divergent attitudes and behaviors. These differences serve as symbols that are used to establish boundaries, identifying who someone is and who someone is not. These boundaries are maintained, often unwittingly, as people abide by them in daily life.[8] When applied to multiracial communities, these principles tell us that people's culture shapes the way they worship and the way they worship serves to identify them as a member of that culture. Their participation therein socially distinguishes them from people who are not participants, thus making claims on their identity. In short: culture imparts identity. Therefore, culture is not only something that shapes people's thoughts and behaviors, but it serves as a social symbol that communicates who they are. This deep connection that social boundaries create between ethnic culture and the self helps explain why people feel strongly about culturally-specific worship traditions: challenging ethnic traditions extend beyond questioning a mode of action to challenging personal identities themselves.

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[7] Michèle Lamont and Marcel Fournier, "Introduction," in *Cultivating Differences: Symbolic Boundaries and the Making of Inequality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 7.

[8] Noel Clycq, "My Daughter Is A Free Woman So She Can't Marry A Muslim: The Gendering of Ethnoreligious Boundaries," *European Journal of Women's Studies*, no. 19 (2012):,160. "This shows once more that identity construction not only concerns the ideological and perceptual level but also the level of daily action. Through actions such as speaking a specific language, adhering to a religion or spending much more time than one's partner taking care of the children, individuals develop and sustain these boundaries and social divisions (Brubaker, et al., 2004; West and Fenstermaker, 1995; West and Zimmerman, 1987)."

THE FORMATION OF IDENTITY: CORE ELEMENTS OF THE CULTURAL SELF ESTABLISHED THROUGH SOCIALIZATION, TOOL KITS AND HABITUS

People acquire different ethno-cultural and racial identities through the process of primary socialization and the development of tool kits and habitus. This section explores 1) these formative influences on one's sense of self and 2) how they contribute to the ethno-cultural differences that determine how identity becomes deeply engrained within individuals. Understanding the profound nature of this relationship helps explain some of the division and conflict within multiracial congregations that results from opposition to cultural change. In identifying this obstacle, this section lays the foundation for understanding the problem that needs to be overcome and why a solution can be found in identity transformation.

The Formidable Influence of Primary Socialization

Primary socialization is a foundational process that occurs during childhood that facilitates an individual's entry into society. It shapes people's thoughts, feelings, and actions so they can be equipped to engage with those around them. Primary socialization is imparted to a person by people who Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann call "significant others." Significant others are those who are positioned to significantly influence a person's life on account of an emotional connection that the forming individual has with them.[9] Parents and other family members are likely to serve as significant others. Because of racial division within society and the fact that people are

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[9] Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise In The Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 131.

more likely to spend time with people of similar sociodemographic characteristics,[10] individuals are likely to receive primary socialization from people of the same race. I hypothesize that this serves to form and reinforce within the child a racially-specific culture.

During the beginning of the socialization process, individuals see themselves the way their significant others see them. In time, however, through dialogue with numerous others, they develop a more nuanced view of their selves.[11] Eventually, they become able to predict the perspective of the "generalized other," thus helping them anticipate the responses held by society regarding who they are and how they should act in the world. This perspective broadly constrains people's behavior, makes them aware of their social location,[12] and provides a home base that serves as a foundation for all subsequent socialization.[13]

It is primary socialization that teaches individuals about their race and how that race shapes how an individual is to engage in society. As mentioned, at a young age, children's understanding of themselves is likely formed by racially homogeneous significant others. Once they are able to recognize the generalized other, they begin to experience how society sees and interacts with them as a raced being. It is through these

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[10] Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 147.

[11] Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise In The Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 130.

[12] Ibid., 130-132.

[13] Ibid., 134.

formative interactions that the three elements of whiteness that Edwards identifies as contributing to white hegemony are imparted to white people: white normativity, white structural advantage, and white transparency.[14] The role of primary socialization in racial identity development and cross-racial interactions may also help explain other shared experiences and perspectives among whites. Such similarities include the following:

> Historical and social scientific research shows that whites from different economic strata, ethnic backgrounds, and religious affiliations—among other lines of distinction—have more easily assimilated into the dominant culture (Barkan 1995; Tuan 1998; Waters 1990), constructed and accessed social structures to their benefit (Guglielmo 2003; Jacobson 1999), possess similar overarching values and ideologies (Bonilla-Silva 2001; Lipsitz 1998; Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985), and do not see race as something that affects them (Feagin, Vera, and Bartur 2001; Waters 1990). These qualities connect whites across various white subgroups.[15]

Racial ideologies and culture, along with other understandings imparted by primary socialization, are difficult to change as "Primary socialization internalizes a reality apprehended as inevitable. This internalization may be deemed successful if the sense of inevitability is present most of the time, at least while the individual is active in the world of everyday life."[16]

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[14] See pgs. 231-239 for more information on white normativity, white structural advantage, and white transparency (including the white evangelical toolkit).

[15] Korie L. Edwards, "Bring Race to the Center: The Importance of Race in Racially Diverse Religious Organizations," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 47, no. 1 (2008): 6, doi:10.1111/j.1468-5906.2008.00387.x.

[16] Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise In The Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 147.

The Formidable Influence of Socio-cultural Toolkits

Socialization not only shapes how we see ourselves as raced but, drawing upon Ann Swidler's anti-representationalist perspective,[17] provides people with race-specific toolkits that constitutes their culture. Swidler defines a socio-cultural toolkit as "a repertoire...of habits, skills, and styles from which people construct their [persistent ways of ordering] action [through time].'"[18] In other words, a toolkit represents the cultural resources individuals have to draw upon when acting in the world. It shapes people's patterns of actions not only by informing what resources they have, but what resources they believe go together and should be used in a given context. The concept of a cultural toolkit explains why different groups behave differently in the same situation as well as why there is observed continuity of the lifestyles of people of the same group.[19] When applied to the issues of race and religion, Korie Edwards affirms that race-specific toolkits contribute to differences in the religious identities of blacks and whites:

> Emerson and Smith (2000) show that white and black evangelicals, for example, possess very different tools in their religiocultural toolkits. Inevitably these

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[17]Omar Lizardo and Michael Strand, "Skills, Toolkits, Contexts and Institutions: Clarifying the Relationship between Different Approaches to Cognition in Cultural Sociology," *Poetics* 38, no. 2 (2010): 209-210, accessed April 2015, doi:10.1016/j.poetic.2009.11.003. Anti-representationalist theory "stands opposed to all attempts to suggest that persons somehow imbibe or internalize overarching, historically emergent, and logically integrated cultural structures or ‘‘conceptual schemes’’—whether these are conceived as normative systems in the Parsonian sense (1935), conceptual schemes in the neo-Kantian sense (Parsons, 1964), cultural codes in the Alexander/Lévi-Strauss sense (Alexander, 2003; Lévi-Strauss, 1966) or classificatory systems in the Zerubavelian (1993) sense. Just like in toolkit theory, in practice theory ‘'culture..is more like a style or a set of skills and habits than a set of preferences or wants'’ (Swidler, 1986:275)."

[18] Ann Swidler, "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies," *American Sociological Review* 51 (1986): 273.

[19] Ann Swidler, "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies," *American Sociological Review* 51 (1986): 277.

> different tools lead whites and blacks to forge distinctly different religious identities, ones that are restricted by the cultural resources available to them.[20]

As seen in chapter five,[21] white evangelicals possess free-will individualism, relationalism, and antistructuralism in their tool kit. These resources shape the way they see themselves and the world around them in a way that poses obstacles to their perception of the systemic nature of racism.

As with primary socialization, these identity and reality shaping tools are hard to change. In what Swidler calls "settled periods," times common to the human experience, people's culture and the social structures that shape their reality are fused, "it is particularly difficult to disentangle cultural and structural influences on action."[22] As a result, an individual's culture provides the resources from which they draw to determine how to see and act in the world.[23] Experience during settled periods "refines and reinforces skills, habits, modes of experience."[24] Furthermore, opportunities that would require an individual to give up their old habits and develop new tools are not pursued.

> People do not readily take advantage of new structural opportunities which would require them to abandon established ways of life. This is not because they cling to

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[20] Korie L. Edwards, "Bring Race to the Center: The Importance of Race in Racially Diverse Religious Organizations," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 47, no. 1 (2008): 7, doi:10.1111/j.1468-5906.2008.00387.x.

[21] Pgs. 237-239.

[22] Ann Swidler, "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies," *American Sociological Review* 51 (1986): 281.

[23] Ibid., 280.

[24] Ibid., 282.

> cultural values, but because they are reluctant to abandon familiar strategies' of action for which they have the cultural equipment.[25]

Therefore, during this time, an individual's culture strongly defines one's reality and shapes the actions one takes. People assume that their socio-cultural toolkit reflects the way things are and act accordingly.[26]

The Formidable Influence of Habitus

Drawing from the classical school of sociological thought,[27] Pierre Bourdieu suggests that socialization goes deeper than providing external tools to utilize in action. Rather, he asserts that culture is internalized, highly structured, and fundamentally shapes the way people behave in the world. This perspective is reflected in his notion of habitus. A habitus is an unconscious, internalized, and deeply engrained structure that shapes, from an early age, an individual's dispositions and how they engage in the world.[28] A

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[25] Ibid., 282.

[26] Ibid., 279.

[27] Omar Lizardo and Michael Strand, "Skills, Toolkits, Contexts and Institutions: Clarifying the Relationship between Different Approaches to Cognition in Cultural Sociology," *Poetics* 38, no. 2 (2010): 205, accessed April 2015, doi:10.1016/j.poetic.2009.11.003.Believes that people have internalized, "highly coherent, overly complex and elaborately structured codes, ideologies or value systems" that structure socialization.

[28] Pierre Bourdieu, "2," in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 72. A habitus, as defined by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, who developed the concept, is an unconscious, internalized and established structure that is a collectively orchestrated and self-propelling reality. He writes in greater detail that a habitus is "systems of durable, transferable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring practices and representations which can be objectively regulated and regular without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor." Hyejeong Jo, "Habitus Transformation: Immigrant Mother's Cultural Translation of Educational Strategies in Korea," 9, 2013, accessed April 2015, http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1006& context=elmm. Though often associated with class, habitus is not tied to social class alone. Rather "[it] is

habitus is shaped by one's place in society: people from different social strata have a different habitus and thus different understandings of where they fit into society and how they are supposed to engage in the world. Once an individual has been inculcated, through socialization, with the objective conditions that produce a habitus, an individual will produce desires and actions compatible with them. What is more, it also yields practices that tend to produce the generative principles that make up and perpetuate the habitus itself. Therefore, each person, whether they are aware or not, is a producer and reproducer of their own habitus. Because habitus is largely unconscious, imparted at an early age, and self-perpetuating, Bourdieu's concept of habitus has been criticized for seemingly excluding the possibility of change.

While habitus differs in experience and style from person to person, it can be generally applied to groups, thus producing similar experiences. It could be said that different racial groups have different habitus, further explaining why they act differently in the world. This, along with primary socialization and socio-cultural toolkits, construct a daily reality that George Herbert Mead warns, in the absence of testing, will be accepted as the way things are. Consider the following quote from Mead as it might shape the seemingly intransigent assumptions, expressions, and practices seen across racial lines in Christian worship.

> The reality of everyday life is taken for granted as reality. It does not require additional verification over and beyond its simple presence. It is simply there, as self-evident and compelling facticity. I know that it is real. While I am capable of

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primarily a method for analyzing the dominance of dominant groups in society and the domination of subordinate groups" (Reay, 2004: 436); so, habitus can be formed and influenced by not only social class but also other factors such as gender and race (McClelland, 1990)." Studies such as Bodovski, 2010; Diamond, et al., 2004; Horvat & Antonio, 1999 explore how race intersects with habitus.

> engaging in doubt about its reality, I am obliged to suspend such doubt as I routinely exist in everyday life. This suspension of doubt is so firm that to abandon it, as I might want to do, say, in theoretical or religious contemplation, I have to make an extreme transition. The world of everyday life proclaims itself and, when I want to challenge the proclamation, I must engage in a deliberate, by no means easy effort.[29]

While socio-cultural forces seem to set people in their ways, I believe that an environment that overcomes the segregation of everyday society, that challenges cultural assumptions, that invites people into unfamiliar practices, and that makes salient culture and race, has the potential to foment change and shake people from their cultural enclaves. Such an environment can be found in the multiracial church.

POTENTIAL FOR TRANSFORMATION WITHIN CULTURAL BOUNDARIES, SPECIFICALLY WITHIN THE MULTIRACIAL CHURCH

Though deeply engrained and largely unconscious, primary socialization, toolkits, habitus, and the cultures that they construct, can be changed. This is especially true of these elements as they relate to racial, ethnic, and cultural identity. Race and ethnicity are

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[29] Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise In The Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 24.

negotiated, subjective, and fluid identities.[30] They are understood differently based on context[31] and over time.[32] Joane Nagel affirms:

> Groups construct their culture in many ways which involve the *reconstruction* of historical culture and the *construction* of new culture. Culture reconstruction techniques include revivals and restorations of historical cultural practices and institutions new cultural constructions include revisions of current culture and innovations - the creation of new cultural forms. Cultural construction and reconstruction are ongoing group tasks in which new and renovated cultural symbols, activities, and materials are continually being added to and removed from existing cultural repertoires.[33]

If the potentially divisive cultures that impart identity can be altered, so can identity itself be transformed. As this chapter goes on to suggest, this shift in identity has the potential to facilitate racial reconciliation. This section of my chapter aids in this argument by addressing how the three formidable influences that contribute to the ethno-cultural differences that, in turn, determine identity being deeply engrained within individuals,

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[30] Gerardo Marti, "Affinity, Identity, and Transcendence: The Experience of Religious Racial Integration in Diverse Congregations," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 48, no. 1 (2009): 54, doi:10.1111/j.1468-5906.2009.01429.x. Studies that Marti mentions as supporting the fluidity of race and ethnicity are as follows: (Barzun 1937, Espiritu 1992; Gimenez 1989; Mahmood and Armstrong 1992; Mason 1970; Mirza and Dungworth 1995; Montague 1964; Nagel 1994; Omi 2001; Omi and Winant 1994; Rodriguez and Cordero-Guuzman 1992; Rohrl 1995; Waters 1990). Note that in discussing how ethno-religious identity changes, I am not speaking of how one's skin color or geographical region of origin changes (certainly this would be an unusual case), but how people change the way in which they see and present themselves.

[31] Ibid., 54-55. Ethno-racial identification is shaped by an individual’s goals of affiliation. More specifically, they are impacted by individual's desire for belonging, social status, and social mobility. Which of these elements take priority is shaped by context (Dhingra 2007; Greenfield 1976; Okarmura 1981; Waters 1996) (54). Furthermore, in multiracial congregations, people selectively present aspects of their ethno-racial identity as they negotiate multiple identities in the context of congregational life (55). The ethnic identity that a person expresses and acts upon is shaped by how salient it is in the context (Stryker 1981) (55).

[32] See Ch. 5, pg. 229-230.

[33] Joane Nagel, "Constructing Ethnicity: Creating and Recreating Ethnic Identity and Culture," *Social Problems* 41, no. 1 (1994): 162, accessed April 2015, doi:10.2307/3096847. See footnote 42 of this chapter to learn more about Nagel's belief that people not only have, but can chose what tools will be in their toolkit.

have the potential to be changed. Before I address this I acknowledge a type of change that does commonly exist and provide an argument for why people should challenge formidable influences: because deep change could aid in reconciliation.

Common Cultural Changes and the Need to Go Deeper

When an individual moves from attending a homogeneous congregation of their own race to a multiracial congregation a degree of secondary socialization occurs. Secondary socialization is the acquisition of role-specific knowledge that communicates how people are to behave in different social roles.[34] For example, how a person is to act as a daughter, a church member, or an employee. Related to race, this extends to how a black person might act in the presence of whites at a predominantly white work place or how a white person may behave when traveling through an all-black community. Unlike primary socialization, secondary socialization is disrupted more easily.[35] First, it is not as deeply engrained.[36] Second, people can move in and out of the contexts in which it would be appropriate to apply the secondary conditioning they have received. [37]For example, when a person returns home from work they may leave the social protocol of work behind them and behave more as a member of a family. If this employee is the aforementioned black person in a predominantly white workplace, this may also mean that they cease to conform to white culture and express their blackness to a greater

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[34] Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise In The Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 135, 138.

[35] Ibid., 142.

[36] Ibid., 147.

[37] Ibid., 142.

degree. In the case of attending a multiracial church, people undergo a degree of secondary socialization in order to be able to respectfully and comfortably engage in and appreciate different styles of worship, develop meaningful relationships with people of different cultures, or understand the vision, mission, and language of a community. While necessary for fruitful, sustained engagement in a multiracial church, it is not necessarily that people allow this socialization to shape them in other contexts. Like the employee who removes their tie and puts up their feet when they return home in the evening, members of multiracial congregations have the option to leave their knowledge and practice of how to respectfully engage in a multiracial context in the pews. Secondary socialization, therefore, represents a potentially meaningful, but relatively superficial transformation (cp. primary socialization). In my opinion, if members of multiracial congregations do not move beyond secondary socialization, they limit their ability to be agents of healing in the world. Even if this socialization is utilized outside of the four walls of the church, applying cross-cultural competencies by itself is inadequate. Rather, it is a transformation of identity that is better suited to make people agents of reconciliation: a transformation that renegotiates primary socialization, toolkits, and habitus, a transformation that shapes how people engage in the world. The good news is that multiracial congregations have the potential to present such a transformative opportunity because they create the circumstances under which primary socialization, toolkits, and habitus can be changed.

Potential for Deeper Change

Potential for Change within Primary Socialization

The transformative contexts that multiracial congregations create challenge the daily experience of segregation and culture-based assumptions and ways of acting. Literature reveals that each formidable influence has mechanisms that allow for change as a result of this context. Just as these elements that so deeply engrain identity-forming cultural differences can be changed, so also can ethno-cultural identity.[38]

Consider primary socialization. The sense of self and perception of reality that results from primary socialization is maintained by interactions[39] with others that engage with what is perceived to be the same reality.[40] At times people encounter circumstances that are on the margins of their daily experience and challenge what life is like.[41] If these marginal experiences occur frequently enough they become routinized, accepted into a person's daily reality. A white person worshipping as the numerical minority at a multiracial church is an example of a marginal experience that challenges people's sense

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[38] Note that I am not speaking of a complete change of the self. This would not be possible, nor desirable. Rather, I am referring to partial change.

[39] Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise In The Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 148, 152, 155.The most important way that reality is maintained is through verbal conversation. In the broadest sense, all people who speak the same language are "reality-maintaining others." (152). During times of crisis, an event that occurs on the margins of everyday life, be it collective or individual, reality confirmations must be "explicit and intensive" (155) to maintain reality.

[40] Ibid., 149-152. While significant others bear the most weight when it comes to shaping one's reality, the message of others, that serve as a sort of chorus, if repeated enough, or communicated in certain means, can carry a similar, if not the same, amount of weight.

[41] Ibid., 155. If confirmations of one's reality becomes more "explicitly and intensive" the individual's sense of self and the world around them may not change.

of self and reality. If a white person attends regularly, this marginal experience comes to shape their reality.

Potential for Change Within Socio-cultural Tool Kits

Tool kits are open to change[42] in what Swidler calls unsettled periods: times when another culture competes with an individual's cultural views and the individual learns new ways of being. During this time a person's ideologies become explicit, action is taken with an awareness of culture, and people can articulate cultural meaning because it does not "come naturally."[43] A multiracial congregation creates circumstances under which social structures and "rituals reorganize taken-for-granted habits and modes of experience… can be maintained.[44]" As explored in chapter three, attending a multiracial

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[42] Joane Nagel, "Constructing Ethnicity: Creating and Recreating Ethnic Identity and Culture," *Social Problems* 41, no. 1 (1994): 162, accessed April 2015, doi:10.2307/3096847.Extending Swidler's toolkit analogy, Nagel asserts that not only do people have access to socio-cultural tool kits, but people can determine what the content of the toolkits are. Drawing upon Fredrik Barth's imagery as a vessel, Nagel describes the construction of ethnic culture by utilizing the image of a shopping cart. In this analogy, the shape of the shopping cart (e.g. size, number of wheels, composition) is determined by constructed ethnic boundaries and the culture is composed by the contents of the cart (e.g. art, music, dress, religion, norms, beliefs, symbols, myths, customs). Nagel emphasizes that the shopping cart is not passed on to us, already filled with cultural goods. Rather, people construct culture by filling their own cart with what is available on the shelves from the past and present .[42] Examples Nagel gives of include the reshaping of black culture in the sixties and seventies and the change of nomenclature among different ethnic groups over time.[42] This might be seen in multiracial congregations through the transformation of corporate culture from maintaining the status quo to reflecting the biblical vision of equality. " As this corporate cultures changes, the identities of individuals are impacted as well.

[43] Ann Swidler, "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies," *American Sociological Review* 51 (1986): 284.

[44] Ibid., 279-280. *With that having been said, what reorganization remains depends on whether or not an individual is in an environment that sustains a new way of action: "Culture has independent casual influence in unsettled cultural periods because it makes possible new strategies of action - constructing entities that can act (selves, families, corporations) shaping the styles and skills with which they act, and modeling forms of authority and cooperation. It is, however, the concrete situations in which these cultural models are enacted that determine which take root and thrive, and which wither and die" (280).* I argue, however, that participation in a multiracial community helps to maintain transformed perspectives. As a

congregation shapes one's worldviews as it relates to race (see pgs. 126 - 128) and the frequent opportunities for fellowship reinforce this transformation.

Potential for Change within Habitus

Finally, because habitus is based on experiences, it can also change. Though people have criticized Bourdieu's concept of habitus for negating this possibility, others argue that this belief reflects a misunderstanding of habitus. Bourdieu himself leaves open the possibility that habitus can change through institutions. Studies provide empirical evidence that change can occur through a shift in social environment or the juggling of the old and new habitus acquired through social mobility (Baxter & Britton, 2001; Horvat, 2003; Horvat & Davis, 2011; Lee & Kramer, 2013).[45] Hyejeong Jo's study of habitus transformation among immigrants in Korea supports the notion that habitus can be modified through daily life when a person engages with an unfamiliar "field."[46] More specifically, she offers evidence to support that habitus can be changed through *micro-level* interactions with institutions and *individuals*. Her evidence also shows that

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matter of fact, they offer the consistent interactions, formative worship, and reinforcing corporate identity that sustains an expanded white worldview.

[45] Hyejeong Jo, "Habitus Transformation: Immigrant Mother's Cultural Translation of Educational Strategies in Korea," 2, accessed April 2015, http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1006&context=elmm.

[46] Ibid., 5-6. Bourdieu defines a field as "a network of a configuration of objective relations between positions." It is "a veritable social universe where, in accordance with its particular laws, there accumulates a particular form of capital where relations of a particular type are exerted." Fields focus on objective aspects of practice (Grenfell & James, 1998) and to perform successfully in a field requires a changing of habitus to maintain a favorable position (TK). Jo concludes: "Habitus in the field provides not just internalized disposition toward a certain practice based on the social position, but a feel for the rules of the game and a sense of likelihood of various outcomes derived from the practices. Thus, with the revised definition tied to the field, habitus includes cognitive aspect as well as non-cognitie unconscious one. Drawing on this definition, for this study, I define habitus not only unconscious embodiment of social structure but also a conscious and intellectual sense of what is going on in the field."

people's actions in unfamiliar environments are not determined by habitus, but are in interaction with it, thus supporting a more flexible understanding of habitus.[47] Therefore, as deeply engrained as habitus may be, when people change their social environments, their habitus can be transformed through both micro-level institutional interface[48] and daily social interaction.

Transitioning from a homogeneous congregation to a multiracial congregation provides the type of change in social environment and personal interactions that can reform an individual's habitus. The following section explores how elements of congregational life in a multiracial congregation, namely fellowship, worship, and collective identity, contribute to identity formation. These identity-forming influences are not the only aspects of congregational life that shape identity nor are they unique to multiracial congregations, though because of the salience of racial identity in multiracial congregations, they have a notable impact on racial identity.[49]

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[47] Ibid., 35-36. study implies that social interactions between different social groups in daily lives as well as social contacts with non-total institutions can be a crucial source of habitus transformation. Also, the habitus transformation helps individuals to develop a new strategy for a competition in the field. This shows that individuals' strategies in a field are not determined by habitus as previous scholarship has assumed, but interacts with habitus. In other words, parents in competitive educational field set up different strategies not only based on their predetermined habitus but also relying on the newly acquired habitus.

[48] Diane Vaughan, "Signals and Interpretive Work: The Role of Culture in Theory of Practical Action," in *Culture in Mind: Toward A Sociology of Culture and Cognition*, ed. Karen A. Cerulo, 51. Contrary to Bourdieu's conceptualization of the habitus *as* a social location, Diane Vaughn suggests that habitus is a *product of* "*social location*: positions in multiple structures that cut across class as well as the trajectory of time, space, and history that typifies individual experience (emphasis original)."

[49] Lori Peek, "Becoming Muslim: The Development of a Religious Identity," *Sociology of Religion* 66, no. 3 (2005): 217, accessed April 13, 2015, doi:10.2307/4153097. Discrete identities are ordered in a salience hierarchy. As people become more committed to a part of their identity, it will more up in the salience hierarchy, thus making it more visible and more likely to enact in a given situation. Social identities and identity salience are generally stable, but roles can be added and dropped and identity salience can change.

Ways In Which The Multiracial Congregation Shapes Identity

Fellowship: Identity Formation through Social Interaction

Multiracial congregations are unique environments where individuals have the opportunity to interact with people across racial lines on a regular basis and develop meaningful cross-racial relationships. Michael Emerson's very definition of the multiracial church includes potential for interaction. In addition to necessitating the presence of different races, the defining 80:20 cut off of multiracial congregations also ensures a certain amount of potential for people to interact with and be aware of those of another race. For example, 20 percent is the point of critical mass at which the presence of a group can be "felt and filtered through a system or organization."[50] It is also the composition at which, if people randomly interact with 20 others, the probability of people coming into contact with someone of a different race is .99.[51] Though similar interactions may take place in a workplace or through a service exchange, the voluntary and spiritual nature of multiracial congregations set these communities apart from other contexts where interaction is required or more superficial. As discussed in chapter three, these environments further contribute to people developing relationships across racial lines on all levels of intimacy. Members of multiracial congregation's preference towards accommodation instead of assimilation shape how people interact with one another as well. This section explores how dynamics present in multiracial congregations contribute

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[50] Ibid., 35.

[51] Ibid.

to a changed view and presentation of one's self, a transformed perspective of others, and actions that are taken in consideration of the larger, diverse community.

Changing One's View of Self

The social interactions encountered through fellowship in multiracial congregations are instrumental in shaping an individual's identity. According to Mead, the individual is shaped through social interaction with others through the use of common language and symbols. More specifically, an individual's view of the self is shaped through how he or she believe they are being perceived by other individuals and the generalized other.[52] Mead describes the forming of one's own identity as a dialogical process. In this process, the "I," the historical self with which one identifies, responds to input from others and the "me," the present self, actively integrates these attitudes into how the self views its identity.[53] Berger and Luckman affirm the dialogical nature of identity formation in saying that "... such reflection about myself is typically occasioned by the attitude toward me that the other exhibits. It is typically a 'mirror' response to attitudes of the other."[54]

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[52] George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self & Society* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1934), 153. Mead defines the generalized other as "The organized community or social group which gives to the individual his unity of self may be called 'the generalized other.' The attitude of the generalized other is the attitude of the whole community." Note that Berger and Luckmann use the term "generalized other" differently from Mead. Mead's understanding has more to do with the theory of mind, taking on others perspectives towards oneself and anticipating responses to those perspectives. People come to understand what they can expect and these expectations are generalized allowing us to make assumptions about those interactions. Berger and Luckmann, on the other hand, see the generalized other as a social force that communicates to individuals how society at large would see and respond to their actions. Though similar, Berger and Luckmann's understanding limits behavior more broadly and is less reflexive.

[53] Ibid., 174.

[54] Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise In The Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 28.

In a society where people are divided along racial lines, the people shaping the self-perception of an individual through social engagement are more likely to be people of the same race with similar assumptions and experiences. Therefore, race-based ideologies and practices are less likely to be challenged through formative quotidian experiences. Furthermore, because multiracial congregations create a space where people interact regularly and have the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships, the influence of racially diverse individuals on identity formation is likely to be greater than a person of another race that an individual met on the street. A white woman I interviewed who had been attending a predominantly black, multiracial congregation for thirteen years shared how her participation in this congregations has led her to see herself as a white person who is privileged, bears power, has racist tendencies, and can play an important role as an ally to the black community.[55]

Changing One's Presentation of Self

In congregations, people look to fellow worshippers to determine how they should present themselves in that context. In essence, context determines what self a person will be.[56] Therefore, if an individual is attending a homogeneous congregation their presentation of self will be tailored to accommodate an audience who is racially the same. In multiracial congregations however, one's projection is shaped by people of other races, offering diverse perspectives and rationale shaped by ethno-cultural differences likely not

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[55] Anonymous, "Transformation of Worship Habitus in A White Women from A Predominantly Black Multiracial Church," interview by author, March 20, 2014.

[56] George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self & Society* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1934),141-142.

encountered (or at least not seriously considered) in a homogeneous church. This presentation of the self, in response to people's reactions, serves as a reflexive mechanism that develops an individual's identity. In the case of my interviewee, for example, she describes herself as having embraced some elements of the black worship tradition, but also as clearly coming from white tradition and still seeing herself and engaging with the congregation as white. This reflects the fact that people in the congregation would get her confused with another white women in the church, thus revealing that she was being associated with her whiteness. Her pastor's emphasis on being a multicultural church and seeking her advice on how to diversify worship through "white" music further indicates that her identity has been shaped by the fact that her congregation views her as white, but also welcomes her and her tradition into the community.[57]

Changing One's View of Others

In addition to changing the way that one sees and presents his or her self, social interactions in a multiracial congregation influence the way an individual views people of a different race. In a media-saturated society, Americans have ample resources offering portrayals (however accurate) of people of another race. These portrayals, as well as any experiences an individual has, provides them with typifications through which they view the racial other. When people connect face to face, however, these assumptions about the other, as well as about oneself, are challenged and revised. Berger and Luckmann

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[57] Anonymous, "Transformation of Worship Habitus in A White Women from A Predominantly Black Multiracial Church," interview by author, March 20, 2014.

describe how, unlike other encounters, face-to-face interactions, make the "other" "fully real":

> In the face-to-face situation the other is fully real. This reality is part of the overall reality of everyday life, and as such massive and compelling. To be sure, another may be real to me without my having encountered him face to face—by reputation, say, or by having corresponded with him. Nevertheless, he becomes real to me in the fullest sense of the word only when I meet him face to face. [58]

In these personal interactions with people of a different race, the typifications individuals have of one another interact.[59] Assumptions and stereotypes are challenged through social engagement and people's view of another is more likely to change than if they did not meet face-to-face.

> Relations with others in the face-to-face situation are highly flexible. Put negatively, it is comparatively difficult to impose rigid patterns upon face-to-face interaction. Whatever patterns are introduced will be continuously modified through the exceedingly variegated and subtle interchange of subjective meanings that goes on. For instance, I may view the other as someone inherently unfriendly to me and act toward him within a pattern of “unfriendly relations” as understood by me. In the face-to-face situation, however, the other may confront me with attitudes and acts that contradict this pattern, perhaps up to a point where I am led to abandon the pattern as inapplicable and to view him as friendly. In other words, the pattern cannot sustain the massive evidence of the other’s subjectivity that is available to me in the face-to-face situation. By contrast, it is much easier for me to ignore such evidence as long as I do not encounter the other face to face.[60]

The transformative power of personal interaction is illustrated in how my interviewee's perspective can to counter the pervasive stereotype of the poverty of the black community:

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[58] Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise In The Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 28.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid., 28.

> So, it's easy for me to sort of categorize, like, if you're black you're poor, you live in the city, you whatever. And I actually appreciate church because it gives me a wider view of what it means to me to be...black. It widens that view, cause I have a lot of [poor] kids [at my workplace]...that I know and I love that are black, but to know like... one of our closest friends [from church] is on the mayor's team, the husband is a financial consultant, the wife is a professor. While this isn't important, it's significant to remember, like, they're one of the wealthiest couples I know...I actually had a very funny situation where I went to a baby shower for her and it was all African American women except [me and one other]...and they were talking about hired help. And [my friend] and I, the two white women, were the only people at the table who did not have hired help![61]

Influencing Actions through Consideration of a Racially Diverse Community

In addition to changing how an individual presents his or her self and views themself and others, interacting with people in a multiracial congregation shapes a person's actions. This is affirmed by the work of Paul Lichterman who posits that, when taking religious action, people draw upon their previous knowledge and existing social cues to determine their setting and scene and what group style is appropriate for that context.[62] In multiracial congregations, this would involve one drawing upon knowledge shaped by the aforementioned, race-specific, formidable influences as well as considering the racial diversity in the current context. (In a homogeneous congregation, considering one's knowledge in light of a group representing different race-shaped perspectives is less likely to be done). More specifically, to determine the appropriate style of action, an

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[61] Anonymous, "Transformation of Worship Habitus in A White Women from A Predominantly Black Multiracial Church," interview by author, March 20, 2014.

[62] Paul Lichterman, "Religion in Public Action: From Actors to Settings," *Sociological Theory* 1, no. 30 (2012): 20-21. Lichterman defines setting as the "social and spatial framework for interaction" Scene is defined as "the conceptual name for a strip of action in which actors are sharing understandings of what is going on here" (20). Group style is defined as "an ongoing pattern of interaction arising from a group's shared assumptions about what constitutes good or adequate participation in a scene" (21).

individual will consider two main factors: their understanding of the boundaries of and relationships within the group.[63] According to Lichterman, "in sum, group style is coparticipants' shared, often taken-for-granted sense of "who we are" collectively in relation to a wider world and how "we" rely on one another while in a scene." Therefore, in the context of multiracial congregations, determining appropriate interaction not only requires consideration of the diverse members of the group, but a placing of one's self in that group and allowing one's self actions to be shaped by the community.

An example of this is seen in my interviewee's expression of how she felt uncomfortable about how the offering at her congregation was taken:

> [In] mainline, white culture generally, money is a private thing...you are encouraged to be generous [but], you don't talk about money very often and you do what you're supposed to, you know, pass the plate down the row and they collect it. Whereas at [my current, multiracial church] everybody files up to the front, and you put your offering in [the basket], and so it's just a very different way... It's like, "here I am!"... I mean nobody knows exactly how much you're giving, people can just file by and keep going but, it's just another, another difference culturally.[64]

With that having been said, she still participates in offering at her current church. While the feelings she described seem to be shaped by her socialization as a white person, her actions are formed in consideration of her church's cultural context. She recognizes that this openness reflects a culture that is more familiar to the majority of people in her church. Therefore, she implies that what may not have been appropriate for her to have participated in at a white church becomes okay for her in the context

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[63] Ibid., 32.

[64] Anonymous, "Transformation of Worship Habitus in A White Women from A Predominantly Black Multiracial Church," interview by author, March 20, 2014.

of a predominantly black multiracial congregation. Her actions have been shaped by her considerations of the larger congregational community.

Progressing in White Identity Development

By changing one's view of self and others and considering the diverse community in the actions one takes, Euro-Americans are positioned to develop their white identity.[65] This section illustrates how the formative interactions mentioned above can contribute to progression along Sue and Sue's model of white identity development. (For a more detailed description of Sue and Sue's model see church 5 pgs. 247 - 252). Examples given

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[65] Daniel T. Sciarra and George V. Gushue, "White Racial Identity Development and Religious Orientation," *Journal of Counseling & Development* 81, no. 4 (2003): 479-480, doi:10.1002/j.1556-6678.2003.tb00274.x. Research supports the notion that higher and more complex levels of racial awareness is correlated with flexible forms of religious orientations. By comparing the qualities of intrinsic and extrinsic orientations[65] and fundamentalism verses quest religion[65] among 233 white college students, Sciarra and Gushue find three orientations religious orientations that are connected to whites' racial identity development. the three pairings are as follows: Pairing 1: The relatively unsophisticated position of "overt racism," was correlated with a rigid and utilitarian religious orientation called "consolation and orderliness." Information processing strategies used with these orientation include the suppression of information and negative out-group distortion. Therefore, people who feel that they have a set and privileged place in the social order also express "dichotomous thinking" and "tenaciously held immutable beliefs" that, when put into practice, are associated with tangible social benefits, such as acceptance and community (479). These qualities are further associated with beliefs that are strongly held, but not fully integrated into the person's life. Therefore, Sciarra and Gushe suggest that people who bear this orientation seem to seek certainty in both their understanding of racial hierarchy and religious beliefs. (479). Second pairing: The second pairing serves as a contrast to the first, presenting a more sophisticated racial identity status characterized as being "racially open" and a "committed and questioning" religious approach that is "flexible" and "integrated." (479). Sciarra and Gushe suggest that a person who is questioning the structures of a racist society and beginning to acknowledge different worldviews would also be open to questioning spirituality and rejecting religious dogmatism (480). This is aided by both racial and religious beliefs being seen as a core part of who a person is, not as a means to an end. Therefore, pursuing their beliefs is intrinsically satisfying. Cognitive strategies employed at this time include flexibility, complexity and reshaping. (480). Third pairing: Surprisingly, in the third pairing a correlation between a white person's fairly developed racial self-awareness and a pragmatic, utilitarian approach to religion. Sciarra and Gushue suggest that this may represent a heightened awareness of one's whiteness, introspection, and a recovery of the positive values of one's white identity in an effort to renegotiate their understanding of being a non-racist white.[65] Information processing in this state is characterized by hyper-vigilance and reshaping prior beliefs. An individual in this stage may seek out a church where they can both find community and support for their journey.

reflect a white person attending a predominantly black, interracial church. This discussion begins with a consideration of the second stage of Sue & Sue's model: Conformity, the first stage in which a white person is aware of the concept of race. This period of time is marked by whites being largely unaware of their race and relying on stereotypes to inform their perspectives of racial others. Although unaware and racist, whites do not see themselves in this way. As seen above, interactions in a multiracial congregation challenge stereotypes and makes whites aware of how they are viewed by racial others. As Caucasians engage with non-whites, they may begin to become aware of their whiteness as people of color see and interact with them as a white person. Though cross-racial interactions occur outside of a multiracial congregation, interactions in this context may be more formative as race is salient and more openly discussed in communities that often have visions, teachings, and activities that explicitly address race. Similarly, being the numerical minority aids whites in them coming to recognize their assumptions and culture. Because these factors are normative in society, it is difficult for whites to see them as unique to their race until they are surrounded by different cultures and communities that can serve as a point of comparison.

As whites engage with people different from themselves they are likely to experience dissonance between their interactions with and feelings towards people of color and their perception of themselves as non-racist individuals. Recognition of this dissonance marks the Dissonance phase of Sue and Sue's model of white identity development, thus contributing towards progress of a white person's racial identity.

The next phase, Resistance and Immersion, is marked by whites' perception of racism and increasing awareness of how it manifests in the world around them. In light of the anti-structuralism that white evangelicals have in their socio-cultural tool kit they are unlikely to be aware of institutional racism and its virulent influence on social systems. Through hearing the stories and sharing in the experiences of people of color however, the far-reaching influence of racism will be more likely to come to light. Generally, be it formal events or small group communities, congregations are intentional about creating opportunities for fellowship where these narratives can be told. Having shared religious beliefs and values provides common ground that aids sharing between people who are racially and culturally different. My interviewee describes how attending a multiracial congregation has shaped her perception of herself in this way: "[attending a multiracial church] helps me recognize my own racist tendencies. Or like,...- I dunno if racist is the word - but how I can stereotype without even realizing [that I'm doing it]."[66] As white people's awareness of their own race and racism is expanded, they may take time to reflect on what it means to be white. This is the hallmark of Sue and Sue's fourth Introspective phase.

Out of this contemplation Euro-Americans continue in their white identity development to achieve an integrated awareness of race (Integrative Awareness Phase). In this phase, whites become more comfortable with their whiteness and prepared to confront racism. This is seen in my interview when she describes how she's become more

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[66] Anonymous, "Transformation of Worship Habitus in A White Women from A Predominantly Black Multiracial Church," interview by author, March 20, 2014.

comfortable talking about race on account of her experience in predominantly black environments:

> I feel like being at church and being [in a racially diverse work environment] makes me much more comfortable talking about race, like it's not, it's not something I have to hide from or not address, but it's something that can come up...[For example], when I see - this sort of sounds like an odd thing to say but - innocent, but still racism, in my young daughter, just cause it's different, I don't have to freak out about that. You know, like, we can have a conversation about it, we can, you know, sort of just talk about people at church. So, I feel like it just helps her to understand differences and understand people.[67]

In time, this increased awareness leads whites to the pinnacle of their journey at which they partner with people to work against racism in the world (Commitment to Antiracist Action). In sum, attending a multiracial congregation facilitates whites raising their awareness of their whiteness, developing more accurate perspectives of blacks, and engaging with race differently, thus contributing to whites' racial identity development.

Musical Worship: Identity Formation through A Shared Meaningful Experience

The second element present in multiracial congregations that shapes identity formation is musical worship. Found in almost all congregations, singing is a core element of congregational life.[68] Musical worship gains its influence in identity formation through the fact that it is a social activity shaped by the people with whom worship is shared. Engagement with people is inseparable from engagement with their racially formed perspectives and cultures. Therefore, as people choose to participate in worship, it both reflects and shapes their ethno-racial identity. Drawing upon the research of Tia

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[67] Anonymous, "Transformation of Worship Habitus in A White Women from A Predominantly Black Multiracial Church," interview by author, March 20, 2014.

[68] Nancy Tatom Ammerman and Arthur Emery. Farnsley, *Congregation & Community* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 37.

DeNora, Gerardo Marti affirms the relationship between worship and identity formation generally:

> Music is appropriated as a resource for the constitution of one's own self... Moreover, music can be used as part of a 'self-regulatory strategies and socio-cultural practices for the construction and maintenance of mood, memory, and identity.' Worship music becomes an inherent part of maintaining one's identity as a Christian believer.[69]

Social Interaction of a Different Kind

Exploring the nature of worship helps explain how music can have this powerful effect on identity. First, worship is an act through which people interact with their congregational community. Marti describes worship as "a social act, embedded in cultures and societies, rather than an individual alone... a social process with profound interactions—spoken and unspoken, overt and covert—between those gathered together."[70] Although it may appear as if worship, even in others' company, is an individual and isolated activity, Stephen Warner's comparison between congregational worship and a Western audience watching a play illustrates how worship is not a passive, isolated act, but calls for communal participation.

> The congregation participates in the ritual with all that participation entails. The audience at a performance of a Western drama merely watches and listens. It is present for the performance, but is not part of it. A congregation is generally required to do things in the course of ritual: sing, dance, read responsively, kneel, eat, drink. In contrast, the members of a Western audience are not required to do anything and may even be required to do nothing. Whereas a congregation joins the celebrant in performing the acts that comprise the ritual, an audience does not

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[69] Gerardo Marti, *Worship Across the Racial Divide: Religious Music and the Multiracial Congregation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 98.

[70] Ibid., 10.

join the actors in the performance of the drama.[71]

The interactions that occur between people of different races in fellowship occur in a more subtle but no less significant way in musical worship. Each process contributes to and reinforces the other.

Participating together in worship, people's interactions and the way they view themselves on this account are shaped by the social structures created by music. "Music is an ordering device as it structures behavior in the here-and-now in both subtle and not-so-subtle ways. As a means of structuring social action, music allows opportunity for coordinated activity with other people. Indeed, music is a form of social control."[72] An example of this is how, in multiracial congregations, worship creates social structures that foster a racially diverse community.[73] This is illustrated in the one hundred and seventy interviews Marti conducted at twelve successfully integrated multiracial congregations reporting that pastors are convinced that worship contributes to diversity within a multiracial congregation. "Devout Christians," Marti writes, "share a conviction that worship has a transformational force and that this powerful force is able to accomplish racial unity."[74] For example, one pastor describes how he intentionally tries to add

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[71] R. Stephen Warner, "2007 Presidential Address: Singing and Solidarity," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 47, no. 2 (2008): 185, accessed April 2015, doi:10.1111/j.1468-5906.2008.00401.x.

[72] Gerardo Marti, *Worship Across the Racial Divide: Religious Music and the Multiracial Congregation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 20-21.

[73] Note, per chapter four of this thesis, pgs. 205 - 207, that there are multiple worship styles that can accomplish this.

[74] Gerardo Marti, *Worship Across the Racial Divide: Religious Music and the Multiracial Congregation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 29.

"flavor" to worship to create a diverse experience: "We'll do old hymns and stuff like 'Amazing Grace,' which would be considered a pretty traditional song, and spice it up - make it sound more gospelly, or like 'Leaning on the Everlasting Arms' or something...so yeah, I definitely try to incorporate a chord here and there to try to spice things up."[75] Marti goes on to explain how Pastors and worship leaders go to great lengths to craft a style of worship music that they believe will contribute to congregational diversity.

Meaning Making

Identity is shaped through the space that worship creates to develop oneself in the presence of others. Not unlike the fellowship described above that informs an individual's perception of themselves and the world around them, music provides a different mode of interaction through which people can cultivate themselves via meaning making.[76] Music does not act directly upon the individual, but shapes them through how the person engages with and interprets it, ultimately producing meaning through this interaction.[77] For example, in his Furfey lecture to the Association for the Sociology of Religion, Warner preformed a song that he described as meaningful to him with his fellow colleagues. Thereafter he explained, "So I asked my friends to help me sing a song that is particularly meaningful to me in order to make a point to you, I would like that point to be not that 'Warner sang a song because it was meaningful to him' but that 'the song is

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[75] Ibid., 38.

[76] Ibid., 20.

[77] Ibid., 97.

meaningful to him because he sings it.'"[78] Nancy Ammerman further captures the relationship between music and meaning making when she writes "gestures, postures, music, and movements tell the story and signal our location in it."[79] Consider, for example, liturgical entrainment. Liturgical entrainment occurs when people move to the music and, in moving to the music, find themselves moving together. Latching occurs as a part of this process when people "latch on" to the music or "get into it."[80] Whether or not a person chooses to participate in corporate worship, therefore, speaks to their relationship with the community and makes claims about that individual's identity. Especially in multiracial congregations where people may have to learn how to worship according to a new tradition,[81] participating represents an openness and yielding to a certain expression of self. For a white person to move to the complex rhythms and participate in the spontaneous expression and dialogical exclamations associated with the black tradition, for example, is to allow his or her self to be identified with and shaped by it. Not to participate, on the other hand, communicates, "I don't do that, that's not who I am." Worship, indeed, creates meaning that both reflects and shapes the congregation and the individuals in it.

This is seen in the example of my interviewee. Though coming from a less

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[78] R. Stephen Warner, "2007 Presidential Address: Singing and Solidarity," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 47, no. 2 (2008): 178, accessed April 2015, doi:10.1111/j.1468-5906.2008.00401.x.

[79] Ibid., 185.

[80] Gerardo Marti, *Worship Across the Racial Divide: Religious Music and the Multiracial Congregation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 99.

[81] Ibid., 81.

expressive and more liturgical background, she says that she came to connect with the worship style at her new church over time. In comparing her former churches with her current, multiracial congregation she says that the worship style at the later is "passionate" and "more just heartfelt worship...[this] is what really sticks out to me and that's the part of the service that I connect with the most."[82] She goes on to share that not only has she come to connect with a worship tradition that is distinctly different from the white congregations she attended, but she has come to express herself through this means:

> [In worship] I can be myself. I can sort of let go to just praise God. I really like music so there's just a lot of pieces of it that, that I connect with. I enjoy singing and I feel like when everybody is so loud it doesn't matter if you're singing exactly right, you can just sort of cut loose and give your whole heart and nobody can totally hear if you're right on or not.[83]

Creating Solidarity

Worship not only shapes individuals through engagement and meaning making, but it also creates solidarity among the worshipping community. This is supported by Warner's comment on his experience singing (not simply listening to) Sacred Harp music.[84] Warner writes, "Sacred harp creates solidarity among people from widely

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[82] Anonymous, "Transformation of Worship Habitus in A White Women from A Predominantly Black Multiracial Church," interview by author, March 20, 2014.

[83] Anonymous, "Transformation of Worship Habitus in A White Women from A Predominantly Black Multiracial Church," interview by author, March 20, 2014.

[84] R. Stephen Warner, "2007 Presidential Address: Singing and Solidarity," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 47, no. 2 (2008): 175, accessed April 2015, doi:10.1111/j.1468-5906.2008.00401.x. "The Sacred Harp, an American anthology of folk hymnody that has been in continuous publication since 1844, represents a tradition whose peculiar features strikingly demonstrate how singing together can produce social solidarity. (The "sacred harp" of the songbook's title and through it

scattered social and cultural locations." This solidarity is facilitated through actions such as being physically present with people, interacting with one another, and focusing together on the same task.[85] In addition, the giving up of control in order to encounter God that is characteristic of emotional worship accentuates the experience of being in community (Nelson 2004).[86] This solidarity has the potential to bring even strangers into a measure of relationship with one another as they are connected through the worshipful act.[87] Solidarity has benefits such as producing emotional energy and providing social capital that creates bridges between groups.[88] Therefore, even among people of different cultures, musical worship creates a greater sense of connection to and identity with one another. It imparts a sense of togetherness, being a part of and for one another, that can foster a safe space for dialogue and reconciliation. Combined with social interactions and meaning making, music has a powerful impact on an individual's identity.

Collective Identity: Shaped by the Corporate Vision

Corporate Identity

The third and final element of congregational life that shapes an individual's sense of self is collective identity. Collective identity is "'the shared definition of a group that

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of the singing tradition, is the human voice, not any other instrument.)"

[85] Ibid., 180.

[86] Gerardo Marti, "Affinity, Identity, and Transcendence: The Experience of Religious Racial Integration in Diverse Congregations," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 48, no. 1 (2009): 62, doi:10.1111/j.1468-5906.2009.01429.x.

[87] R. Stephen Warner, "2007 Presidential Address: Singing and Solidarity," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 47, no. 2 (2008): 182, accessed April 2015, doi:10.1111/j.1468-5906.2008.00401.x.

[88] Ibid., 181.

derives from member's common interests, experience, and solidarity' (snow 2001:1)." It has also been defined as, "'a public pronouncement of status' (Friedman and McAdam 1992) - a way of indicating to self and others some meaningful identity.'" On a more concrete level, it is "an individual's cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice or institution."[89] This corporate identity is socially constructed, shaped by the life of the congregation. This is affirmed by Erving Goffman's statement about how institutional context shapes the presentation of the self and, ultimately, one's assumed identity:

> Each moral career, and behind this, each self, occurs within the confines of an institutional system, whether a social establishment such as a mental hospital or complex of personal and professional relationships. The self, then, can be seen as something that resides in the arrangements prevailing in a social system for its members. The self in this sense is not a property of the person to whom it is attributed, but dwells rather in the pattern of social control that is exerted in connection with the person by himself and those around him. This special kind of institutional arrangement does not so much support the self, but constitutes it.[90]

Drawing upon Goffman's statement and his own research, Marti concludes that the congregation's corporate identity shapes individuals' identities, causing them to take on personally the characteristics of the congregation itself:

> [The individual's] adopted religious identity is a reflection of the structure of the religious institution itself. The emphasis on congregational characteristics draws attention away from attitudes of attenders regarding culture clashes, ethnic

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[89] Jesse M. Smith, "Creating a Godless Community: The Collective Identity Work of Contemporary American Atheists," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 52, no. 1 (2013): 82, doi:10.1111/jssr.12009.

[90] Gerardo Marti, "Affinity, Identity, and Transcendence: The Experience of Religious Racial Integration in Diverse Congregations," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 48, no. 1 (2009): 55, doi:10.1111/j.1468-5906.2009.01429.x.

> prejudices, or racial discrimination to focus instead on how the corporate structure of multiracial congregations impinges on constructions of personal identity.[91]

Indeed, individuals negotiate their identity based on institutional and social environments.

Many multiracial congregations emphasize a collective identity that draws from congregationally specific resources to describe and orient their diverse faith community. This corporate identity usually de-emphasizes racial or ethnic identity so people of diverse backgrounds are, theoretically, not hindered from assuming this identity on account of ethnic differences. Based on a study Marti conducted at two multiracial congregations in Los Angeles, Oasis and Mosaic, he identified three "moments" that, although not necessarily occurring in a linear fashion, characterize the co-construction of corporate identity in multiethnic congregations. Through this process, an individual "considers the congregation to be his or her congregation, considers himself or herself as *belonging* to the congregation, has *committed himself or herself* to the congregation, and see himself or herself as an *extension* of the congregation."[92]

The Three Moments of Corporate Identity Development

<u>The Establishment of Affinity</u>: The first step towards identifying with the congregation is developing affinity with the congregational community. Affinity exists when there is an expression of "shared interests that draw people together and provide initial orientation

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[91] Ibid., 55-56.

[92] Ibid., 54.

for further interaction."[93] People come to church seeking affinity: a connection that highlights something "critically important to them as a person."[94] "In order for an affinity to occur," Marti writes, "a person must be able to connect some aspect of his or her identity with some aspect of the people and practices of the church; conversely, a person cannot persist in a congregation if aspects of his or her personal identity do not connect at some level of affinity to the people and activities of the congregation."[95] This affinity can be based on a wide-variety of elements such as shared theology, values, interests, or needs. For example, at one of the churches Marti interviewed, Oasis, the shared element that brought people together was their attempts to "make it" in Hollywood.[96] Thus begins the formation of corporate identity.

Identity Reorientation: In the next phase, through the influence of shared affinity, a person's identity begins to shift away from elements outside of the congregation to align themselves with identifiers that are rooted directly in the history, values, and beliefs of the congregation. Therefore, a congregant's identity begins to reflect the values of the congregation itself. This corporate identity is developed through sermons, worship music, participation in small groups, promotional material, and other forms of communication and connection through which people are frequently exposed. It is also promoted through

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[93] Ibid., 57.

[94] Ibid., 58.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Ibid.

informal relationships, be it with church leaders or a committed congregant who encourages less committed attendees towards fuller participation in the church and alignment with congregational identity.[97] Identity re-orientation at Oasis was evident in the fact that people described their identities in ways that were connected to the concept of an entrepreneurial missionary, a persona shaped by the congregation's emphasis on evangelism.

During identity reorientation, people come to see beliefs and practices of the congregation to reflect "natural" and "normal" Christianity.[98] This is a mark that the identity reorientation has occurred. Marti writes that, once identity has been reoriented, the expression of Christian life in the church the individual identifies with is seen as "absolutely right." This stands in contrast to other congregations that, in comparison, are considered to be "missing it," "off base," or even heretical."[99] Furthermore, conforming to the idealized practice of the congregation is seen as what it means to belong. Marti summarizes the powerful transition that takes place: "A new orthodoxy is absorbed. The moral pressure to attain and keep with congregational orthodoxy becomes part of what it means to 'belong' to the congregation. The corporately constructed identity becomes a corporately enforced identity."[100] A new identity is being formed.

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[97] Ibid., 60.

[98] Ibid., 59.

[99] Ibid., 60.

[100] Gerardo Marti, "Affinity, Identity, and Transcendence: The Experience of Religious Racial Integration in Diverse Congregations," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 48, no. 1 (2009): 60, doi:10.1111/j.1468-5906.2009.01429.x.

Ethnic Transcendence: The final moment of integrating the identities of ethnically and racially diverse individuals into that of a single congregation is ethnic transcendence. In this moment, with a shared understanding of what it means to be Christian, people see their religious identity as overriding the differences among them. Religious identity becomes more important than ethnic identity.[101] With that having been said, the state of ethnic transcendence is not to be confused with color-blindness. It does not mean that people do not see or cannot express their ethnic identity, but that people connect to the congregation through a shared religious identity instead of ethnic affiliations.[102]

This transcendent identity is reinforced through activities like water baptism, communion, and a public commitment to membership that serves to reorient people's experience away from ethnic particularities and towards a shared religious identity.[103] People Marti interviewed described how membership especially not only affirmed a person's commitment to the congregation's collective identity, but, reminiscent of Mead and Luckmann and Berger, also "create[d] connections to other members of the church who reflect their identity back to them."[104] While it may seem as if individual identity could be suffocated in this context, Marti notes that people may join affinity groups to

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[101] Ibid., 60-61.

[102] Ibid., 64. This distinction has been affirmed by Kathleen Garces-Foley (2007) and Fugita and O'Brien (1991).

[103] Ibid., 60-61.

[104] Ibid., 62.

express more of an individual sense of identity.[105] In reflection of the overall process, Marti concludes:

> Evidence from Mosaic and Oasis suggests that the experience of becoming a member of a multiethnic/multiracial congregation reorients personal identity such that people of various ethnic and racial heritages subdue their ethnoracial distinctions in favor of a common religious identity that forms the basis for affiliation with their congregation and structures these cross-ethnic interactions as nondisruptive...As individuals become more deeply involved in the congregation, they selectively accentuate and/or obscure their ethnic and racial affiliations. Congregational activities and structures in diverse congregations urge members to take on collective identities, and members of these congregations co-construct a new shared identity, especially through rituals and shared practices."[106]

The Unintended, Counterproductive Consequences of Corporate Identity

Although Marti frames this shaping of the self in positive terms, and I agree that a shared collective identity is helpful in the development of deep and healing relationships, this process is not without critique. An ethnically transcendent corporate identity produces more unintended, counterproductive consequences. First, Marti mentions that a corporate congregational identity (like any group identity) has potential for a new kind of exclusion based on conformity to the corporate identity rather than race. Second, Edwards argues that, no matter how much race appears to be transcended, corporate identities will still reflect the orientation of one racial group. Because identity is formed by socio-historical toolkits, it is likely that corporate identities will resonate with people who function out of the same tool kit, but not those who shape their identity with

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[105] Ibid., 64.

[106] Ibid., 63.

different tools.[107] Because the corporate identities of multiracial congregations tend to be constructed using a white toolkit, the effort to create a unified sense of community can lead to white hegemony instead.[108] Edwards summarizes this conundrum:

> Inevitably these different tools lead whites and blacks to forge distinctly different religious identities, ones that are restricted by the cultural resources available to them. When promoting a religious identity, interracial religious organizations will need to choose a religiocultural toolkit from which to construct this identity. I propose that whiteness will dictate that it be the one that whites are comfortable and familiar with. Racial and ethnic minorities will need to draw upon their proficiency in the dominant culture to bridge a connection with white attendees.[109]

Furthermore, Edwards argues that, because corporate identity strives to transcend race, it often doesn't recognize the differences in the social and economic experiences of people of different races. As a result, churches may offer an identity that doesn't speak to the needs of non-white members of their community. Edwards further explains this problem and how it can maintain the ideology of whiteness:

> The promotion of a broader, inclusive religious identity submerges the real, everyday consequences of living life in the United States as a racial minority, leaving them with a limited to no mechanism for applying faith to these experiences in a collective context. Furthermore, promoting social identity that minimizes the role of race in people's lives serve to reinforce whiteness. Whites are not inclined to think about race and its consequences for them. This approach allows them to continue to do so.[110]

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[107] Korie L. Edwards, "Bring Race to the Center: The Importance of Race in Racially Diverse Religious Organizations," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 47, no. 1 (2008): 7, doi:10.1111/j.1468-5906.2008.00387.x.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Ibid.

[110] Ibid.

Marti admits that the approach seen in Mosaic and Oasis does not acknowledge differences in social and economic realities among races and leaves institutional racism unquestioned.[111] This is a problem that needs to be addressed. Even if tolerated for pragmatic reasons, pastors should not be comfortable with the subtle, but destructive forces found in corporate identity. While shaping individual identity and bringing people together across racial lines, corporate identity can promote further exclusion and hegemony. These dynamics should be explored further to determine if these benefits are worth the cost of unity. Alternative means of developing unity and corporate identity should be pursued as well.

The Fusion of Cultures in Identity Transformation and Implications for Racial Reconciliation

Together, participation in fellowship, music, and a congregation's corporate identity can yield a powerful influence on a person's sense of self. Because people are engaging with racially diverse individuals, being invited to participate in worship expressions with which they may not be familiar, and assuming a corporate identity that transcends, but may not reflect the toolkits of more than one race, the possibility of shaping racial identity cannot be eluded. Furthermore, the race of the person being transformed will play a central role in this change as an individual's race shapes what they notice, their values and perspectives, and the experiences they will consider when modifying their identity. The races with which a person is interacting and aligning

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[111] Gerardo Marti, "Affinity, Identity, and Transcendence: The Experience of Religious Racial Integration in Diverse Congregations," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 48, no. 1 (2009): 65, doi:10.1111/j.1468-5906.2009.01429.x.

oneself with also influences an individual's new identity. These dynamics facilitate a molting process where people shed some of their old self and produce new aspects of the self, while allowing their core to remain the same.[112] The result of these deliberations[113] is not unlike that of immigrants coming from different cultures:[114] a fusion of identity that draws from both one's home culture and the culture(s) of the multiracial community.

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[112] Mary Jo Neitz, "The Process of Conversion," in *Charisma and Community: A Study of Commitment within Charismatic Renewal* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1987), 89. This molting imagery is drawn from Neitz's discussion of how reality is reconstructed through the conversion process. I thought this imagery was appropriate for racial identity formation as well.

[113] Mustafa Emirbayer and Ann Mische, "What Is Agency?," *American Journal of Sociology* 103 (1998): 963-964, 970-999. Mustafa Emirbayer and Ann Mische consider how temporal aspects of agency interact in decision making processes. This dynamics would be engaged as people in multiracial congregations decided what aspects of a new culture will be incorporated into their identity. To fully capture agency, the authors argue that one must see how it is situated within the flow of time (963). Social actors can simultaneously be oriented to the past, present, and future, allowing all three to shape one's decision making (964). The first dynamic is the iterational element: the "selective reactivation by actors of past patterns of thought and action, as routinely incorporated into practical activity, thereby giving stability and order to social universes and helping to sustain identities, interactions and institutions over time" (971). The iterational element determines what an individual pays attention to, how they categorize an event and locate it in relation to other people, events and contexts, and how they choose an appropriate repertoire for a response and expectations for the future. I anticipate that, in this phase, an individual's primary socialization, toolkits, and habitus will come into play. A white may also consider past experiences they've had with members of another race as well as the general racial history between them. The second dynamic is the projective element. This is "the imaginative generation by actors of possible future trajectories of action, in which received structures of thought and action may be creatively reconfigured in relation to actors' hopes, fears, and desires for the future." (971). This dynamic draws upon memories to consider possible turns of events and appropriate responses, place them in narrative and, through imagination and enactment, test out future possibilities. This draws a person's present and perceived future situation into the equation. In this phase, the context of the interracial congregation a person is a part of and the extent that they understand and can imagine it as a part of their future comes into play. The Third dynamic is the Practical-evaluative element. This is "the capacity of actors to make practical and normative judgments among alternative possible trajectories of action in response to the emerging demands, dilemmas, and ambiguities of presently evolving situations" (971). This takes place in the present and functions to problemitize the situation, categorize the situation according to past experiences, weigh possible choices, decide, and execute the decision (998-999).

[114] See the following: Chen, Carolyn. "Becoming American Men and Women: Otherworldly Narritives and This-Worldly Self." In *Getting Saved in America: Taiwanese Immigration and Religious Experience*, 111-45. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008; Joshi, Khyati Y. "Ethnicity and Religion." In *New Roots In America's Sacred Ground: Religion, Race, and Ethnicity in Indian America*, 34-61. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006.

In my interview with the white woman who attends a predominantly multiracial church, it is evident how her worship expression reflects both white and black culture. Throughout our conversation she described how she's developed a "passionate" and "heartfelt" style of worship that she associates with the black tradition and assumed the African American value of the application of faith to life. On the other hand, she still prefers more cognitive preaching styles and maintains the analytical perspective that she associates with being white. Her skepticism of authority and reservations of the public discussion of money also reflect areas in which the feelings and actions that make claims on her identity conform to her white-based primary socialization, socio-cultural toolkits, and habitus. It is interesting to note how, throughout her interview, her likely unconscious use of the words "me/my" and "they/theirs" indicate which elements of worship she, as a white worshipper, has taken on as her own and which elements she participates in but does not see as a part of her own tradition or identity.[115] Regardless of what elements she assumes and what she does not, her worship socialization, toolkits, and habitus clearly reflects expressions that are both black and white.

In light of this, I ask the reader to consider how identity transformation could contribute to racial reconciliation. A fusion of cultures within one's self is deeper than learning how to act in a new role through secondary socialization. While learning how to engage in a different social location may be necessary for fruitful participation in multiracial congregations, this is not commensurate to the changes that take place in

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[115] Anonymous, "Transformation of Worship Habitus in A White Women from A Predominantly Black Multiracial Church," interview by author, March 20, 2014.

whites who come to assume and identify with expressions of worship associated with the non-white community. In my perspective, while developing skills in cross-cultural competence through secondary socialization is beneficial, the identity transformation that allows an individual to share an intimate part of themselves with racial others will go farther in creating solidarity and respect across racial lines. First, assuming another's culture can be a sign of honor and respect. If a white person does so with pure motives and a humble spirit it may communicate value of and submission to another culture. This may be especially meaningful since, historically, people of color have been expected to conform to the culture of whites. Perhaps a measure of healing and humanization can be offered by whites who choose to be transformed by the cultures that some may still see as less desirable and lesser than. Second, when people identify with a culture, that culture is integrated into their sense of self. This creates a connection between themselves and others who bear a similar self-perception. Therefore, disparaging those who hold that culture is like disparaging a part of oneself. As a result, fused racial identities may increase the likeliness of experiencing the racial other as a Christian sister or brother, thus complementing and facilitating the actualization of the spiritual kinship Christians have in Christ. I wonder if this forming of identity may be the difference between people merely affirming the message of equality heard from the pulpit and more mindfully living the biblical vision out through their lives.

Summary on Racial Identity Development in Multiracial Congregations

Racial identity and how individuals engage with people of other races is deeply engrained in one's sense of self. Despite this, firmly established primary socialization,

toolkits, and habitus are not exempt from change. Experiencing marginal or new situations, such as those present in multiracial congregations, have the potential to altar an individual's racial identity and the way they see people of a different race. Research suggests that this change can occur through the fellowship, worship, and assumption of corporate identity espoused in multiracial congregations. As people share in these experiences, they have the opportunity to reconsider and modify their identity. In the end, however, not all elements of identity are changed. Core elements remain. Other aspects of racial identity, however, may come to reflect a fusion of the individual's home culture and the new culture(s) of their multiracial community.[116] This fusion offers hope for reconciliation being facilitated through identity transformation. As individuals incorporate cultures associated with people of a different race into their own identity, perhaps the divide between them will become smaller, the solidarity will become greater, and people will be more likely to love their neighbors as themselves (Matt. 22:39; Mark 12:31).

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[116] Distinguishing between core and non-core elements of an individual's racial identity, which of these elements are changed, why, and under what circumstances are questions for future research.

VII. EPILOGUE: IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND PLANS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Theology has been used to justify racial hierarchy in the United States ever since slaves were snatched from their homeland and carried to American shores. Be it a sense of chosenness, the biblical allowance of slavery, or the quoting of scripture that permitted segregation to persist, biblical interpretations shaped by imperial interests have contributed to the institutionalization of racial inequality (Ch. 1). However, emerging theology on the unity in diversity of the body of Christ offers a different perspective on what the Bible has to say (Ch. 2). Thanks to the tireless work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and the agents of justice and reconciliation who have carried his legacy to the modern day, a different perspective on race has emerged that is having an encouraging influence on the American religious landscape. It is this theology that is likely[1] to undergird multiracial congregations.

Multiracial congregations have the potential to foster racial reconciliation. Despite how egalitarian a community may or may not be, Emerson's research suggests that, overall, multiracial congregations contribute to reconciliation through cross-racial relationships, transformed perspectives, and increased social capital (Ch. 4). Furthermore, because, among U.S. minority groups, blacks are most divided from whites, the

[1] Remember that not all multiracial congregations become multiracial intentionally (see pgs. 111-113)

reconciliation that can take place in multiracial congregations is sorely needed between these two communities (Introduction).

Despite the potential to heal long-standing racial tensions, obstacles to reconciliation may be present within multiracial communities. This thesis has explored two obstacles that involve restricting the expression of blacks, a community that has developed a worship tradition distinct from whites on account of segregation and oppression. The black church has a rich heritage and offers a beautiful expression of faith that provides a valuable perspective on God and how the Lord can be worshipped. Despite this, when blacks attend multiracial congregations, their expression may be restricted. This can occur through black expression being encouraged, but essentialized and manipulated (Marti), or discouraged, yielding to white hegemony (Edwards). As a result, under these circumstances, blacks are unable to fully express themselves and genuinely participate in this form of Christian community. While being a part of a multiracial congregation involves a measure of sacrifice and yielding to the other, essentialism and hegemony is problematic because they do not give blacks the opportunity to yield. Rather, they require them to do so, thus removing their agency. This is both dehumanizing and contrary to the biblical vision of an egalitarian body of Christ (see Ch. 2). When black expression is stifled, this has the potential to not only hinder blacks' spiritual development, but opportunities for enrichment and reconciliation for the entire body of Christ.

I hypothesized that these or similar obstacles are encountered by other communities of color. While I have not found research supporting this as of yet, I

attribute this to my limited knowledge and the nascence of the field, not the lack of racial oppression.

The church must do better. In an effort to pursue diversity, we have wounded ourselves. Without change, we will continue to be the agent of our own disablement. Therefore, the church, and more specifically, whites in the multiracial church, must first raise their level of awareness. Because whiteness is largely unconscious and white hegemony may feel like the norm (Ch. 5), simply making whites aware of the contents of this thesis may play an important role in fostering reconciliation. The following suggestions, however, are not limited to whites, although they are restricted in that they are based on implications that can be drawn from this thesis.

Raising awareness unto reconciliation begins by becoming aware of how theology, shaped by imperial motivations, has been used against the actualization of the biblical vision of equality in the body of Christ (Ch. 1). Much damage has been done and the church bears a measure of responsibility. Therefore, we should strive to bring restoration and reconciliation to divided communities. Although walls of division are high and wounds run deep, there is hope for reconciliation. Indeed, as chapter two reveals, the bible paints a vibrant picture of the egalitarian community that God not only desires, but as advocates of multiracial ministry argue, has made possible through Jesus' work on the cross.

Another area in which I believe my work implies that the church needs to be aware is how, despite good intentions and significant social progress, the ideologies and power dynamics that institutionalized division still remain (Ch. 4 and 5). More

specifically, they are present in multiracial congregations and attempts to diversify a ministry may result in unintended, counterproductive consequences. In the context of interracial congregations, these consequences take the form of essentialism and white hegemony. These elements militate against the biblical vision of equality in the body of Christ.

The good news, however, is that, despite the ends in relation to which they have been employed, neither of these ideologies are necessary to develop a successfully integrated multiracial church. This is the third area of which the church must become more aware. As Marti's research suggests, there are multiple styles of musical worship that contribute to a successfully integrated multiracial church. Although people may feel strongly about one style based on their upbringing, experiences, and racial identity, exposure to worship in multiracial congregations can shape both congregational preferences and impact racial identity (Ch. 7). Transformed identities that reflect elements of cultures for different races may serve to aid racial reconciliation as well.

Raising the church's level of awareness in these areas will be a long and laborious process. Obstacles such as deeply rooted historical division (Ch. 1), systemic inequality, and the largely unconscious ideology of whiteness (Ch. 5) are just a few of the issues that stand in the way. I believe that by raising people's awareness of these problems through education and identifying other problem sources and solutions through research, we can lay a foundation for the potential in multiracial congregations to be actualized in reconciled relationships.

As far as education is concerned, I hypothesize that this could be achieved by offering customized trainings in the aforementioned literature to the leadership of multiracial congregations in ways that are relevant, accessible, and applicable to them. Additional information that may need to be presented in these trainings to round out the curriculum includes a presentation of the increasing diversity in the United States and the continued reality of racial division in the church today.[2] To get a more accurate understanding of the reality within multiracial congregations, how these dynamics impact people of color and what they can do to foster a more egalitarian environment is needed as well.[3] Topics such as cultural intelligence, strategies for racial reconciliation, and approaches to race education could be helpful as well.

Once awareness has been raised, a next step would be to transform mindfulness into changed practice. For example, to address essentialism and hegemony, intentional efforts would have to be made that allow blacks to express themselves - not as a means to an end or only to the extent that white people feel comfortable, but genuinely and uninhibitedly. This could restore black's agency to fully participate in and yield to the goals of unity within the congregation. I hypothesize that this will require reflection and humble action on the part of whites especially. More specifically, they must give up power, de-center themselves, and work with racially diverse members of the

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[2] For information on racial division in the church today, I'd suggest: Emerson, Michael O., and Christian Smith. *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

[3] For more information on how people of color and whites can work together to address issues related to racial division see: Emerson, Michael O., and George A. Yancey. *Transcending Racial Barriers: Toward a Mutual Obligations Approach*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

congregation to collaboratively produce one of Marti's four styles of worship. In sum, awareness is the first step in a long and costly journey. While my thesis, focusing primarily on the landscape of multiracial congregations and power dynamics therein, cannot speak to the process, I suggest that future research focus on how congregations can make change.

PLANS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In identifying and corroborating the presence of essentialism and white hegemony, Marti and Edwards have made valuable contributions to the study of multiracial congregations. Each discovery has alerted practitioners to powerful counterproductive dynamics of which, otherwise, they may not have been aware. I am interested in exploring an issue that I believe may have a similarly stifling effect on congregations: the differences between the professed beliefs of the leadership regarding unity in diversity and the actions of the congregations themselves.

Drawing primarily upon the work of George Yancey, I established that congregational leadership can contribute to the success of a multiracial church by committing to and embodying the racial diversity it seeks (see pg. 152). Other than that, there is a paucity of research indicating how such leadership contributes to a congregation's success. [4]As a matter of fact, recognizing both the impact of leadership and the lack of information about the role leaders play in the success of multiracial congregations, Korie Edwards is currently undertaking The Religious Leadership and

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[4] Examples of studies on leadership include the following: Law, Eric H. F. *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb: A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1993; Foster, Charles R. *Embracing Diversity: Leadership in Multicultural Congregations*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 1997; McClintock Fulkerson, Mary. *Places of Redemption: Theology for a Worldly Church*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Diversity Project (RLDP). "This project, seeks to understand the roles and experiences of multiracial church head clergy; and how they develop, sustain, and guide their congregations. The RLDP will produce the first-ever comprehensive body of knowledge about leaders of racially diverse churches in the United States."[5] The core question is "what does it take to successfully pastor a multiracial church in today's America?"[6]

Drawing from the resources discussed in chapter two, I hypothesize that when this study is complete, it will be found that pastors attempt to develop, sustain, and nurture successful congregations through the communication and embodiment of a multiracial theology, as an individual and in the life of the congregation. With that having been said, however, I also expect that the theology espoused by the pastor is not always embraced and lived out by the congregants themselves. I am interested in discovering to what degree this may be the case, the reasons behind it, and how the actions of the people can be brought into alignment with whatever multiracial vision the leadership may have. More specifically, *I propose to explore the ecclesiological beliefs and values of leadership in multiracial churches, how these are communicated to the congregation,*

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[5] "Religious Leadership and Diversity Project," Religious Leadership and Diversity Project, Homepage, accessed April 10, 2015, http://rldp.net/.

[6] "Religious Leadership and Diversity Project," Religious Leadership and Diversity Project, Core Questions, accessed April 10, 2015, http://rldp.net/; This study will explore three key questions: 1) "How do multiracial church pastors develop, sustain, and nurture their congregations? 2) What are the expectations that come along with being a multiracial church pastor? 3) What factors affect the leadership capacity of multiracial church pastors?" "The Religious Leadership Diversity Project," digital image, accessed April 2015, http://sociology.osu.edu/files/ReligiousLeadershipDiversity.pdf. Date will be collected through 125 in-depth interviews and 40 focus groups of the leadership and congregants of racially and ethnically diverse congregations.

and understood, interpreted, and lived out by the congregants themselves. In essence, I desire to compare the theological ideals of the leadership to the practice of the congregants and explore the process that produces discrepancies between actions, intentions, and beliefs.[7] It is my hope that by better understanding these elements, I can identify counterproductive dynamics therein, where they begin, how they are fostered, and how they can be overcome through a change in congregational praxis. This knowledge could empower pastors to contribute to racial reconciliation and equality both within and between congregations, creating a unified witness and empowering individuals to be agents of justice in every sphere.

Although there is much work that needs to be done, through awareness-raising education and cutting-edge research, steps can be taken to better understand and mend divisions within the body of Christ. As the early church was being formed, ethnic conflict divided the body and questions arose as to how gentiles may have to conform to the cultural majority of the church (Acts 15:1-29, Gal. 2:1-10). With time, however, God revealed that the gospel was for all people and that the Lord of the nations did not require followers of Jesus to conform to Jewish customs to enter the faith. Throughout the book of Acts, diverse communities can be seen working together, united by the goal of reaching people of every tongue, tribe, and nation with the good news of Jesus Christ. The God who led his people through racial division then, can also foster unity among the

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[7] M. L. Denton, "Gender and Marital Decision Making: Negotiating Religious Ideology and Practice," *Social Forces* 82, no. 3 (2004): accessed March 2015, doi:10.1353/sof.2004.0034. Denton's study of the practice of gender roles in evangelical marriages indicates that members of denominations may understand and live out male headship different from that of denominational leadership. This article shows that what a person says they believe in, how they describe their understanding thereof, and how they live it out are different when it comes to gender roles. I hypothesize that such discrepancies will also be found in the area of racially egalitarian community.

twenty-first century multiracial church. God desires to usher in his *shalom*, and as congregations yield to him, they can become forerunners of his kingdom on Earth.

APPENDIX:

TYPES OF MULTIRACIAL CONGREGATIONS

Mission Impetus:

Neighborhood Embracing - Mission Impetus + Proximity: These congregations actively reach out to the neighborhood or reinterpret mission in light of changes in the neighborhood and becomes a multiracial congregation as a result.

Neighborhood Charter - Mission Impetus + Proximity: Although possessing the same impetus and source of members as "neighborhood embracing", congregations that are categorized as "neighborhood charter" are distinguished from the former in that they *begin* as a multiracial congregation due to diversity being in proximity to the leadership, target audience, and/or congregation, rather than being made into one.

Niche Embracing - Mission + Culture/Purpose: Its mission draws diverse people from all throughout the region who are attracted by what they do.

Niche Charter - Mission + Culture/Purpose: Started as a multiracial church because the leadership designed it to have a multiracial mission from the beginning.

Resource Calculation Impetus:

Survival Embracing - Resource calculation + Proximity: Economic change in the congregation results in it reaching out to the neighborhood.

Survival Merge - Resource calculation + pre-existing organizational package: Resource needs force a merger of two pre-existing congregations.

External Authority Impetus:

Mandated - External Authority + Proximity OR Existing Organizational Package: External authority requires that a church become multiracial either because of changes in the neighborhood or resources.

Using the same survey data, African American philosopher and analyst on this study, George Yancey, divided the same congregations into four different categories.

Leadership multiracial: congregations based on a leader who attracts a diversity of people.

Evangelism multiracial: congregations use proselytizing strategies to reach a diversity of people.

Demographic multiracial: a congregation becomes multiracial largely through a changing neighborhood that provides a source for diversity.

Network multiracial: Grows diverse through social ties (most sustainable).

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