

Re-Membering the Stories at Home in the Body: Pentecostal Blackwomen, Formal Theological Education, and the Tragic Gap

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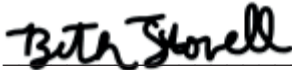
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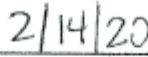
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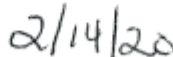
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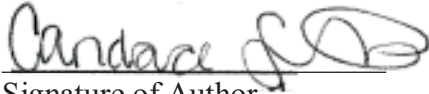

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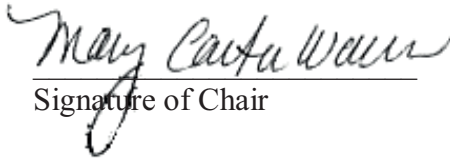
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Abstract

This project explores the nature of formal theological education as it relates to Pentecostal Blackwomen in the United States. Parker Palmer's tragic gap is used to remember home as a space to embody an integrated identity, which encompasses the various intersections of Black womanhood. This work uses social analysis as a method combined with a womanist methodology to resound the muted historical and religious narratives of Black and Pentecostal women in America and offer counter-memories to fragmented historical accounts. The project provides theological reflection on the current context of formal theological education in the United States considering these fragmentations of history. The project offers suggestions to theological institutions, Pentecostal denominations, and Pentecostal women completing formal theological education, which will contribute to the embodiment of an integrated identity or wholeness.

Keywords: Black history, Pentecostalism, spirituality, theological education, tragic gap, womanism

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To my campus daughters, you made me a mother through love, and this is for you as much as it is for me. Gillian, Alexandria, Wisline, Miryam, Scarlyn, Raéden, Lashanté, Vashawn, Deneisha, and Jordan: Never forget that you too stand on the shoulders of the

women before you. The work is awaiting you to leave your mark of purpose on it. I love each of you dearly. Tag you're next my future doctors!!

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Dedication

In memory of Leslie Glenroy Sweeting,
an angel in the flesh who now watches over me from Heaven.
I love you and could not have done this without you.

To every Pentecostal Blackwoman and Blackwoman
enrolled in formal theological institutions:
Your experience is enough...Own it!

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CHAPTER ONE. HOME IN THE TRAGIC GAP

The truth is you never can leave home. You take it with you wherever you go. It's under your skin. It moves the tongue or slows it, colors the thinking, impedes upon the logic.¹

– Maya Angelou

It is early July and the Kentucky sun reached its peak. Three generations of the White family women gathered at my grandparents' home on Hood Avenue. Of the women present two were nurses, one a nurse's aide, another completing nursing school, and finally myself. Each of the women chose the vocational call to be agents in the physical healing process, but that afternoon as wounded healers themselves they continued the work of communal healing. The conversation bounced about covering a gamut of topics that afternoon, which encompassed laughter, tears, and anger while discussing the complex beauty of Black Pentecostal womanhood. This day marks the fondest memory of time spent with my maternal grandmother, and ironically the last time to remember her being fully alive before she died the following week. My fourteen-year-old self did not quite understand the depth of the meeting at that time; however, my attention captured the sacred space shared in that moment as we drank in the wisdom our elders shared through their stories. As I reached the candidacy stage in my Ph.D. journey, the reflections of my experiences during coursework indicated a longing to return to that space. Not necessarily the physical space, but the space in which I am at home in my body, fully alive to celebrate the beauty of my Blackness, my womanhood, and my Pentecostal heritage.

¹ *Creativity with Bill Moyers: Maya Angelou*, directed by Films on Demand and Films Media Group, 2010, accessed February 20, 2015.

My grandparents' faint yellow two-story home with brown shutters hosts many poignant memories of family, and I attribute a great deal of who I am to my formative upbringing there. Academic pursuits required me to relocate, but whenever I travel back home a mandatory stop is by their former house. This cathartic act grounds me despite all my experiences in the world and reminds me of my rich heritage. Every time I walk along the sidewalk in front of the house, nostalgia situates me between distant memories and my present realities. The home has changed a great deal over the two decades since my grandparents' deaths, but the memories of being on their front porch remain with me.

The front porch of many homes are decorated with furniture that provide comfort and space to enjoy the weather and beauty of the surrounding world. The front porch becomes an extension of the home and often reflects of the conditions within the home. On the other hand, the front porch allows people to witness the outside elements. Literally, its limited covering exposes those on the front porch to the heat of the sun or some wetness from the rain. The same was true of my grandparents' front porch. Their front porch became a staple for their neighbors and, for me, an introduction to the larger world outside my Black Pentecostal faith context. Unlike my neighborhood, their neighborhood was very diverse, and people used their front porches often. Their front porch holds countless memories of my grandfather and his buddies closing their nights outside smoking cigarettes, drinking beer, and talking sports. When extended family members visited, the front porch hosted children running to catch lightning bugs or playing tag as the adult conversations permeated the evening air. This space became a hallmark of family time and building relationships with the neighbors. After my grandparents' death the front porch experience resumed at my mother's home. It is the

meeting ground to resolve life issues, catch up with neighbors, meditate, or just enjoy the cool breeze of a late summer evening.

The front porch of a house may be utilized in various ways, but for me it remains a place to enjoy the beautiful journey alongside others through the messy contradictions of life. Hence the scope of this work is situated on the front porch of the larger conversation of Pentecostalism and formal theological education. This research project opens remembering an intergenerational sister circle including my grandmother, mother, and aunts. I am unsure about whether my grandmother somehow knew her transition was near; however, what is certain is that this experience provides the underpinnings of my scholarship within Practical Theology. This special moment of passing on our legacy and oral history in the everyday lays the foundation to explore the fragmentation of Black womanhood, particularly as a result of encounters within wider society, and in a special way, in encounters in formal theological education. The sister circle provided a sense of identity and wholeness and this research seeks to identify ways to create such “homes” like these within theological institutions for Pentecostal Blackwomen². These aforementioned spaces are symbolic of ways in which Pentecostal Blackwomen are at home in their bodies via an integrated identity that allows them to equally embrace their gender, race, and faith tradition.

Displacement: Fragmented Identity as a Theological Problem

No one completes an academic program unaffected by their life experience. This history, however, becomes the null curriculum often overlooked within many institutions—theological and secular alike. Why does this happen? What are the

² Throughout this project I utilize Blackwoman to denote the intersection of gender and race in the contextualized experience of Blackwomen in the United States.

presuppositions of formal theological education that pay limited attention to the contextual history of each student present?

In *A Hidden Wholeness*, Parker Palmer asserts everyone is birthed into this world whole or undivided, but time, experience, and reality creates distance between the inner and outer lives of an individual.³ When children come into contact with the outside world the divide between the inner and outer understanding of self emerges. According to Palmer our differences from others in the outside world teaches people to employ a boundary, such as a wall, in order to protect their vulnerabilities. Many people find living behind this wall provides the easiest partition of the most fragile components of oneself, but in time this fragmentation results in a divided life that diminishes identity. Palmer adds, “[h]ere is the ultimate irony of the divided life: live behind a wall long enough, and the true self you tried to hide from the world disappears from your own view! The wall itself and the world outside it become all that you know. Eventually, you even forget that the wall is there—and that hidden behind it is someone you called “you.”⁴

The consequences of the divided life between the inner self and the self-presented is three-fold: (1) Our inner light cannot illuminate the work we do in the world. (2) Our inner darkness cannot be penetrated by the light that is in the world. (3) Our inauthenticity between the performed self and the real self creates problems relationally.⁵ Living a fragmented life does not have consequences for the individual alone but also disrupts community. Communities are not able to live and grow to the maximum capacity because people are living muted versions of themselves. As a result of living fragmented,

³ Parker Palmer, *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward and Undivided Life* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 39.

⁴ Palmer, *A Hidden Wholeness*, 43-44.

⁵ Palmer, *A Hidden Wholeness*, 44.

people throughout their lives must seek to return to a mature state of wholeness, or an integrated identity that has been shaped by the culmination of their experiences.

Within the field of practical theology human experience takes precedence as a starting point for doing theology. Mark Cartledge explains practical theology as “a discipline that is deliberately interpretive. Practitioners and researchers in practical theology are engaged in the reading of both the contemporary reality under study and the theological tradition from which they seek to operate.”⁶ Practical theology, as a result, offers a lens to more deeply explore, in this research, the experience of Blackwomen in light of their historical and religious contexts. A part of the fragmentation of identity is connected to the physical embodiment of a person. W.E.B. DuBois addresses the fragmentation in identity with the term “double consciousness,” or the viewing of oneself in relation to the perception of others.⁷ DuBois is specifically referencing the dichotomous reality of being Black and American. Floyd-Thomas adds,

because of the omnipresent pain and shame of slavery and the persistent trauma of anti-black racism in its myriad forms, too many black people consider history something to be *escaped* rather than *embraced*. In thinking historically, we have to approach history as a means of personal and collective liberation. Conversely, taking away a people’s history is a means of enslaving them. Thus, history is a double-edged sword that can be used either to oppress or liberate black folks.

⁶ Mark Cartledge, *Practical Theology: Charismatic and Empirical Perspectives*, Studies in Pentecostal and Charismatic Issues (Carlisle, U.K.: Paternoster Press, 2003), 2.

⁷ W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folks* With an introduction by John Edgar Wideman, First Library of America Paperback Classic ed. (New York: Penguin, 1990), 3.

However, in the face of this dual tension, there is the existential crisis at the core of the black experience.⁸

Furthermore, the Black female identity cannot be segmented, so it is challenging to navigate life acknowledging of only one dimension of her identity. Pressure—whether internal or external—to choose between race or gender is not only unjust but becomes idolatrous. To isolate either Blackness or womanhood from one's whole identity creates a myopic gaze for what it means to live as a Blackwoman. Furthermore, this short-sightedness focuses on a singular event of injustice as opposed to addressing the complex, systemic, oppressive forces embedded across multiple arenas of society. Instead of fostering a both/and corrective to injustice, it creates a fight against one issue or the other. Blackwomen, as a result, are not allowed to envision their identity as an integrated one but pressured to idolize either gender or race above the other. Therefore, it becomes very idolatrous in nature.

Despite the growing theological interest regarding human subjectivity, limited studies have been conducted to explore the construction and integrated identity of Blackwomen. Within the social sciences, seminal research has gathered data chronicling identity formation and development primarily within White male subjects.⁹ These theories provide a significant framework for their respective disciplines, but their knowledge needs revisions given the postmodern context and increased diversity in the United States. Additional indicators such as gender and race contribute to the formation

⁸ Juan Floyd-Thomas, *Liberating Black Church History: Making it Plain* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2014), 3.

⁹ Jean Piaget, Erik Erikson, and Lawrence Kohlberg each contributed to the early research on identity formation and development. Only in later studies does Kohlberg include both genders and different socioeconomic statuses. Carol Gilligan, another social scientist, critiques their work from missing the added dimension of gender.

of identity within humanity, and the omission of such factors skews or even negates the data. The social sciences expose a gap in which practical theology has the unique opportunity to account for the interconnectedness of the metaphysical and physical within identity.

Identity is a polyvalent term and there are several indicators that must be accounted for. Within the social sciences, Sherry K. Wyatt examined the relation of identity and meaning making and provided empirical data connecting identity (e.g., psychosocial, racial, womanist) to faith formation. Her research supports the conceptualization of an integrated identity. She found research tools need a multiple identity development scale given that Blackwomen utilized various coping mechanisms to endure the lived reality of belonging to diminished gender and racial groups.¹⁰ Dwight Hopkins also suggests, “[t]o know oneself was to know the other and share in her or his spiritual necessities of life. Only in relationship did one become conscious that one was a human being with privileges and responsibilities to God, the self, the family, the community, and creation.”¹¹ While identity formation is guided by our interactions with others it is problematized when interaction with others becomes detrimental to an individual or group.

Parker Palmer also warns that societal violence poses the greatest challenge to humanity. Violence exceeds beyond the physical manifestations to include “*any way we have of violating the identity and integrity of another person.*”¹² Some fragmentations in

¹⁰ Sherry Wyatt, “Identity and the Making of Meaning: Psychosocial Identity, Racial Identity, Womanist Identity, Self-Esteem, and the Faith Development of African American College Women,” PhD diss., (North Carolina State University, 1997):133, ProQuest (9736850).

¹¹ Dwight Hopkins, *Down, Up, and Over: Slave Religion and Black Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 113.

¹² Palmer, *A Hidden Wholeness*, 169. Italics are the emphasis of the author.

identity are connected to the physical embodiment of a person. Throughout the American¹³ context individual difference legitimized assaults based on race, gender, religious affiliation, and other physical factors. Violence comes in forms of discrimination, marginalization, and oppressive practices like creating narratives or stereotypes that diminish dignity and personhood. Such has been the case for many Black and Brown people in America. Theologian Dwight Hopkins suggests Black theology emerges as an effort for African American people to address displacement by claiming their Blackness and freedom as people of God.¹⁴ Black theology encompasses culture, the collective church tradition, and individuals—both male and female. While Black theology does provide a liberating voice to the Black religious experience, it often fails to adequately address the lived experience of Blackwomen. Therein lies the motivation for the pursuit of this topic: to fully comprehend the theological problem of fragmented identity, we must examine the ways Black female identity has been understood within the context of history, a specific faith tradition, and within theological institutions. These too often ignored formative factors undergird the Blackwoman's sense of being within the world.

Theological education becomes problematic when it fails to acknowledge and engage the diverse voices enrolled within their institutions. While many mainline Protestant denominations began providing full access to ordination despite gender in the 1950s-1970s on average women still comprise around one-third of the total population at

¹³ For the sake of this project American and America is used to distinguish the North American context of the United States of America. The U.S., America, and American will be used interchangeably.

¹⁴ Dwight Hopkins, *Introducing Black Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1999), 4.

theological institutions within the Association of Theological Schools (ATS).¹⁵ In previous years where ATS annual reports indicated as one to two percent drop in enrollment, most notably the decline consistently impacted female student enrollment whereas male enrollment has fluctuated since 2010.¹⁶ While this report contains the raw data concerning student enrollment and completion data, a deeper exploration of theological education is warranted. Barbara Finlay’s research suggests there are gendered differences students faced in their theological educational process—noticed as early as within the discernment process to pursue theological education and remaining until graduation.¹⁷

For Pentecostal Blackwomen seeking formal theological education in the United States, the theme of displacement is critical. Historically within the academic discipline of religion, the androcentric, European narrative is dominant. Normative narratives based primarily on one gender and race causes the experiences of other minority groups to be displaced. Furthermore, Blackwomen may experience another degree of displacement within Black Pentecostalism since they have not always been welcomed fully within their denominations or home congregations. These women experience tension between their “womanhood” and “Blackness” within society, gender difference within the Pentecostal tradition, as well as tension between their Black Pentecostal heritage within academic theological institutions themselves. Pentecostal Blackwomen, however, are familiar with tension as they daily negotiate the confluence of oppression faced considering gender,

¹⁵ Barbara Finlay, *Facing the Stained Glass Ceiling: Gender in Protestant Seminary* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2003), xi.

¹⁶ Association of Theological Schools (ATS), “2014-2015 Annual Data Tables,” Table 2.8-B and Table 2.12-B, accessed March 17, 2017, <https://www.ats.edu/uploads/resources/institutional-data/annual-data-tables/2014-2015-annual-data-tables.pdf>.

¹⁷ Finlay, *Facing the Stained Glass Ceiling*, 35.

race, and sometimes class. Although research has been conducted on theological education regarding gender and race, little is known about the challenges theological institutions face in their formal education of Pentecostal Blackwomen, and yet Blackwomen are one of the increasing demographic groups enrolling in theological institutions.

Framing the Study

Practical theology is the application of theology to daily life illustrated in the cultural, communal, and dialectical exchange of religion within our day-to-day happenings.¹⁸ The heart of practical theology then becomes critical reflection on human experience. Considering this, the explanation of practical theology as practice-theory-practice unveils the idea that our actions influence our theories and in-turn creates a praxis.¹⁹ Practical theology then examines theory-laden practices and practice-laden theory. To put it another way, our “fore-understandings” influence the construction of our ideologies, beliefs, and ultimately our identity.²⁰ These presuppositions become the lenses to perceive the world and color our encounters. Therefore, before continuing any further it is wise to address the understandings of Blackwoman, Womanism, the tragic gap, and formal theological education, as used in this research.

¹⁸ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Randall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 81.

¹⁹ Don Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996), 7.

²⁰ Hans Georg Gadamer, Joel Weinsheimer, and Donald G. Marshall, *Truth and Method* (London: Continuum, 2004), 309. Gadamer believed people hold certain prejudices and bias which shape the way in which they view the world. It is important to note that Gadamer is often critiqued given his understanding of prejudices does not account for power dynamics and structures. Hence, Gadamer views fore-understandings from a neutral perspective.

Blackwoman

Blackwomen experiences include oppression that is both racist and sexist in nature. Kimberlé Crenshaw explains that the concept of intersectionality distinguishes the overlapping discrimination faced based on gender, race, class. She writes:

Intersectionality is a means of capturing both the *structural* and *dynamic* (e.g. *active*) aspects of multiple discrimination, thus affecting both theory and practice. It addresses the manner in which racism, sexism, and other discriminatory *systems* create background inequalities that define the relative position of women, races, etc. It also addresses the dynamics: ways that specific acts and policies create burdens constituting the active aspects of disempowerment. In other words: how discrimination is structured, and also how it works.²¹

Intersectionality illustrates that Blackwomen are unable to divide their identity as both Black and female within wider society. Cheryl Harris expands the understanding of intersectionality with her employment of the term Blackwoman in research as “an effort to use language that more clearly reflects the unity of identity as ‘Black’ and ‘woman,’ with neither aspect primary or subordinate to the other.”²² The re-membling of Blackwoman as a term bears witness to the complex reality of the Black female experience and is a celebratory way of uplifting the integrated identity of both parts of her. Additionally, the author’s capitalization of the word Blackwoman intentionally distinguishes the racial/ethnic group of people and from the color black.²³ Throughout the

²¹ Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Traffic at the Crossroads: Multiple Oppressions,” in *Sisterhood is Forever: the Women’s Anthology for a New Millennium*, ed. Robin Morgan (New York: Washington Square Press, 2003), 46. Words in italics are from the original author.

²² Cheryl Harris, “Whiteness as Property,” *Harvard Law Review* 106, no. 8 (1993): 1719. doi:10.2307/1341787.

²³ Lori L. Tharps, “The Case for Black With a Capital B,” Opinion, *New York Times*, November 18, 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/19/opinion/the-case-for-black-with-a-capital-b.html>.

Black experience in America, the uncapitalized first letter of terms to describe the race, perpetuates an erasure of personhood and dignity afforded to other groups and nationalities. Simply put, “Black should always be written with a capital B. We are indeed a people, a race, a tribe. It’s only correct.”²⁴ Throughout the dissertation the term Blackwoman and Blackwomen will be used to honor our integrated identity and to continue the work on intersectionality of the Blackwomen scholars who proceed me.

Womanism

The distinctive experience of Black womanhood gives rise to the creation of womanism. Womanism evolves from the term “womanist” in the book *In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens* by Alice Walker. She chronicles her journey of coming to understand herself as a Black woman in relation to her connection with other Black women—both alive and dead—and her experiences within wider society. It seems chronicling these experiences awaken her to new interpretations of herself and the world around her. Using the discipline of theology, first generation womanists such as Delores Williams, Katie Cannon, and others birth a theological discourse that gives credence to the contextual experiences of the Black woman and relation to God, self, and others. The foundation of womanism come from Walker’s original four-part definition:

1. From *womanish*. (opp. of “girlish,” i.e. frivolous, irresponsible, not serious.)
A black feminist or feminist of color. From the black folk expression of mothers to children, “you acting womanish,” i.e. like a woman. Usually referring to the outrageous, audacious, courageous, or willful behavior. Wanting to know more in greater depth than is considered “good” for one. Interested in grown up

²⁴ Tharps, “The Case for Black With a Capital B,” .

doings. Acting grown up. Being grown up. Interchangeable with another black folk expression: “You trying to be grown.” Responsible. In charge. Serious.

2. Also: A woman who loves other women, sexual and/or nonsexually. Appreciates and prefers women’s culture, women’s emotional flexibility (values tears as natural counterbalance of laughter), and women’s strength. Sometimes loves individual men, sexually and/or non-sexually. Committed to the survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female. Not a separatist, except periodically, for health. Traditionally a universalist, as in: “Mama, why are we brown, pink, and yellow, and our cousins are white, beige and black?” Ans: Well you know the colored race is just like a flower garden, with every color represented.” Traditionally capable, as in: “Mama, I’m walking to Canada and I’m taking you and a bunch of other slaves with me.” Reply: “It wouldn’t be the first time.

3. Loves music. Loves dance. Loves the moon. Loves the Spirit. Loves love and food and roundness. Loves struggle. Loves the Folk. Loves herself. Regardless.

4. Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender.²⁵

The first portion of the definition addresses the bold and daring actions of womanism. Borrowed from a common phrase in Black folk talk, “acting womanish” describes young girls that act too grown by focusing on things beyond their control. Womanism courageously addresses and challenges injustices caused by dominant behavior and practices with society. Walker also emphasizes the necessity of both

²⁵ Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens: Womanist Prose* (New York: Harcourt, 2004), xi-xii.

genders, female and male for the wholeness and survival of society. Walker quite possibly attempts to provide an alternative to the critique against feminism, through acknowledgement and affirmation of previous successes of Black people unified—across gender barriers—to tackle racial discrimination. The second part of the definition also affirms the myriad hues growing within the womanist garden, which serves as a celebration of the diversity amongst Black people. Womanists commit to join other womanists in liberation from oppression and injustices around the world. Walker also details the pleasant things in life such as food, nature, and community.²⁶ Critical to womanism is the internalized struggle, for when the Black woman loves and affirms herself she gives witness that the “incarnate spirit refuses to be bound.”²⁷

Walker asserts that a womanist is a Black feminist or a feminist of color. Concerns remain about exactly who can be a womanist. For example, can men or non-Black women be womanists? A literal reading of the definition seems to suggest women of any color can be womanist through the use of the analogy of color. Purple, the color which represents womanist, is merely a deeper shade of lavender, which colors feminist. Gender discrimination, prejudice, and stereotypes are components of sexism and they affect women of all races and hues. However, to be a womanist requires additional layers to examine. Womanism confronts the triple oppression Black women encounter at the intersection of gender, race, and class.²⁸ The added layer of class recognizes the

²⁶ Delores Williams, “Womanist Theology: Black Women’s Voices,” *Christianity and Crisis* 47, no. 3 (March 2, 1987): 68.

²⁷ M. Shawn Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Being* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 46.

²⁸ Katie Cannon, *Katie’s Canon: Womanism and the Soul of the Black Community* (New York: Continuum, 1996), 59.

economic disadvantages factored into the intersection of gender and racial discrimination. Monica Coleman raises a great point when she asks if womanism “is of Black women, by Black women, for Black women.”²⁹ There remains an openness with the definition provided by Walker; yet, the concern lies in the ability of non-Black women to comprehend and understand the full context of womanist theology. Other women and Black men can empathize with the oppression, based on gender and race respectively, faced by Black women so there remains some common ground from which contextual and liberation theologies can build together. The challenge of womanism, then, is to create balanced scholarship that avoids voyeuristic consumption of Black female experiences and superficial ploys for diversity. Womanism highlights the diversity of the Black female experience using the flower metaphor in the definition above. These lived experiences are too broad and are not representative of a homogeneous experience. Womanist thought understands the Black female experience as not a single experience but rather as a multiplicity of lived experiences.

A womanist consciousness provides the philosophical grounding for this project. This consciousness is centered in the context of Blackwomen’s lived realities but extends out since womanism prioritizes the eradication of all forms of oppression. Therefore, Layli Phillips explains, “[a] womanist is triply concerned with herself, other Black women, and the entire Black race, female and male— but also all humanity, showing an ever-expanding and ultimately universal arc of political concern, empathy, and activism.”³⁰ Walker might have coined the term but the work of womanism operated long

²⁹ Monica Coleman, “Roundtable Discussion: Must I Be Womanist,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 22, no. 1 (2006): 91, doi: 10.2979/FSR.2006.22.1.96.

³⁰ Layli Phillips, ed., *The Womanist Reader* (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, LLC, 2006), PDF e-book, Introduction.

throughout Blackwomen's history. Scholars link womanism with the Blackwomen's literary tradition to illustrate it "articulates a long and unique history of Black women's thought and activism."³¹ Womanism recognizes Blackwomen have an innate ability to tell it like it because throughout history Blackwomen share their story and experiences even when others refuse to acknowledge them. Womanism affirms the validity of Blackwomen experiences. Layli Phillips suggests Blackwomen's ability to own their own stories matters a great deal. She writes:

Perhaps the central organizing principle of womanism (if it can be said that there is one) is the absolute necessity of speaking from and about one's own experiential location and not to or about someone else's. Black women's scholarship has placed Black women and their experiences at the center of analysis just like traditional White men's scholarship has placed White men and their experiences at the center of analysis; the crucial difference is that Black women's scholarship has articulated and owned the centering, whereas traditional White men's scholarship has not. Black women's scholarship does not parade as universal, but rather it emanates from a point of acute authenticity and invites others to participate in a similar, equally authentic, process. While traditional White men's scholarship presumes to have a monopoly on content as well as method, Black women's scholarship underscores the fallacy and pomposity of such a presumption. Ironically, universality emerges not from the imposition of sameness and the enforced proclamation that "we're all just human underneath it all," but from the careful and respectful acknowledgment that both individuals

³¹ Phillips, *The Womanist Reader*, Introduction.

and groups have experiences that generate differences in both vision and concern and the recognition that these differences can contribute to the robustness and optimal functioning of the human race as a whole.³²

A womanist consciousness honors the treasure of difference and uses this perspective to share experiences of Blackwomen to enrich the breadth of relationships within and outside the Black community. This powerful history of truth-telling provides the foundation from which the writer completes this project.

Tragic Gap

Womanism provides language to address the complexities Blackwomen face and the tragic gap offers further insight. The tragic gap, as conceptualized by Parker Palmer is a never closing “gap between the way things are and the way we know they might be.”³³ It is the place of tension that juxtaposes the disheartening realities of the present against the not-yet-materialized hopes to come. Palmer asserts the tragic gap breaks open a new way to live integrally and non-violently toward self and in community with others. However, the multi-layered and unresolved tensions within the lived experiences of Blackwomen embodies the tragic gap. Blackwomen are often aware of the disruptive presence the Black female body bring into the spaces entered academically and religiously. Her sheer presence, at times unintentionally, resounds in distinct contrast to the idealized norm of White womanhood and patriarchy in its varied forms. Blackwomen, as a result, may find it easier to acquiesce to even the most subtle efforts of others

³² Layli Phillips and Barbara McCaskill, “Daughters and Sons: The Birth of Womanist Identity; Who’s Schooling Who? Black Women and the Bringing of the Everyday into Academe, or Why We Started the Womanist (1995),” in *The Womanist Reader*, Chapter 5.

³³ Palmer, *A Hidden Wholeness*, 175.

(especially those with authority) to quarantine their presence, diminish their personhood, or altogether silence their voices.

For many theologically-educated Pentecostal Blackwomen home within the tragic gap becomes multifaceted. However, to situate herself at home within the tragic gap creates a sacred space for Blackwomen that critiques the destructive forces of racism and sexism in the world and finds hope in the unity of her Black feminine identity and story. Home, then, becomes a metaphorical space where all human experience can be integrated into a harmonious and dynamic reality. It is a space that enables Blackwomen to hold these tense encounters with hope and progress toward authenticity via an integrated identity.

Pentecostal Blackwomen can embody the tragic gap as home, not solely as a method of survival but also to thrive and live authentically within the world. Home within the tragic gap initiates the Reign of God³⁴ in our lives for multiple reasons. Firstly, it offers the best strategy to avoid dualism within their identity since it equips Pentecostal Blackwomen with language to encompass the various layers of an integrated identity without having to compartmentalize any one dimension. The eschatological nature of the tragic gap also assists this group with balancing experiences between the

³⁴ I hold the perspective the reign of God includes realization and authentic embodiment of the purposes for which one is uniquely created for by God.

now and the not yet.³⁵ This version of inaugurated eschatology³⁶ provides those within the tragic gap hope and support despite present day challenges. The attainment of perfection, or maturity, is consistently worked toward in the world while understanding the reality that full integration of our authentic being will not be complete until the world to come. This reality does not discourage or preclude hope for a better future in the present, rather it helps remove the façade of a perfect human condition. Finally, the work of the tragic gap produces benefits for both individuals and institutions. The dialogue produced enables Black Pentecostalism to navigate the tensions of intersectionality, recognize work of the Holy Spirit even in collaboration with the knowledge produced in theological institutions. Likewise, theological institutions can find ways to sustain academic rigor with openness to the work of the Holy Spirit throughout, which in turn contributes to the cultivation of a more robust theological training.

Formal Theological Education

Theological education can occur through a variety of ways such as religious education within congregations or the clinical pastoral education of chaplaincy work. For the sake of this work formal theological education references academic instruction at tertiary institutions. Formal theological education is the academic study within

³⁵ Biblical theology provides the theological framework to support the eschatological nature inherent in the tragic gap. George Eldon Ladd uses New Testament texts to explain the new kingdom that is ushered in after the Second Coming of Jesus which transposes the injustices of the present world. The eschatological view of the kingdom is one where suffering of this world is eradicated and the new world is one free of earthly concerns such as pain, sickness, marriage, and death. See George Eldon Ladd, *The Last Things: An Eschatology for Laymen* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2004), 105-106. See also, N.T. Wright's eschatological work on the kingdom in light of Jesus' passion account in *How Jesus Became King: The Forgotten Story of the Gospels* (New York: HarperOne, 2012), 127-249.

³⁶ Inaugurated eschatology points to the present and the future realities of the Kingdom. See George Eldon Ladd, *The Presence of the Future: The Eschatology of Biblical Realism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1973), 33.

theological disciplines. Most commonly, it references theological studies at the graduate level or higher. The Association of Theological Schools the Commission on Accreditation, or ATS, is the governing board monitoring the enrollment and functioning of member schools throughout North America and Canada, to ensure quality theological education. According to ATS, theological education serves to “educate persons for the practice of ministry and for teaching and research in the theological disciplines.”³⁷ ATS encompasses over 270 graduate schools of theology which span across Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox faith traditions. Chapter four will more thoroughly elaborate on formal theological education. The data utilized within this project is a part of their accrediting policies and standards and specific to the member schools within the United States only.

Grounding Experience

Throughout life, individuals carry understanding of words, ideas, and concepts largely related to our individual and collective experiences. As the researcher, it is an important step to make transparent the formational experiences I bring to this work. The following sections will briefly share key moments that shaped my childhood and adult life as a Pentecostal Blackwoman.

Family Life

My parents met at their Pentecostal church when my father returned home after serving with the Marines and my mother had relocated for college. Shortly after marriage, my father left the church and religious life altogether creating the initial strain

³⁷ The Association of Theological Schools, “About ATS,” accessed March 13, 2017, <http://www.ats.edu/about>.

in their marriage. Like many young couples in the church, starting a family came quickly and affirmed the church's stance on family life, as it was taught and understood.³⁸ My parents have three children, of which I am the middle child and only daughter. My mother served as the primary caregiver for us as children and the spiritual backbone of our family. My dad, although the authoritarian of the family ensured he allotted time to play and talk with us each day. Family values were intertwined with our faith practices despite my dad no longer joining us at church. We were taught the importance of honesty, respect toward our elders, and living a "holiness" lifestyle that honors God, distinctive from non-believers. The challenges within their marriage persisted and my parents divorced when I was around seven. The stigma of divorce can be touchy in Pentecostalism, but my mother remained strongly committed to the faith tradition.

Life after divorce transformed our lives in so many ways. A major change was our relocation back to my mom's small hometown. The distance between the two places reduced the time we spent with my father and his side of the family to mainly holiday breaks and summers. On the other hand, as my mother completed her nursing degree and worked, my brothers and I often stayed at our maternal grandparents' home. The warm, nurturing atmosphere of maternal grandparents provided a contrast to the stern disciplinarian nature of my paternal grandparents. My maternal grandparents had seven children. Most had already moved away to pursue career advancements and only my aunt and mother remained in the town. My grandparents' home was the nucleus of the family especially during holidays and times of crisis.

³⁸In conversations with my mother or other female members at the church, they explained our denomination taught against the usage of birth control primarily from the teachings of the local pastors. Instead couples were taught that God, in God's sovereignty would determine the number of children families were to have.

My grandparents were retired, but my grandmother remained active in many things around the community. She attended our Pentecostal church and served in leadership as an Evangelist. She was second in command only after the pastor and many looked to her for guidance spiritually and personally. My grandfather, after serving time in the Army and as a factory worker, spent his retirement relaxing from the many years of hard labor and enjoying his first love—watching baseball. My grandparents continued to teach us about the values of hard work, spending time with family, but most importantly living for the Lord until their death. My grandparents died three months apart during my freshman year of high school and, shortly after their death, my mother and siblings moved back to the city, where I remained until I moved away for my doctoral studies.

Growing up Pentecostal

Like my father, my siblings and I were born into Pentecostalism, which is affectionately termed being a *pew baby*.³⁹ I entered my faith heritage as a fourth-generation Oneness Pentecostal⁴⁰ since my paternal great-grandfather, a Pentecostal pastor, raised his family in the tradition. My mother originally attended the local African Methodist Episcopal Zion (A.M.E. Zion) church but joined the Pentecostal church during her teenage years. As a child, I thought being Pentecostal simply equated to attending church almost daily and twice on Sunday. My closest friends were always members

³⁹ This nickname represents children who are born into the tradition and used jokingly for the frequent church attendance amongst Pentecostal groups. *Pew baby* also denoted the [Black] Pentecostal way of being, or identity, that governed my interactions within the world during childhood. Italics are writer's own emphasis.

⁴⁰ Oneness Pentecostalism characterizes a subgroup within Pentecostalism, which subscribes to "Jesus only" focus indicated in their baptism formulas and key doctrinal creeds pertaining to the godhead. It is often linked to Pentecost with the apostles in the second chapter of the book of Acts; therefore, note at times used interchangeably with the term *Apostolics*. Pentecostalism will be discussed more fully in Chapter Three, but for a deeper understanding of Oneness Pentecostalism, see Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005).

within the church, as the Black Pentecostal culture in which I was raised viewed church members as extended family.

Pentecostalism, specifically within Black culture, is often depicted in many exaggerated, comical ways and leads to misunderstandings of Pentecostalism as a whole. Much of my life centered around the church, so only after I began attending school did I realize the distinctions of being Pentecostal. It is hard for me to separate growing up Black, female, and Pentecostal, living in a small town in Kentucky. I recall being teased for both being Black and a “holy roller.”⁴¹ However, one common theme throughout my life growing up was the difference being Pentecostal made, and junior high school was the first time I could no longer ignore the differences. Prior to this time my clothing consisted of dresses and skirts—no pants—despite the weather conditions. Rain, snow, or shine I wore skirts or dresses and primarily very long ones. My church used scripture to support the prohibition of pants since it was considered masculine apparel. At the new school, physical education classes required me to wear shorts or pants to participate and so I changed for class. I often chose to remain in my pants or shorts all day until it was time to leave for home. Eventually, my mother permitted me to wear pants and shorts regularly after I continuously argued my case that women’s pants are not designed for men. This was one of my earliest memories of subverting the traditional and sexist practices of the church.

I attended a small store front church for most of childhood. The senior pastor lived in a bordering state and traveled every week to preach on Sundays and teach Bible study on Wednesdays. His wife only visited on special occasions due to her career and

⁴¹ A derogatory term used by outsiders of the tradition to refer to Pentecostals.

their family. My grandmother, as the right hand of the pastor, spent time maintaining the church building, preaching, and teaching. She had just the right amount of sassiness balanced with love that made her a respected member of the community and congregation. She rarely held her tongue and was passionately outspoken in her advocacy for those who were marginalized and oppressed. After my maternal grandparents' death, we relocated to another city and began attending the largest Pentecostal megachurch there.

The senior pastor at the new church previously worked as an engineer for many years and later pursued theological education prior to pastoring. He pushed for academics and educational success amongst the congregation, which was different from other congregations in the denomination. His wife was a frequent fixture in the church and known for her homemaking skills. Though she aided in the successful daily operation of the church, greater attention was given to her physical beauty and demure submission as the archetype of Pentecostal femininity. In my youth I noticed the special treatment always given to the pastor's wives in the denomination, so much so it often became a coveted position. Additionally, I noticed that women strongly outnumbered men in both congregations but also many congregations in the denomination. Women tended to the beautification and fundraising of the church, taught the younger generations, prayed and preached, and were often the backbones of their families. Though I witnessed women successfully preaching, teaching, and a few pastoring, I still remember a strong desire not to become a pastor's wife or a preacher throughout the majority of my childhood.

Discerning the Call

The process of discerning my call to ministry links to my baptism story.

Traditionally within Pentecostalism, babies are not baptized; however, most children at church decided very early to be baptized in order to participate alongside peers in church activities such as singing in the choir, ushering, or playing an instrument. As we got older several of my friends at church admitted to getting saved at young ages because it gave a sense of belonging within the church.⁴² During my adolescent years I remained shy and introverted, which added to the delay of baptism. My hesitation became a frequent topic of conversation during Sunday School classes and at extended family gatherings. I also opted to delay baptism until I authentically embraced being a Pentecostal and not just to join a church activity. Upon deciding to be baptized I chose an uncommon manner of only allowing the minister to baptize me and the pastor's wife to be present. My family unsuccessfully attempted to persuade me, but I wanted my baptism to reflect an intimate moment between me and God rather than become a public spectacle. My baptism story really set the stage for my call. In remembering my baptism, this decision to delay was pivotal and in many ways a strategic rebellion against traditional norms within the congregation—maybe even a precursor to my call to formal theological education as a Pentecostal Blackwoman.

Other key aspects in discerning my call were prophetic words regarding my life purpose spoken over me by a female preacher. Within Black Pentecostalism it is common for preachers and pastors to prophesy or provide insight to an individual by Holy Spirit

⁴² Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory indicated identity formation as the primary psychosocial task within adolescence. Within this demographic, youth are concerned with their individual identity as well as fit of their identity within their peer groups. The developmental conflict is one of identity versus identity confusion. See Erik Erikson, *The Life Cycle Completed: A Review* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982), 55.

inspiration, regarding a life event, spiritual correction, or to guide decision-making. Often church leaders mentioned I was called to be a spiritual leader, but specifically she instructed my mother to train me in spiritual disciplines as preparation for the task God assigned to me. As a result, my mom impressed upon me the value of studying the Scriptures, prayer, and other spiritual practices. Despite the many female ministers and preachers in my church and family, it still took some time to accept my call to pursue theological education.

Many individuals in the church held advanced or terminal degrees, but very few within our denomination pursued formal theological education, quite possibly because many leaders remained suspicious of theological institutions—fearing those who complete theological studies tend to rely too much on book knowledge rather than the influence of the Holy Spirit. I understood the decision to pursue theological studies was a costly one. Instead of listening to the nudging of the Holy Spirit, I played it safe by pursuing psychology with a specialization in elementary education during my undergraduate studies. Shortly after graduation, my stepmother, also the director of Christian Education at our church, died and her death prompted me to courageously take a leap of faith. In addition, while completing the application process my mother shared with me for the first time her unfulfilled dream to attend seminary. Honoring the legacies and experiences of these female ministers in my family gave me the final confirmation I needed to fully accept my call and pursue formal theological education. This confirmation of my call kept me going throughout seminary as well.

Formal Theological Education

The excitement of reading my acceptance letter felt short-sighted by the realities that awaited me in seminary. My naiveté about seminary life caused me to presume it to be a joyous time of deep studies in the Bible with fellow believers. I believed my experiences of a Catholic secondary education, diverse interfaith fellowship during my undergraduate experience, and my Pentecostal heritage prepared me for studies at the liberal Presbyterian seminary. Quickly, I found some concepts and topics studied challenged my Pentecostal beliefs and identity. The academic task of learning to read Biblical passages from the original language, addressing criticisms of meanings lost in translation, engaging different doctrinal beliefs, and navigating gender inclusive language were far outside of my experience and comfort. The cultural differences as well as the personal experiences of those I studied with, positioned me to evaluate several embedded theologies⁴³ for the first time in my adult life. Despite these new concepts and material, seminary proved to be one of my most spiritually dry periods. My personal devotion frequently became shortchanged as I devoted more time to my academic study of religion.

I excelled in many courses and several professors encouraged me to consider doctoral studies given the lack of Pentecostal female scholars. Quite frankly disinterest primarily rested on my graduation countdown and celebration of the end of my academic endeavors. Little did I know they were planting seeds based on the gifts they saw within me. The final year of seminary things changed when several new professors of color

⁴³ Howard Stone and James Duke explain embedded theology, or first-order theology, is our practice of embodying the teachings and beliefs of the church in our daily lives. An embedded theology can be lived out for years unquestioned; however, a circumstance in life often occurs which allows it to develop into a deliberative theology, or “an understanding of faith that emerges from a process of carefully reflecting upon embedded theological convictions.” See Howard Stone and James Duke, *How to Think Theologically* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996), 13-16.

joined the faculty including the homiletics professor. Debra, a poised, young and extremely intelligent Blackwoman, challenged me to step beyond self-imposed limitations and see the possibilities within my reach. Preaching ministry, she often told the class, must be void of selfishness. For her, selfish preachers are those who inaccurately exegete the text, but also includes ministers who shrink away from their full potential. Hence, selfishness manifests in many ways including flat out refusal and/or allowing insecurities or self-doubt to hinder you. She not only cultivated my preaching skills, but her mentorship was also vital in discerning the possibility of advanced theological training.

After much prayer and consultation with other mentors and immediate family I heeded the call to doctoral studies. I enrolled in a Ph.D. in Practical Theology in a small Catholic institution in Florida. As time drew near for me to leave the comforts of the state which I called home all my life, I often referred to this as my Abrahamic call. I entered the program as the only female amongst six male colleagues; however, the blended cohort structure enabled me to find solace amongst the women in previous and later cohorts. During the coursework phase, conversation amongst female peers often reflected on the divided nature of theological studies—leaving us women to feel as if we must choose between our gender, race, or religious tradition. The challenge was a lack of space for an integrated identity particularly in a discipline in which the White male experience is usually designated the most authoritative and normative, in subtle and not so subtle ways. Hence, the core of my scholarly agenda remains focused on themes of embodiment and identity formation. The experiences within this program requires attention,

conceptually at the intersection of Pentecostalism, Black womanhood, and formal theological education in America. This work speaks to this intersection.

Research Questions

The core question of this project is: *What is a pathway to an integrative identity for Pentecostal Blackwomen who have been called to and formed for ministry in theological institutions?* An integrative identity incorporates our embodied spirituality, as well as accounts for the daily negotiation of oppression faced considering gender, race, and sometimes class. The tension experienced between our “womanhood” and “Blackness” within society, gender difference within Pentecostalism (including Black Pentecostalism), and misunderstandings of Pentecostal spirituality within academia contributes to challenges Pentecostal Blackwomen face while matriculating through theological institutions. These challenges give rise to supporting questions necessary to address the central question of project:

1. What contributes to the construction and fragmentation of Blackwoman identity within American society?
2. What contributes to the construction and fragmentation of a Pentecostal identity and Black Pentecostal identity in America?
3. What are the negotiations of race and gender for Pentecostal Blackwoman within the tradition? What contributes to the affirmation and minimization of Black womanhood within Black Pentecostalism?
4. What is the context of formal theological education in America and how is it shaped by race and gender?

5. How can formal theological institutions recognize and educate the integrated identity of Pentecostal Blackwomen attending their institutions?

Relevance of the Study

Scholarship is never meant to be completed just for the sake of doing so. Practical theology continues to grow and evolve considering the many areas that emerge to address the diversity of human experiences. The embodiment of a fully integrated identity for the theologically educated, Pentecostal Blackwomen creates implications for the Pentecostal church, the academy, and society. In a particular way, this work seeks to address the church and the academy in way in which previous scholarship is limited.

Womanist theology over the last few decades advanced scholarship that brought greater awareness to and agency for Blackwomen in general. Womanist theology offers insight into the contemporary context of Blackwomen's experiences. On the other hand, it falls short in adequately addressing the concerns of the Pentecostal church and Pentecostal Blackwomen within theological institutions. Within academia, Womanist theology broke through certain barriers for women of color; yet, work remains for Pentecostal Blackwomen to fully reclaim their integrated identity unapologetically. Often the misrepresentation of womanism creates a barrier for genuine dialogue within the Black Pentecostal church. This project hopes to illustrate how Black Pentecostalism and womanist thought can bridge the gap of disconnection and produce benefits for both groups.

Additionally, this work aids the field of practical theology through expanding practical theological pneumatology. The work explores ways in which theological institutions might balance seeking the Holy Spirit within the academic process of deeper

theological understanding. The examination of Black Pentecostalism aids in understanding how theological institutions might create more space within their academic studies and curriculum for the integration of the Holy Spirit at work. This study also contributes to the conversation on vocation within theological institutions. Pentecostal understanding of the vocational call serves as foundational to explore how ministry is envisioned and embarked upon within the tradition and provides insight to theological institutions for how to better serve students with emphasis to gender differences and academic resources needed.

Lastly, the work contributes to Black Pentecostalism in addition to theological institutions. Black Pentecostalism historically held suspicion against mainstream theological institutions outside of their organization and control; however, this work hopes to aid in the re-appropriation of the value of theological education. The more theological education re-appropriates the value of the Holy Spirit as foundational to spiritual formation of individuals and theological institutions, the less threatening Black Pentecostal traditions may view it to their traditions. Diffusing the historical tensions between the two institutions strengthens the relationship between and each group is left better as a result of drawing from the wisdom they both bring to the table.

Both, Pentecostalism and theological institutions, must critically reflect upon their engagement with Blackwomen. Ultimately, the goal is to assist Blackwomen with ways to embody wholeness through an integrative identity. This work adds to dialogue within society, the church, and theological education, hopefully transforming practices and finding more ways to support Pentecostal Blackwomen. This project is not only a component of the wider conversations around Blackwomen's experiences, but also

represents my lifelong commitment to addressing pertinent issues of Blackwomen, Pentecostalism, and higher (theological) education.

Research Method

Joe Holland and Peter Henriot introduce the “pastoral circle” model to analyze social issues that require pastoral action. The “circle of praxis,” as it is referenced, “emphasizes the on-going relationship between reflection and action.”⁴⁴ The pastoral circle includes the components of insertion, social analysis, theological reflection, and pastoral planning.

The first mediation, or step in the pastoral circle is insertion. Insertion grounds the work in the lived experiences of the individuals and community being studied. This step enables the researcher to identify through experiences and feelings what Osmer defines as the descriptive-empirical task of practical theology to identify “what is going on?”⁴⁵

Social analysis provides for deeper investigation into the pastoral issue at hand. Osmer denotes this the interpretive task of practical theology, which draws upon theoretical resources to help better understand the “why” behind what is going on.⁴⁶ Social analysis explores the theological issue with regard to the policies and structures that undergird it.⁴⁷ A complete analysis of policies and structures includes examining the dimensions of economics, culture, politics, and history from both objective and subjective perspectives.

⁴⁴ Joe Holland and Peter Henriot, SJ, *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice* Rev. and Enlarged ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 7.

⁴⁵ Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.), 4.

⁴⁶ Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 4.

⁴⁷ Holland and Henriot, *Social Analysis*, 14.

The third mediation of the pastoral circle is the space where theological reflection occurs. Osmer notes this as the normative task of practical theology, which addresses “what ought to be going on?” from the context of the Christian tradition.⁴⁸ Theological reflection employs theological interpretation (biblical principles, concepts, or stories), ethical norms, and good practices to deeply reflect upon the presented issue.⁴⁹ This step of “prophetic discernment,” as Osmer refers to it, creates the opportunity for cross-disciplinary dialogue and enhances theological reflection.⁵⁰

The final mediation of pastoral planning occurs within the pragmatic task of practical theology. The pragmatic task pinpoints actions that address and engage “into a reflective conversation with the ‘talk back’ emerging when they are enacted.”⁵¹ In short, pastoral planning offers solutions to the issues but it does not always completely resolve the problem. Rather it leads to continued conversations that raise additional questions to further reflection on new issues which might have arisen from the conversation. The research design of this project includes insertion, social analysis, theological reflection, and pastoral response.

Theologians and scholars have adapted the pastoral circle model to construct new methods for completing the steps. James and Evelyn Whitehead modified the pastoral circle in constructing their method for theological reflection within Christian ministry. The Whiteheads’ work is employed both as a method and a model. Using the Whiteheads’ work as a model helps identify the conversation partners and signifies their

⁴⁸ Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 4.

⁴⁹ Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 130-32.

⁵⁰ Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 160-72.

⁵¹ Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 4.

authority.⁵² The generalized categories listed are experience, the Christian tradition, and culture. For the purposes of this project the categories are categorized to Blackwomen experiences, Pentecostalism (with emphasis on the Black Pentecostal tradition), and theological education as a culture. As a method, the Whiteheads provide three steps to complete theological reflection: attending, assertion, and pastoral response.

The initial step of attending requires deep listening to each contributing source while suspending judgement. Active listening in the beginning of every step. Listening to what transpires also means attending to both the verbal and non-verbal factors involved. The Whiteheads explain, “listening is difficult. Paying attention to one another—or even to the strings in our own hearts—is seldom easy.”⁵³ Internal factors such as our emotions, understandings of events, and worldview influences how we respond to the other. External factors that affect our moods are things such being hungry, tired, or even happy. Both, internal and external factors influence the ways we listen and engage one another. For this cause the Whiteheads remind us that “attending is a learned discipline, a virtue.”⁵⁴

Attending occurs in each of the chapters in this work. Chapter one begins by attending with insertion including my personal experience with Pentecostalism and formal theological education and the theological problem of fragmented identity. Social analysis allows for deep listening to the context of Blackwomen in American society, Pentecostalism, and theological education in the subsequent chapters.

⁵² James D. Whitehead and Evelyn Eaton Whitehead, *Method in Ministry: Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry* Rev. and updated ed., Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1995),

⁵³ Whitehead and Whitehead, *Method in Ministry*, 67.

⁵⁴ Whitehead and Whitehead, *Method in Ministry*, 67.

The second step of assertion brings all the perspectives together in conversation. Assertion recognizes each conversation partner serves as both a source of wisdom and critique within the dialogue. During this stage of the process the conversation partners join for the first time in conversation with one another. The metaphor of a crucible depicts the second part of assertion process since it “suggests the transformation that often occurs at this stage—if we handle the volatile components with care.”⁵⁵ Assertion provides a new way of imaging the conflict presented between the conversation partners. Understanding conflict as an “honorable embrace” challenges the assumptions that “in religious matter disagreement signals disloyalty and dissent is equal to disobedience.”⁵⁶ Instead, assertion reassures us that conflict is a necessary piece of the story and when treated as such the communities involved leave from the experience heard, strengthened through accountable with each other, transformed as a result. The first half of chapter five begins the process of assertion as the current context of formal theological education is examined in light of gender, race, and religious tradition.

The final step of the Whitehead method is pastoral response. The previous two steps encouraged dialogue with each conversation partner accounting for shared perspective and areas of conflict, both of which offer insight to responding to the problem. The objective here is “to translate insight into action.”⁵⁷ Pastoral response also includes beginning with listening to respond effectively. Listening helps to build consensus amongst the conversation partners. Consensus building is vital to this step, which is “the ability to move from honored diversity to shared action.”⁵⁸ Theological

⁵⁵ Whitehead and Whitehead, *Method in Ministry*, 15.

⁵⁶ Whitehead and Whitehead, *Method in Ministry*, 79.

⁵⁷ Whitehead and Whitehead, *Method in Ministry*, 16.

⁵⁸ Whitehead and Whitehead, *Method in Ministry*, 17.

reflection becomes life-giving when it honors the conversation partners as sources of wisdom includes each into the resolution. Effective action requires “the ability to generate alternatives, to choose among these partial solutions, and to keep these choices accountable to the larger vision of the reign of God.”⁵⁹ The final chapter of this project offers several practical steps for how theological institutions can bridge the gap of fragmented identity within the enterprise of theological education. Additionally, it addresses how understanding of an integrated identity, particularly a Pentecostal Blackwomen identity, can contribute to the context of theological education. The writer also offers several practical suggestions to Black Pentecostalism and theological institutions as they journey alongside Pentecostal Blackwomen who pursue theological education.

⁵⁹ Whitehead and Whitehead, *Method in Ministry*, 17.

Overview of the Work

Chapter One provided the foundation for the overall project. In this chapter the theological problem of fragmented identity was introduced. Using the concept of tragic gap as a type of home for Pentecostal Blackwomen provides the metaphor to examine the theological problem of fragmented identity in the subsequent chapters. The writer's personal experience as a Pentecostal Blackwoman aided the insertion step and better hearing the theological problem. The chapter included the research method and design for the project.

Chapter Two begins the social analysis of the context of Blackwomen in American society. Examination of the institution of chattel slavery lays the foundation of Blackwomen entry into America as a context far from "home" for Blackwomen. From the forced kidnapping from their home continent and arrival to the Americas discussions about their identity emerged. The chapter serves to detail how Blackwomen have struggled to re-member "home" and own their identity despite their displacement. The chapter includes a discussion of blackness in terms of historical identity and transitions to the social construction of Black femininity. It highlights the denigrating narratives associated with Black womanhood as well as the movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which affirm race and gender.

Chapter Three builds the previous chapter and examines the intersection of race and gender within American Pentecostalism. Finding "home" in the Spirit investigates the origins of Pentecostalism, its defining characteristics, and three major waves. What initially begins from multicultural revivals succumbs to the racists and sexist practices in society. Finding "home" in the Spirit, hence, gives attention to the exilic nature of Black

Pentecostalism, with focus on the historically Black denominations of the Church of God in Christ, Inc. and the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, Inc. The last section of the chapter moves forward by examining the space created for Blackwomen leadership and call within Black Pentecostalism.

Chapter Four briefly analyzes the context of formal theological education in the United States. This chapter reflects on how institutions create and fail to create “home” spaces for marginalized groups. The chapter uses ATS data, current issue and trends of theological education in order to examine gender, race, and religious identity or faith tradition.

Chapter Five links the entire work together with the final task of offering a pastoral response. In this chapter I share the insights gleaned from listening to each conversation partner and how each might faithfully respond to the issue of fragmented identity. I provide several suggestions for theological institutions in this work. It is understood that the insights offered here are not complete resolutions to all the issues plaguing Pentecostal Blackwomen who engage in theological education; rather it breaks open the space for larger dialogue across each of these arenas as well as offer some practical responses.

CHAPTER TWO. FAR FROM HOME: BLACK WOMANHOOD IN AMERICA

Until the lion has his own storyteller the hunter will always have the best stories.

-African Proverb

When Black identity is property that can be owned by someone else, defined by someone else, created by someone else, shaped by someone else, and marketed by someone else, we are chattel dressed in post-modern silks and linens.⁶⁰ -Emilie Townes

Black or African Americans⁶¹ comprise a little over thirteen percent of the estimated 325.7 million population of the United States.⁶² The estimation increases when accounting for persons of mixed races. Despite the vast number living in America of African descent, the historic words of W.E.B. Du Bois ring true about the struggle of America's interaction with Black people. Du Bois exclaims, "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line,--the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea."⁶³ Du Bois' claim addresses the American failure to re-examine the context in which race has been socially constructed and acted upon within society. The lasting effects of a virulent racial hierarchy as a result continue to plague America today.

⁶⁰ Emilie Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil* (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2006), 45.

⁶¹ For the purposes of this dissertation, Black references people of the African diaspora including people from Africa or of African descent living in America unless otherwise indicated by author. Black may be used interchangeably with African Americans.

⁶² United States Census Bureau, "United States," QuickFacts, table 1, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045217>.

⁶³ W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, with an introduction by John Edgar Wideman, First Library of America Paperback Classic edition (New York: Penguin, 1990), 16.

Since the arrival of enslaved Africans to the Americas, the debate regarding Black identity spans across society, academic institutions, and the Church itself. Emilie Townes argues, “Black identity has been made property and it should leave a sickening weariness in the pit of our collective stomach for property means things owned, possession.”⁶⁴ Furthermore, when people become property they are “reduced to exchange values that can be manipulated for economic gain—but rarely by the members of the community themselves. This manipulation includes merging race with myth and memory to create history.”⁶⁵ Townes is suggesting that when Black people become the sole proprietors of Black identity and defining Blackness, it is then they subvert the historical reduction to property and experience true liberation. She adds, “ownership, then, means rights over resources that the individual can exercise without interference.”⁶⁶

The ownership and commodification of Black identity throughout Black existence in America not only translates to the inability to define Blackness but also the interference of oppressive groups in the defining and demonizing of Black identity. The Black female identity in America, furthermore, is subject to fragmentation given it is interwoven into the larger American identity—which contains portrayals of both Blackness and womanhood in a negative light. Albert Raboteau explains, “a prime source of identity for a nation is history, construed as a set of interlocking stories that we tell one another about our origins and our past. I mean the mythic history that establishes our sense of national origin, destiny, and purpose.”⁶⁷ The negative narrative of Blackness

⁶⁴ Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*, 43.

⁶⁵ Words in italics are from the author’s texts. See Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*, 44.

⁶⁶ Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*, 43-44.

⁶⁷ Albert Raboteau, “Balm in Gilead: Memory, Mourning, and Healing in African American Autobiography,” in *Invisible Conversations: Religion in the Literature of America*, ed. Roger Lundin (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 84.

almost always silences the articulation of Black people themselves, as these narratives are created and cultivated primarily by a dominant ideology, White patriarchy, for the sake of maintaining the status quo of racial hierarchy.

This chapter examines Black identity and conceptualizations of Blackness in American society. Attention is given to the contribution of history and culture in identity formation and development in individuals. The next section of the chapter provides a brief outline of the historical understandings of Black and Blackness preceding and immediately following chattel slavery. The construction of Black identity in the United States will be treated as well as close attention given to Black female identity. The chapter closes with an examination of key movements of the Twentieth and Twenty-First centuries, which serve as the re-affirmation of Blackness during the Harlem Renaissance and the Civil Rights Movement, leading to the current discussions of Blackness with the Black Lives Matter movement.

Black female identity throughout American history navigates displacement and hostility within wider society and at home. The introductory chapter used the metaphor of the tragic gap as home in an effort to explain how marginalized people and groups juggle the harsh realities of oppression while remaining hopeful for a better future to come. The tragic gap eliminates the lofty ideals of a perfect society, which in the context of the fallen world will never occur, and at the same time calls into accountability the injustices of society. This chapter demonstrates ways Black people and women subvert these practices to reclaim their narrative and tell their own stories. This section of the work sets the tone for the subsequent chapter to address similar concerns within the religious fabric of the nation and Pentecostalism.

Treatment of History and Culture in Identity Development

The telling of key stories within community groups, families, and individuals often become ways to communicate who one is and how they came to be. In this manner, identity, then, is linked to self-understanding that develops from life experiences. Erik Erikson, a neo-Freudian⁶⁸ psychologist and psychoanalyst known for his work on identity development, suggests the human life cycle is the epigenesis of identity⁶⁹ given identity evolves throughout the course of one's life.⁷⁰ Erikson explains that change occurs because identity is rooted two identities, "*the core of the individual*" and "*the core of his [or her] communal culture*" respectively.⁷¹ Erikson explains, "in psychological terms, identity formation employs the process of simultaneous reflection and observation, a process taking place on all levels of mental functioning, by which the individual judges himself in the light of what he perceives to be the way in which others judge him in comparison to themselves and to a typology significant to them; while he judges their way of judging him in light of how he perceives himself in comparison to them and to types that have become relevant to him."⁷² Likewise, Johann Metz affirms identity naturally links to physical bodies, which are situated in a specific time in history and shaped within a particular culture.⁷³ The challenge, he asserts, resides in the fact that outsiders as well as changing social structures throughout history also contribute to

⁶⁸ Sigmund Freud produced seminal research on human behavior including theories regarding psychosexual development and the origins of psychoanalysis. One of his core arguments—that our behavior and personality is greatly influenced by the events from our childhood—provides the foundation upon which Erikson develops his own theories and research.

⁶⁹ See Erik H. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1968), 91-141.

⁷⁰ Erikson, *Identity*, 23.

⁷¹ Words in italics are from the author's text. See Erikson, *Identity*, 22.

⁷² Erikson, *Identity*, 22-23.

⁷³ Johann Baptist Metz, *Faith in History and Society: Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology* trans. by J. Matthew Ashley (New York: Crossroads, 2007), 10.

identity.⁷⁴ Identity formation develops from the processes by which these influences interplay. Hence, self-understanding is not only negotiation on the basis of self-description. Individuals construct a personal identity; however, history and culture rooted in experience additionally influences identity development.

In defining history various concerns arise. What constitutes history? Is there a singular history or are there multiple histories? What dominant voice or voices are the contributors to history? Floyd-Thomas suggests “history is a study of the PAST. In this instance, the term PAST—principles, assumptions, society, and transitions—is used...to reflect the key categorical concerns that arguably comprise the structural core of historical knowledge and experience.”⁷⁵ His methodology points beyond a reductionist approach of history in favor of a more critical examination of historical facts. By digging deeper, history becomes a potential source of liberation personally and collectively as a broader understanding of historical events are embraced.⁷⁶

The problem with history is that it is often told from the perspective of those within the society who control the power, and, in turn, construct the main historical narrative. History, from this vantage point, eliminates the microhistories of groups who have been muted, ignored, or completely distorted by the dominant group. Metz suggests exploring history with a focus on remembering suffering, since it remains a constant throughout time and renders history more subjective.⁷⁷ Townes advocates for the analysis of history through memory when she suggests “memory may serve as a

⁷⁴ Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 221.

⁷⁵ Juan Floyd-Thomas, *Liberating Black Church History: Making it Plain* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2014), 3-4.

⁷⁶ Floyd-Thomas, *Liberating Black Church History*, 3.

⁷⁷ Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 75.

corrective to dominant sociocultural or theological portrayals of history.”⁷⁸ Memories—individual and collective—remain significant to history, as well as the meanings of memories within a given culture.

Culture is defined within the social sciences as “the behaviors, ideas, attitudes, values, and traditions shared by a group of people and transmitted from one generation to the next.”⁷⁹ It encompasses a way of life for groups and provides meaning to the identity of the group. Clifford Geertz proposes, “culture is public because meaning is.”⁸⁰ Geertz understands culture connects to the meaning assigned to it within the larger community. According to Geertz, “culture is not a power, something to which social events, behaviors, institutions, or processes can be causally attributed; it is a context, something in which they can be intelligibly –that is, thickly described.”⁸¹ The public understanding of culture may expand to include things such as dress and appearance, customs and communication, as well as music and food. Yet, description of these aspects alone fails to capture the totality of culture, because the symbols within culture get layered with deeper meaning. Stephen Bevans suggests that one’s cultural context, including the time and location in which a person lives, influences their understanding.⁸²

One differentiating trait of human culture is language. In the article *Culture, Context, and Behavior*, David Matsumoto explains humans use verbal language “to create sounds representing those symbols (morphemes), to create rules connecting those symbols into meaningful words (lexicon), then phrases and sentences (syntax and

⁷⁸ Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*, 17.

⁷⁹ David Myers and C. Nathan Dewall, *Psychology*, 11th ed. (New York: Worth Publishers, 2015), 155.

⁸⁰ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 12.

⁸¹ Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 14.

⁸² Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002), 4.

grammar), and to put all this together into sentences (pragmatics).”⁸³ Through the use of language, groups create ideologies and communicate normative practices, which govern acceptable behaviors and actions within society. Language, as a result, becomes a tool to define, affirm and/or diminish group or personal identities within culture. Symbols of culture, such as memories are also subjected to the influence of language. Memory is fluid and mobile, which de Certeau explains, makes it an “interventionary force from its very capacity to be altered.”⁸⁴ Memory is mediated through the process of remembering events, especially historical events which contribute to identity development. Ricoeur suggests that over time history as historiography⁸⁵ becomes problematic because, “whether personal or collective, memory refers back by definition to the past that continues to be living by virtue of the transmission from generation to generation; this is the source of a resistance of memory to historiographical treatment.”⁸⁶ Critical to Ricoeur’s treatment of history and historiography is Heidegger’s understanding of *Dasein*, to which Ricoeur assents Heidegger’s key claim that humans are beings situated in time.⁸⁷ Absent from Heidegger’s argumentation is the mention of memory;⁸⁸ however Ricoeur draws upon Dilthey and Kierkegaard respectively for the terms “succession of generations” and “repetition” in building his case for the history. Ricoeur explains “the creative power of repetition is contained entirely in this power of opening up the past

⁸³ David Matsumoto, “Culture, Context, and Behavior,” *Journal of Personality* 75, no.6 (December 2007): 1291, doi: 10.1111/j.1467-6494.2007.00476.x.

⁸⁴ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven F. Randall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 86.

⁸⁵ Ricoeur defines historiography as the writing of history or the designation historical knowledge. Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, and Forgetting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 397-98.

⁸⁶ Ricoeur, *Memory, History, and Forgetting*, 398.

⁸⁷ Ricoeur, *Memory, History, and Forgetting*, 384.

⁸⁸ Ricoeur, *Memory, History, and Forgetting*, 385.

again to the future”⁸⁹ and this ensures that from generation to generation historical memories are edited and passed down.

Memory is of particular importance to womanism. Maparyan asserts, “[f]or womanists, memory is infinite and encompasses past, present, and future.”⁹⁰ Womanist understanding of history is one that is embodied, in which context the interconnected nature of community members spread across time. Agnew adds “[m]emory is an act of remembering that can create new understandings of both the past and the present.”⁹¹ As a result, the personal and collective identities of Black people are impacted by the confluence of these relationships. Considering this, womanism also recognizes that when memory remains fragmented, that it become detrimental to identity. Such is the case when authentic memories and histories are edited or censored within historical accounts. Womanists address how such normative, White patriarchal hegemony creates false narratives of history that fragment Black identity across wider society. M. Shawn Copeland explains,

In a negrophobic society, black ontological integrity suffers compromise. On the one hand, massive, negative, transgenerational assault on black bodies has ontological implications. In such a society, *blackness* mutates as negation, nonbeing, nothingness; blackness insinuates an ‘other’ so radically different that her and his very humanity is discredited. Then, black identity no longer offers a proper subject of sublation, of authentic human self-transcendence, but a bitter

⁸⁹ Ricoeur, *Memory, History, and Forgetting*, 378-80.

⁹⁰ Maparyan, *The Womanist Idea*, 49.

⁹¹ Vijay Agnew, *Diaspora, Memory and Identity: A Search for Home* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division, 2005), PDF e-book, Introduction.

bondage to be escaped. Blackness becomes a narrative of marginality and a marginal narrative.⁹²

Anti-Blackness pervades society in the way history is remembered and shared; hence, this necessitates deeper examination of history that resounds the muted voices, memories, and histories.

In short, individuals negotiate lived experiences to construct and understand identity. History, culture, and memory are integral to how personal identity develops over time. Moreover, the same is true for nations, as they develop a national identity based on the narrative of their historical existence. And again, the dominant narrative often fails to account for other stories within the larger story. Such was the case for America in relation to Black people's narratives.

Historical Implications of Blackness in U.S. Colonization

When memory and history remain fragmented within society, it becomes detrimental to identity, in this case, Black identity. The historical construction of Black identity in the United States builds upon ideologies of Black inferiority and denigration. Both ideologies remain critical to the success of African colonization and the American economic profit from chattel slavery. Kelly Brown Douglas introduces the "White cultural attack" theory, which explains that White culture exists primarily as a contrast to what is non-White in American society.⁹³ White culture, therefore, serves as the normative narrative to subsequently judge other microhistories as deviant. In the discussion of American slavery, semantics matter. African slaves did not come to

⁹² M. Shawn Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Being* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010), 19.

⁹³ Kelly Brown Douglas, *Sexuality and the Black Church: A Womanist Perspective* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1999), 23.

America; rather, slave traders forcibly kidnapped African peoples—that had a history and an identity—to bring them to America with a new identity. The method of transportation intentionally strips Africans of their identity as tribal leaders, scholars, craftsmen, and farmers into American slaves immediately.⁹⁴ Examination of Black identity must begin here to capture the methodical process of deprogramming and fragmentation of the understanding of Blackness internally and in society.

The negative valuation of the color black throughout history eventually transferred to Black bodies as foundational to the denigration of Black people. For English men during this time black represents “the handmaid and symbol of baseness and evil, a sign of danger and repulsion.”⁹⁵ This definition directly contrasts the positive meaning associated with whiteness throughout history, so it is not a surprise that travel accounts to Africa more often than not remarked on the difference of complexion in African people.⁹⁶ Blackness, initially just a physical descriptor of the darkened skin tone of Africans, soon developed into philosophies about the groups of people encountered. The colonizers note also differences other than color. Douglas suggests, “[t]he differences in appearance, dress, religion, and manner of living converged to give rise to new notions—as well as no doubt to support already existing notions—that Africans were an extremely libidinous people.”⁹⁷ The lack of clothing worn by Africans prompted Europeans to view Africans, especially the women, from a sexualized prospective. White

⁹⁴ George Rawick, *From Sundown to Sunup: The Making of the Black Community* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Company, 1972), 7.

⁹⁵ Winthrop Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550–1812*, 2nd ed. With new forewords by Christopher Leslie Brown and Peter H. Wood (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012), PDF e-book, p. 44. All subsequent citations refer to this edition.

⁹⁶ Winthrop Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro*, PDF e-book, p. 4.

⁹⁷ Douglas, *Sexuality and the Black Church*, 32.

explains, “unaccustomed to the requirements of a tropical climate, Europeans mistook seminudity for lewdness.”⁹⁸ Negative first impressions of African practices and appearance became the catalyst for Europeans to define Blackness with myths of perversion;⁹⁹ however, these myths require various layers in order to sustain the societal domination of Whites over time. Hence, “[t]o suggest that Black people were oversexualized meant that they were governed by matters of the flesh. This alone, according to the dominant early Christian tradition, was enough to signal their inferiority and need to be dominated by those governed by reason, namely White men.”¹⁰⁰ Early Europeans utilize Aristotelian concepts to advocate slavery on the basis of skin color rather than slavery as a method to civilize barbarianism within society, which is Aristotle’s suggestion.¹⁰¹ The narrative that Africans are a primitive people lacking morals and intelligence seemed to legitimize the efforts to forcibly kidnap and commit various atrocities over several centuries.

The initial impressions of Europeans contribute to the ill treatment of Africans along the transportation into slavery. The Trans-Atlantic travel to the Americas encompasses unthinkable conditions as hundreds of people squeeze into dark bottoms of cargo ships where disease, sickness, and death are rampant. Along the months-long voyages, Africans rarely experienced daylight and the diversity of dialects made communication challenging. Researchers mentioned the lack of clothing and other material objects those captured brought with them. Handlers asserts, “the data indicate

⁹⁸ Deborah Gray White, *Ar’n’t I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South*, rev. ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), 29.

⁹⁹ Douglas, *Sexuality and the Black Church*, 32.

¹⁰⁰ Douglas, *Sexuality and the Black Church*, 35.

¹⁰¹ Jane Samson, *Race and Empire* (London: Pearson Education Limited, 2005), 19.

that many if not most persons, particularly adult males and children of both sexes, were completely nude and devoid of any body covering throughout the Middle Passage.”¹⁰² Women wore small, often tattered cloths covering the genitalia. Handler explains, “in short, as a group, enslaved Africans brought virtually no material goods with them, and for all intents and purposes arrived empty-handed into the New World.”¹⁰³ Additionally, the practice of African “guardians,” or “slaves appointed to police fellow captives during the Atlantic crossing”¹⁰⁴ further ensured little potential for rebellions. Divisive methods like these provided control and reinforced power divisions along the voyage and eventually on plantations. The politics of social relationships on the ships provide the greatest security from challenge, as Smallwood suggests, rather than sole reliance on large crews or heavy artillery.¹⁰⁵ The journey across the ocean was physically and mentally grueling since most aspects of home and identity were taken away. Fanon suggests the primary goal of every oppressor is to destroy the cultural heritage of the captives and establish inferiority through the demeaning practices of colonizers.¹⁰⁶ Reduction of African identity to that of slaves sets the foundation for the creation of a racial caste system for economic profit in America with chattel slavery.

Black Identity During Chattel Slavery

¹⁰² Jerome S. Handler, “The Middle Passage and the Material Culture of Captive Africans,” *Slavery & Abolition* 30, no. 1 (2009): 4. doi:10.1080/01440390802673773.

¹⁰³ Handler, “The Middle Passage and the Material Culture of Captive Africans,” (2009):12.

¹⁰⁴ Stephanie Smallwood, “African Guardians, European Slave Ships, and the Changing Dynamics of Power in the Early Modern Atlantic,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 64, no. 4 (2007):679. doi: 10.2307/25096747.

¹⁰⁵ Smallwood, “African Guardians, European Slave Ships, and the Changing Dynamics of Power in the Early Modern Atlantic,” (2007): 681.

¹⁰⁶ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (London: Pluto Press, 2008), 8.

Scholar Paula Giddings chronicles the historiography of chattel slavery as a precursor to the evolution of heinous treatment of enslaved Blacks in America. Chattel slavery, or the acquisition of indentured servants as property, predated the arrival of enslaved Africans in Virginia in 1619.¹⁰⁷ The system of indentured servitude included links to poor or criminal Europeans¹⁰⁸ and Native Americans whom society considered legal property.¹⁰⁹ Under this system European indentured servants worked for a designated amount of time in exchange for their necessities such as housing, food, or transportation to the colonies. In the first years after Africans arrived, protection was given under international laws initially affording them a higher status than other servants, and they often worked alongside White servants.¹¹⁰ The harsher treatment toward European colonists initially ensured that owners recouped financial costs and any children born to the indentured colonists during servitude were born free.¹¹¹ The need to develop the New World cheaply ushered in a time of exploitation and within decades Black only chattel slavery became the standard.¹¹² Black chattel slavery enforced a White patriarchy that lasted for centuries until its formal end with the Emancipation Proclamation in 1865.¹¹³ Black chattel slavery, to be referred to as chattel slavery for the

¹⁰⁷ Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (New York: Amistad, 2006), 33.

¹⁰⁸ Rawick, *From Sundown to Sunup*, 22.

¹⁰⁹ Giddings, *When and Where I Enter*, 33.

¹¹⁰ Giddings, *When and Where I Enter*, 34.

¹¹¹ Daniel P. Mannix, *Black Cargoes: A History of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1518 – 1865* (New York: Viking Press, 1962), vii.

¹¹² Raboteau explains that Africans were one of the many groups enslaved in history; however, slavery in the new world took on a racialized meaning that equated slavery with blackness, or the skin color of African peoples. See Raboteau, *Canaan Land: A Religious History of African Americans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 6.

¹¹³ Although the Emancipation Proclamation abolished slavery, the limitations of communication during this time period contributed to the delay in news of freedom reaching the entire nation at the same time. Some African American communities host celebrations such as Juneteenth and/or the 8th of August to commemorate Black emancipation from chattel slavery.

remainder of this project, marked a period of one of America's most heinous treatment against people of African descent.

Chattel slavery operated from an interdependent context and needed cooperation from both Blacks and Whites to ensure its success, which meant power dynamics were critical.¹¹⁴ The interconnection of White slaveholders and the legal system in the nation reinforced chattel slavery. Many slaveholders at this time were government officials; thus, White officials consistently passed legislation to ensure personal and national economic gain from the service of enslaved Blacks. For example, Cannon notes, as early as 1660, legislation ensured “all Africans—and only Africans and their descendants—entering the colonies would be subjected to an entire framework that required them to be treated as objects, as possessions, rather than as human beings.”¹¹⁵ These laws successfully made life-long servitude mandatory for all Black slaves. Additional laws restricted the assembly of slaves in groups, required identification and documentation to travel, restricted the right to bear arms, prohibited literacy, and prohibited interracial relationships.

Black bodies, old and young, female and male, were subject to violation. It is impossible to analyze the institution of slavery without acknowledging the “virtually unlimited power” White slaveholders possessed over Blacks.¹¹⁶ The intent of chattel slavery from its inception “was to crush the spirit and will in order to transform an entire race of people, their lives and their labor, into basic commodities of production and

¹¹⁴ Rawick, *From Sundown to Sunup: The Making of the Black Community*, 62.

¹¹⁵ Katie G. Cannon, *Katie's Canon: Womanism and the Soul of the Black Community* (New York: Continuum, 1996), 28.

¹¹⁶ Cannon, *Katie's Canon*, 29.

reproduction.”¹¹⁷ Black bodies became property and a source of lucrative economic gain for others.¹¹⁸ Slaves were cheap labor, considering provisions were only the bare necessities of lodging and meager food supplies in exchange for their free labor. The economic success of slavery translated into political capital for White slaveholders. For example, the Black family unit remained subject to fear and uncertainty; slave holders sold families for economic gain or to wield their power. The fragmentation of Black family life happened in more ways than separating families at slave auctions. The practice of omitting fathers from the birth record on plantations enabled the passage of legislation such as *partus sequitur ventrem*, which specified a child maintained the state of the mother.¹¹⁹ Practices such as these favored White slaveholders, particularly as it was commonplace amongst many of them to have outside children with enslaved Blackwomen.

Another economic aspect of slavery directly connected the importance of Blackwomen in the continuation of slavery. John Hope Franklins explains, “there was always a fear that the supply of slaves would become exhausted while the demand was still great.”¹²⁰ The economic value of fertile Blackwomen increased at the end of the Trans-Atlantic slave route when “the slaveholding class was forced to rely on natural reproduction as the surest method of replenishing and increasing the domestic slave population.”¹²¹ Blackwomen suffered rape and other physical violence at the hands of white slaveholders. The rape of Blackwomen and separations of families justified the

¹¹⁷ Cannon, *Katie’s Canon*, 32.

¹¹⁸ Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*, 44.

¹¹⁹ Angela Y. Davis, *Women, Race, and Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 12.

¹²⁰ John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*, 8th ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 130.

¹²¹ Davis, *Women, Race, and Class*, 6-7.

reduction of these women to “breeders” and served to strip them of humanity and dignity. The use of animalistic terms to reference Blackwomen distanced the societal view of nurturance commonly associated with motherhood and absolved slaveholders of a conscience as they divided families.¹²² African American female bodies became mere commodities who lacked protection or care under the system of slavery.

Slavery intricately encompassed physical, spiritual, and emotional abuses of the lives of those enslaved. Emilie Townes explains dominant groups exercised hegemony over subordinate groups within society through coercion.¹²³ Slaveholders often employed public, corporeal punishment as an effective measure to instill obedience. Another route to maintain control within society was patrolling. Patrol systems on plantations provided poor Whites social status above Blacks and allowed Whites to discipline and assist in the recovery of runaways.¹²⁴ Adding to the brutalities of slavery, Rawick explains, “the patrollers intervened in every aspect of slave life. Moreover, as they were not the owners, they often had less concern that slaves would be unable to work as a result of brutal treatment.”¹²⁵ In addition to the brutal violence Blacks experienced at the hands of wealthy landowners, poorer Whites were given free rein to further terrorize and intimidate Blacks including within the slave quarters. Few slaveholders refrained from any physical punishment of slaves during slavery and in these rare instances, slaves equated the lack of whippings with freedom.¹²⁶ Ideologies such as these maintained the status quo and as Townes explains, “a kind of false consciousness ... that creates societal

¹²² Davis, *Women, Race, and Class*, 7.

¹²³ Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*, 20.

¹²⁴ Rawick, *From Sundown to Sunup*, 61.

¹²⁵ Rawick, *From Sundown to Sunup*, 62.

¹²⁶ “Free niggers” were the name given to slaves who did not receive whippings from the slave holders. See Rawick, *From Sundown to Sunup*, 65.

values and moralities such that there is one coherent and accurate viewpoint on the world.”¹²⁷ The ambiguity of freedom gained leverage to keep slaves passive and obedient.

The institution of chattel slavery remained a dominating force spanning four centuries; however, enslaved Blacks found ways to resist the presumed inferiority of slavery. The dichotomous nature of slavery, Peter Parish underscores, is that “the master learned to treat his slaves as both property and as men and women; the slaves learned how to express and affirm their humanity even while they were constrained in much of their lives to accept their status as chattel.”¹²⁸ Despite the atrocious conditions, Blacks cultivated a sense of meaningfulness in life and produced a tenacity that enabled them to rise above the conditions. One subversive tactic enslaved Blacks employed was utilizing the brief time away from the slave holders. Cannon explains Blacks used “the hours from nightfall to daybreak to foster, sustain, and transmit cultural mechanisms that enabled them to cope with such bondage. In spite of every form of institutional constraint, Afro-American slaves were able to create another world, complete with their own folklore, spirituals, and religious practices...There was a critical difference between what Whites tried to teach and what slaves actually learned. Against all odds, Afro-American slaves created a culture saturated with their own values and heavily laden with their dreams.”¹²⁹ For example, Blacks risked punishment to secretly gather in the hush harbors for religious encounters, which speaks to their plight in slavery and faith development.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*, 20.

¹²⁸ Peter Parish, *Slavery: History and Historians*, 1st ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 1.

¹²⁹ Cannon, *Katie's Canon*, 33.

¹³⁰ Anne H. Pinn and Anthony B. Pinn, *Fortress Introduction to Black Church History*, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002), 12.

Slaveholders used religious ideology to legitimize the institution of slavery, prohibited literacy amongst the slaves, legislated baptism to only grant spiritual freedom, and often quoted from Pauline texts that advocated for obedient slaves.¹³¹ The experiences within the invisible institutions of the hush harbors countered the ideologies of enslavers as well as others utilized the night hours to plot rebellions or escape slavery by leaving to the North.

Post-Antebellum

The legal mandate for the end of slavery came at the end of the Civil War with the Emancipation Proclamation in 1865, which ushered America into a new era. The Reconstruction Era¹³² chronicles the post-antebellum time in the years immediately following slavery in America, a time in which the country worked to rebound from its division. The nation witnessed pertinent legislation as the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments—known as the Reconstruction Amendments, brought about legislative victories for Blacks. White hegemony, however, repressed substantial gains within the Black community.

The Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery with the exception as punishment for convicted criminals in December 1865.¹³³ Alexander Tseis explains the revolutionary nature of the Thirteenth Amendment is in the Enforcement Code in Article Two of the amendment, which gives Congress the right to uphold the law and intervene in any cases

¹³¹ Raboteau, *Canaan Land*, 14-15.

¹³² The Reconstruction Era denotes the period from the years 1865 through 1877.

¹³³ U.S. Const. amend. XIII.

that violate of the law.¹³⁴ Likewise Anderson adds, “it moved responsibility for enforcement and protection of civil rights from states to the federal government and sent a strong, powerful signal that citizens were first and foremost U.S. citizens.”¹³⁵ The Civil Rights Act of 1866 became the precursor for the subsequent Reconstruction Amendment. President Johnson attempted to veto this act, which declared all persons born in the United States, apart from Native Americans, are citizens regardless of their previous condition and deserve the rights and protections of citizenship by law.¹³⁶ The Fourteenth Amendment received ratification on July 9, 1868, and is significant to Blacks as it grants citizenship and “equal protection under the law.”¹³⁷ Like the previous amendment, it also contains a clause empowering Congress to enforce the law. The Fifteenth Amendment, in February of 1870, states: “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.”¹³⁸ The Fifteenth Amendment highlights the added layer of gender to the conversation. Black men are given the right to vote and the Fifteenth Amendment excludes both Black and White women from voting rights. Whites, however, created barriers such as poll taxes, literacy tests, and primary elections to halt progress and ensure systemic racism continue within society.¹³⁹ Black men began participating in

¹³⁴ Alexander Tsesis, ed., *The Promises of Liberty: The History and Contemporary Relevance of the Thirteenth Amendment* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 10.

¹³⁵ Carol Anderson, *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide* (New York: Bloomsbury USA, 2016), 8.

¹³⁶ Walter L. Fleming, ed., *Documentary History of Reconstruction: Political, Military, Social, Religious, Educational, and Industrial, 1865 to 1906* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), 1:197-201.

¹³⁷ U.S. Const. amend. XIV.

¹³⁸ U.S. Const. amend. XV.

¹³⁹ Raymond Wolters, *DuBois and His Rivals*, (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2002), 40. PDF e-book.

civil duties such as serving on juries, voting, holding public offices, serving in militias, and leasing property.¹⁴⁰

In addition to legislation, Congress implemented programs to restructure the nation in light of the divisive Civil War. The Freedman's Bureau¹⁴¹ launched in March of 1865, and provided aid and land redistribution during that time period.¹⁴² The bureau assisted newly emancipated Blacks as well as poor Whites with things such as shelter, educational facilities, job placement and land for those with the war.¹⁴³ The Freedman's Bureau offered hope of forward progress and protection for Blacks under the new decree of freedom.¹⁴⁴ Initially the organization leased forty-acre plots of land to newly freed Blacks to ensure "economic self-sufficiency"¹⁴⁵ but under the presidency of Andrew Johnson these orders end.¹⁴⁶ Johnson, Lincoln's successor, contributed to the re-strengthening of White supremacy by pardoning former Confederate troops without accountability for their actions, favoring governmental assistance for poor White citizens above others, and demonstrating his disdain overall for Black people.¹⁴⁷ Still the Freedmen's Bureau managed to assist with building school and colleges for Blacks, in collaboration with other Black community organizations.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁰ Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution: 1863-1877* (New York: History Book Club, 2005), 87.

¹⁴¹ The formal name of the organization was the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands.

¹⁴² Carol Anderson, *White Rage*, 15.

¹⁴³ Albert P. Blaustein and Robert L. Zangrando, eds., *Civil Rights and the Black American: A Documentary History* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1970), 210.

¹⁴⁴ President Johnson felt poor Whites were subjected to a sense of inferiority at the hands of former slaveholders and new emancipated Blacks and needed more governmental help as a result. See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 81.

¹⁴⁵ Anderson, *White Rage*, 15.

¹⁴⁶ Anderson, *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide*, 15-16.

¹⁴⁷ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 179-83.

¹⁴⁸ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 97-98.

The push against Reconstruction illustrated the intense circumstances Black people and free Blacks now faced. The end of slavery signaled the loss of total control over Black bodies, and increased vigilantism emerged as a response to maintaining social control. The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) became one of the primary groups of resistance to the emancipation of Blacks in the South. Six Confederate veterans in 1866 created the organization in Pulaski, Tennessee.¹⁴⁹ The KKK began as a social club but Allen Trelease explains the violent nature of the organization changed as vigilantes assumed leadership in 1867 and 1868.¹⁵⁰ The growing violence occurred given the self-governance of dens within local communities.¹⁵¹ During the early years, members dressed in flowing robes, white face masks with eye and nose holes, and cardboard, cone-shaped hats.¹⁵² Outfits such as these provided enough disguise at night as the Klan members burned crosses, destroyed property, and violently murdered many Blacks in efforts to instill fear. The KKK attempted to ensure Blacks understood their place of inferiority despite emancipation.¹⁵³ Blacks became targets regardless of their gender or age, and for any minor incident but often for no reason other than being Black.¹⁵⁴

Many of the injustices Blacks faced during slavery are maintained under their new freedom. Following the leadership of President Johnson, states instituted legislation and practices to restrict Blacks in the subordinate class as laborers or domestics. Black Codes emerged and governed Black interaction and behavior within society. Included in the

¹⁴⁹ Allen Trelease, *White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction* (New York: Harper & Row Publishing, 1971), 3. See also Foner, *Reconstruction*, 425.

¹⁵⁰ Trelease, *White Terror*, 5.

¹⁵¹ Trelease, *White Terror*, 11.

¹⁵² Trelease, *White Terror*, 4.

¹⁵³ Linda Gordon, *The Second Coming of the KKK: The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s and the American Political Tradition* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2017), 2. Kindle e-book.

¹⁵⁴ Eric Foner, *Reconstruction*, 121.

Black Codes were things such as annual labor contracts, which restricted work with a particular mill, plantation, or mine owners, otherwise Blacks faced legal consequences including public whippings.¹⁵⁵ Under these codes, “Blacks were denied access to land, banned from hunting and fishing, and forbidden to work independently using skills honed and developed while enslaved, such as blacksmithing.”¹⁵⁶ Black Codes rescinded almost all progress of emancipation and repositioned Blacks back into servant-master relationships as during slavery.¹⁵⁷ Black Codes’, or state laws’, “centerpiece was the attempt to stabilize the black work force and limit its economic options apart from plantation labor. Henceforth, the state would enforce labor agreements and plantation discipline, punish those who refused to contract, and prevent whites from competing among themselves for black workers.”¹⁵⁸ Each of the codes deepened the dependency of Blacks on societal institutions or people and made it difficult to achieve economic uplift.

Another assurance for economic instability emerged through a system of heavy taxation, in which failure to pay taxes resulted in criminal charges against freed Blacks.¹⁵⁹ A form of debt peonage known as sharecropping became the new system of exploitation against Black freedmen. In the system of sharecropping, Blacks (and poor Whites) leased small plots of land to harvest crops from White landowners. The disadvantages of rural areas forced Blacks often to rely on the excessive prices of White merchants for all goods and services, and created a cycle of generational debt as debt

¹⁵⁵ Anderson, *White Rage*, 19.

¹⁵⁶ Anderson, *White Rage*, 21.

¹⁵⁷ Blaustein and Zangrando, eds., *Civil Rights and the Black American*, 210.

¹⁵⁸ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 199.

¹⁵⁹ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 207.

amassed each year with little hopes of complete repayment.¹⁶⁰ Additionally, Blacks received harsher punishment and criminal charges than others for violation of labor contracts.¹⁶¹ State apprenticeship laws further separated freed Black families, requiring children to work as free labor in the event Black parents became unable to financially support their families.¹⁶² Brinkley explains “[t]he bottom line was that black economic independence was anathema to a power structure that depended on cheap, exploitable, rightless labor and required black subordination.”¹⁶³ Whites employed peonage and convict leasing practices to maintain the status quo of a racialized caste.

The years following the Reconstruction Era and leading up to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s became known as the Jim Crow Era. A minstrel show character provided the namesake of this time and directly referenced the segregationist practices enforced by government legislation.¹⁶⁴ Jim Crow in America represented a set of laws and legislation that permitted segregation of the races in public places, schools, and even in romantic relationships. The landmark United States Supreme Court Case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* enabled states to uphold the “equal but separate accommodations for the white and colored races.”¹⁶⁵ American society encountered many waves of transition during Jim Crow era, but Black inferiority remained critical to the national agenda.

¹⁶⁰ Roger L. Ransom and Richard Sutch, “Debt Peonage in the Cotton South After the Civil War,” *Journal of Economic History* 32, no. 3 (1972): 642.

¹⁶¹ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 200.

¹⁶² Foner, *Reconstruction*, 201.

¹⁶³ Anderson, *White Rage*, 21.

¹⁶⁴ Douglas Brinkley, *American Heritage History of the United States* (New York: Viking, 1998), 279.

¹⁶⁵ Kermit Hall, *The Oxford Companion to the Supreme Court of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 637-638.

The second revival of the Klan and its incorporation occurred in 1915, under the leadership of “Colonel” William Simmons¹⁶⁶ with a cross-burning ceremony at Stone Mountain in Georgia.¹⁶⁷ With this revival of the Klan, members chose not to hide under the darkness of night and proudly displayed their affiliation. Gordon explains the second wave of the Klan included hosting large public events like parades and pageants, campaigning for select politicians, and publicly recruiting via newspaper ads.¹⁶⁸ The rebirth of the Klan “shared the Negrophobia of the old, but its list of hates and fears reached also to Catholics, Jews, immigrants, radicals, organized labor, and other groups who posed an imagined threat to individuals in every part of the country.”¹⁶⁹ The concept of “100% American,” or extreme nationalism, is used to normalize the message of hate and intolerance.¹⁷⁰ The Klan used American symbols including the American flag and quotes from the Constitution, Declaration of Independence, and the Bible to reach potential members from all levels—uneducated and educated alike.¹⁷¹ The new message suggested “[o]nly a fusion of racial purity and evangelical Christian morality could save the country.”¹⁷² White nationalism became effective at garnering support, especially since urbanization and immigration brought changes to many cities during this time.

Jim Crow laws and Black codes enabled segregationist practices and continued mistreatment of blacks—including murder, with little to no consequences. Despite the legislation emerging from this time period, these practices ensured the maintenance of a

¹⁶⁶ George Lewis, “‘An Amorphous Code’: The Ku Klux Klan and Un-Americanism, 1915-1965,” *Journal of American Studies* 47, no. 4 (2013): 975, doi:10.1017/S0021875813001357.

¹⁶⁷ The ceremony took place on Thanksgiving night of that year. See Trelease, *White Terror*, 421-22.

¹⁶⁸ Gordon, *The Second Coming of the KKK*, 2.

¹⁶⁹ Trelease, *White Terror*, 422.

¹⁷⁰ Lewis, “An Amorphous Code,” 975.

¹⁷¹ Lewis, “An Amorphous Code,” 975-76.

¹⁷² Gordon, *The Second Coming of the KKK*, 14.

racial caste system within American society, from which wealthy Whites could safely exploit others. Blacks soon realized not much had changed for even “[i]n post-slavery culture, whiteness remains the measure of man[woman], that is, of humanity.”¹⁷³

Throughout the periods of colonization and immediately following Whites continued to define and manipulate understandings of Blackness in society.

Stereotypical Construction of Black Female Identity in the United States

Black people remain prime targets of character assassination in American history, and for Black women, the manipulations of Black femininity often arise from the construction of stereotypes regarding Black womanhood. Townes asserts, “[e]very stereotype emerges in the wake of pre-existing ideology that deforms it, appropriates it, and naturalizes it.”¹⁷⁴ The Cult of True Womanhood ideology successfully launches a White cultural attack against Black womanhood particularly in contrast to White femininity. The nineteenth century true womanhood ideology gains relevancy as the ideal standards for being a “lady” become the “four cardinal virtues—piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity.”¹⁷⁵ Society uses the basis of these standards to presume White women as delicate, proper, and deserving of privilege and protection different from Blackwomen. Blackwomen fall short of the standard primarily due to the negative connotations of Black womanhood in society. Black female bodies, in short, represent the unfeminine and warrant the physical, emotion, and sexual exploitation they encounter. The Cult of True Womanhood fades by the 1860s yet the lingering ideology of White

¹⁷³ Linda Martin Alcoff, Foreword, in *Black Bodies, White Gazes: The Continuing Significance of Race* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008), x.

¹⁷⁴ Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*, 43.

¹⁷⁵ Barbara Welter, *Dimity Convictions: The American Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1976), 21.

female superiority remained the foundational standard of beauty and womanhood. The efforts to de-womanize Blackwomen rose up from these stereotypical images of Black womanhood, negative depictions which dated back to the historical myths of Blackwomen and perpetuated gender and racial oppression. Caricatures of Black female identity mutate over their course of existence in America and the section below examines the evolution of three: Mammy, Jezebel, and Sapphire.

Mammy

Mammy has a controversial history. She is offensive to Blacks, yet many Whites remember her as a symbol of nostalgic sentimentality.¹⁷⁶ The Mammy caricature originates during slavery time and her fictional myth continues throughout the Jim Crow Era.¹⁷⁷ Accounts of Mammy contain “[t]he prototypical fictional Mammy: asexual, fat, self-sacrificing, excellent cook, excellent housekeeper, self-sacrificing, and above all loyal to her family.”¹⁷⁸ She offers a false narrative that White men do not find her sexually appealing given she is an obese, asexual, elderly Blackwoman. Historical accounts, however, dispute this myth and record: “[t]hose who did assist in the care of White children were either children or teenagers—not those with the elderly Mammy image.”¹⁷⁹ According to White, Mammy is also necessary to promote a maternal figure who passes on the racial hierarchy within White patriarchy to the generations that

¹⁷⁶ Jessie W. Parkhurst, “The Role of the Black Mammy in the Plantation Household,” *The Journal of Negro History* 23, no. 3 (July 1938): 349, doi: 10.2307/2714687.

¹⁷⁷ Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*, 31.

¹⁷⁸ Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*, 32.

¹⁷⁹ The Federal Writers’ Project of Works Progress Administration offers one of the best historical insights about slavery through their interviews of former slaves. See Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*, 33.

follow.¹⁸⁰ She ultimately safeguards “the economic, political, and social interests of White ideology and history in the United States. Her caricature was used to prove that Black women (and by extension children and men) were happy with their enslavement.”¹⁸¹ The happy go lucky slave is antithetical to the realities of slave life. Mammy, however, illustrates the “benefits of maintaining the color line and how Black women behaved under White control.”¹⁸² Hence, the narrative of Mammy needs transformation with time.

One such adaptation happens with societal advances during urbanization. Segregation practices at that time restrict Blackwomen employment to only domestics in White homes. Black domestic workers establish bonds and often gain respect from the children in their care; nevertheless, societal expectations ensure these women understand their assigned position of inferiority. The Mammy caricature correlates with domestic work given “[t]hey [Black women] performed many duties of the mythological Mammy but they departed company from her when it came to loyalty to their families and resentfulness at their enforced economic status.”¹⁸³ Unable to gain better employment, the Mammy caricature is “the public face that Whites expect Black women to assume for them.”¹⁸⁴ Blackwomen, though unhappy with these restrictions, endure the challenges often due to financial necessity.

The exploitation of Black womanhood maintains capitalistic interest. White economic structures in America wield power to protect continuous exploitation of Black

¹⁸⁰ Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 73.

¹⁸¹ Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*, 31.

¹⁸² Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*, 39.

¹⁸³ Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*, 35.

¹⁸⁴ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 73.

womanhood and Aunt Jemima serves as one of the early adaptations of the Mammy image for economic gain. The Pearl Milling company borrows the Aunt Jemima character¹⁸⁵ and employs a former slave from Kentucky, Nancy Green, to travel the nation marketing their pancake mix.¹⁸⁶ The sinister nature of the Aunt Jemima marketing reiterates beliefs about Blackwomen as subordinate domestic workers, an object of possession for profit. Townes writes:

The ads removed White female domestic labor and replaced it with Black labor—Aunt Jemima—a ‘real’ person and slave. Subtly or otherwise, the ads suggested that although White women could not have Aunt Jemima in the kitchen (or any other hired servant), they could mimic the lifestyle of a southern plantation mistress—they could *possess* Aunt Jemima but not *be* Aunt Jemima. As advertisers reconstructed an idyllic South, they also gave White housewives the ability to reconstruct their worlds.¹⁸⁷

Companies successfully utilize versions of the Mammy caricature to sell a variety of household items to such an extent that Aunt Jemima eventually morphs into trademarked items visible in many White households.¹⁸⁸ Syrup bottles, ash trays, salt and pepper shakers, beverages, dolls and other items bear her likeness. Marketing campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s tailor the image of Aunt Jemima in efforts to make her less offensive to Blacks given her history,¹⁸⁹ and she remains profitable today as “a product line that

¹⁸⁵ Aunt Jemima is the name of a Mammy character in the Baker and Ferrell minstrel act. See Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*, 36.

¹⁸⁶ Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*, 36-37.

¹⁸⁷ Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*, 41.

¹⁸⁸ Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*, 40.

¹⁸⁹ In the 1970s marketing began depicting her as a plump woman wearing a polka-dot scarf. In the 1980s the scarf was removed, her hair permed, and she could be idealized as a housewife or working woman.

accounts for \$300 million of the Quaker Oats company's \$5.3 billion in annual sales."¹⁹⁰

Aunt Jemima, parading as a Mammy figure, enables White business men to capitalize off of a sanitized version of Black female exploitation into modern times.

The next transformation of Mammy into the Black Matriarch characterization strategically occurs around the same time as the feminist movement. The Black Matriarch stereotype developed as a result of the mid-1960's Moynihan Report from the government regarding Black family life in America. She became a depiction of failed Black motherhood, in the same way as the Moynihan Report blames Black women for poverty, increasing single-parent families, and the criminality amongst Black men. The Black Matriarch characterizes Blackwomen as domineering, single mothers that lead broken Black family units. In other words she is "the Mammy gone bad."¹⁹¹ For this reason the Black Matriarch caricature is interchangeable with the Welfare Queen image.¹⁹² The Welfare Queen myth came to life during the presidential campaign of Ronald Reagan as he exaggerated the story of a Black Chicago woman arrested for welfare fraud.¹⁹³ From this single story developed the myth of welfare exploitation by Blackwomen generally. Collins adds, "[u]sing images of bad Black mothers to explain economic disadvantages links gender ideology to explanations for extreme distributions of wealth that characterize American capitalism."¹⁹⁴ The Black Matriarch/Welfare Queen images have been used to demonize and blame an entire group of women in society based on skin color. This caricature remains detrimental to Black identity because it places

¹⁹⁰ Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*, 42.

¹⁹¹ Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*, 115.

¹⁹² Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*, 116.

¹⁹³ Franklin Gilliam, Jr. "The 'Welfare Queen' Experiment," *Nieman Reports* 53, no. 3 (Summer 1999): 50.

¹⁹⁴ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 76.

blame on Black women and again fails to adequately address systemic injustices that contribute to racial oppression in the U.S. The Mammy image illustrates the intersection of race, gender and class of Black female life in America, which often results in layers of exploitation. Collins shares that this caricature in particular “diverts attention from political and economic inequalities that increasingly characterize global capitalism.”¹⁹⁵ In short, inequities in educational, legal, health care, and other social systems all play a role in the oppression and generational poverty amongst Black people; therefore, Blackwomen should not bear the weight of blame.

An adage proclaims “the more things change, the more they stay the same.” American history uses Mammy to negate the atrocities of slavery and socially acceptable mutations of her allow dismissal of societal factors contributing to further denigration of Black womanhood. Collins suggests, “[c]urrently, while the mammy image becomes more muted as Black women move into more and better jobs, the basic economic exploitation where U.S. Black women make either less for the same work or work twice as hard for the same pay persists.”¹⁹⁶ The reduction of Mammy images still fail to eradicate the practices of embedded ideologies within America. The social constructions of Black womanhood deserve continuous interrogation in order to combat oppressive structures and uproot lasting ideologies.

Jezebel

An alternative depiction of Black womanhood is the caricature of Jezebel. The Jezebel stereotype evolves over time into various depictions of Black womanhood, but central to each subtype is the presumed lascivious nature and promiscuity of Black

¹⁹⁵ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 76.

¹⁹⁶ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 74.

females. From the beginning of captivity, traveling across to the Americas, and on the auction blocks, Black bodies were subject to public spectacle and for consumption. Blackwomen were not given the same liberties of chastity afforded to White females, as they were forced to appear naked and were groped while on auction blocks. The Jezebel stereotype reinforces the sexualized narratives associated with Black femininity.

The Jezebel stereotype also emerges during slavery, but she provides a stark contrast to the Mammy caricature. Her depiction often contains elements the “tragic mulatto” slave imagery. West writes, “Jezebel was often portrayed as a mixed-race woman with more European features, such as thin lips, straight hair, and a slender nose.”¹⁹⁷ The focus of her complexion fades over time and is not as important as her presumed nature. Jezebel is hypersexual and seductive. Her existence provides the explanation for miscegenation as White women blamed her solely, rather than their husbands for the predatory sexual advances of White men during slavery.¹⁹⁸ The Jezebel stereotype evolves over time to other depictions of Black womanhood, but aggression and a hypersexual nature remain central to each subtype.

The characteristics associated with Jezebel expanded to signify ideologies about Blackwomen in general. Black female bodies were sexually deviant and whorish. The nature of this caricature emerged in consumerism when various sexualized products with exposed Black female bodies sold across the nation. Greeting cards, sporting goods, and housewares portraying naked and barely clothed Black women became commonplace in

¹⁹⁷ Carolyn M. West, “Mammy, Sapphire, and Jezebel: Historical Images of Black Women and Their Implications for Psychotherapy,” *Psychotherapy Theory Research and Practice* 32, no. 3 (September 1995): 462, doi: 10.1037/0033-3204.32.3.458.

¹⁹⁸ Patricia Morton, *Disfigured Images: The Historical Assault on Afro-American Women* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1991), 9.

many households.¹⁹⁹ The tragedy is that these depictions did not protect any Black female body. David Pilgrim explains that some of the same items even contained images of adolescent girls with exaggerated butts and breasts which communicated pedophilic messages propositioning with sexual advances.²⁰⁰ These aforementioned products ensured the messages communicated about Black femininity stripped this demographic of humanity, respect, and protection given to other groups of women.

The commodification of Black females also made it to mainstream media. Perhaps one of the most seminal cultural representations of Jezebel emerges with Blaxploitation out of Hollywood. From the early 1970s, this cinema era, produced a flurry of Jezebel characterizations in film and television shows reinforcing the hypersexual and aggressive ideologies associated with Jezebel stereotypes. To keep Jezebel culturally relevant way and acceptable by the masses, Jezebel morphs into the “bad Black girl” stereotype. Jewell adds, “[t]he bad-black girl is depicted as alluring, sexually arousing and seductive. She fulfills the sex objectification requirement of White womanhood, although she is portrayed as a less naive, more worldly seductress.”²⁰¹ For example, Pam Grier, infamous for her role of Foxy Brown, becomes a cultural icon for exacting revenge on her White male co-stars via sexual encounters. The danger of blaxploitation is this consumeristic evil never dies, rather it provides various spinoffs for the Jezebel caricature to evolve, often including the participation of some Black actors, writers, and artists. Blaxploitation created the opportunity for Black women to leave the

¹⁹⁹ David Pilgrim, “The Jezebel Stereotype,” in Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia (Big Rapids, MI: Ferris State University, 2012), <https://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/jezebel/>.

²⁰⁰ Pilgrim, “The Jezebel Stereotype,” <https://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/jezebel/>.

²⁰¹ Jewell, *From Mammy to Miss America and Beyond*, 32.

stereotypical movie roles of mammy and the tragic mulatto; however, Pilgrim cautions, the reality remained primarily White male producers and directors controlled these voyeuristic accounts of Black life.²⁰²

Following suit Jezebel mutates again, this time during the hip hop era. The “hoochie” image becomes a contemporary representation of “deviant Black female sexuality”²⁰³ and it exudes virulent misogyny worse than the historical Jezebel. Made popular by hip hop rap group 2 Live Crew, the depiction of Black women as hoochies gives credence to the denigration of Black women. According to Collins, society denotes the various categorizations of hoochie. She writes:

one category consisted of “plain hoochies” or sexually assertive women who can be found across social classes. Women who wear sleazy clothes to clubs and dance in a “slutty” fashion constitute “club hoochies.” These women aim to attract men with money for a one-night stand. In contrast, the ambition of “gold-digging hoochies” lies in establishing a long-term relationship with a man with money. These gold-digging hoochies often aim to snare a highly paid athlete and can do so by becoming pregnant. Finally, there is the “hoochie-mama” popularized by 2 Live Crew, an image that links the hoochie image to poverty. As 2 Live Crew points out, the “hoochie-mama” is a “hoodrat,” a “ghetto hoochie” whose main purpose is to provide them sexual favors. The fact that she is also a “mama” speaks to the numbers of Black women in poverty who are single parents

²⁰² Pilgrim, “The Jezebel Stereotype,” <https://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/jezebel/>.

²⁰³ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 81.

whose exchange of sexual favors is motivated by their children's economic needs.²⁰⁴

Through this mutation of this version of the Jezebel, Black culture joins in the denigration of Blackwomen. Although White male executives control the music industry, Black men and women joined the sexist assaults against Black females for financial compensation. Jezebel morphs into the “freak” as a representation of her insatiable sexual appetite, which Collins adds is linked to her “deviant female sexualities” such as prostitution, homosexuality, and “freaky” sexual acts such as oral and anal sex.²⁰⁵ In contemporary times, Jezebel continuously transforms to satisfy her sexually aggressive nature in negative ways.

In summation, the representation of Jezebel leveraged depictions of Blackwomen as hypersexual to rob Blackwomen of sexual agency and to legitimize the sexual violence they have been subjected to throughout history. The Jezebel stereotype commodifies the Black female body as a source of pleasure and profit for men in society and disregards her voice when she speaks out against such characterizations. The caricature remains detrimental to future generations of Black girls and women because it leaves them vulnerable to the sexual whims, abuse, and economic exploitation of men who are left unaccountable.

Sapphire

The Sapphire caricature is the depiction of Blackwomen as loud, aggressive, and emasculating. Society employs her to negate a sense of strong Black womanhood although few may see her as subversive and empowering. Sapphire asserts her agency

²⁰⁴ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 82-83.

²⁰⁵ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 84.

and demonstrates her inability to be controlled. As a result, “Sapphire is a dangerous woman because she is not devoted to Whites and cannot be controlled by men. She does not live in the White world as the trustworthy loyal Mammy. In fact, she does not relate to Whites at all if she so chooses. Her relationships are primarily Black and her concerns are found solely within the Black community in which she resides.”²⁰⁶ However, this fact becomes the very avenue to launch an attack on Black womanhood. Sapphire, “was head-strong and opinionated. She was loud-mouthed, strong-willed, sassy, and practical. The Sapphire stereotype made her husband look inferior, and in doing so, her image set detrimental standards for the Black family.”²⁰⁷

Her popularity began with the “Amos ‘n’ Andy” show, an auditory minstrel show that later turned into a situational comedy featuring “network television’s first all-[B]lack cast.”²⁰⁸ On the show, the character Sapphire Stevens is often featured belittling her husband for his failed business schemes and lack of intelligence. Sapphire’s characterization is not only an affront to Black women, but also presumes disparaging narratives about Black men. Sapphire is distinctive from the other Black female caricatures, Jewell explains, because she:

necessitates the presence of an African American male. When the Sapphire image is portrayed it is the African American male who represents the point of contention, in an ongoing verbal dual between Sapphire and the African American male. Her sheer existence is predicated upon the presence of the corrupt African American male whose lack of integrity, and use of cunning and trickery provides

²⁰⁶ Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*, 63.

²⁰⁷ Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*, 61.

²⁰⁸ The “Amos ‘n’ Andy” remained a radio show from 1928-1960 and is later adapted into television show by Columbia Broadcasting Systems (CBS) network from 1951-53.

her with an opportunity to emasculate him through her use of verbal put-downs. In doing so, Sapphire demonstrates her virtues and morals compared to those of her mate as she exposes the lack of virtues and morals in the African American male. The most notable characteristic of Sapphire is her sassiness which is exceeded only by her verbosity. She is also noted for telling people off, and spouting her opinion in an animated loud manner. Because of her intense expressiveness and hands-on-hip, finger-pointing style, Sapphire is viewed as comedic and is never taken seriously. She usually has an ally, another African American woman who shares many of the same characteristics.²⁰⁹

The “Amos ‘n’ Andy” show pushes the Sapphire character before a national audience, and in time situational comedies became the platform for her continued depictions. Sapphire makes her routine appearance in these shows where she is portrayed as boisterous and overbearing. Television executives used situational comedies as the preferred method, and given “her intense expressiveness and hands-on-hip, finger-pointing style, Sapphire is viewed as comedic and is never taken seriously.”²¹⁰ She remains a prominent caricature in twenty-first century television and media.

Modern characterizations of Sapphire are Pamela (Pam) James from *Martin* and Rochelle Rock from *Everybody Hates Chris*, both roles played by the actress Tichina Arnold. On both television shows, Arnold portrays the wise-cracking, domineering, and stereotypically rude Blackwoman that unleashes her anger on others especially the male

²⁰⁹ Karen Sue Jewell, *From Mammy to Miss America and Beyond: Cultural Images and the Shaping of U.S. Social Policy* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 32.

²¹⁰ Jewell, *From Mammy to Miss America and Beyond*, 32.

characters.²¹¹ The Pam character strays a little from the original conceptualization of Sapphire, as her character is the single best friend Gina, the other lead female character on the show. Yet, the Sapphire behavior shines through during most episodes where viewers witness the insult-laden exchange between Pam and Martin. On the contrary, the Rochelle character from *Everybody Hates Chris* depicts Arnold as an intimidating mother and wife, and the one who really controls her household. The unfortunate reality is that although these television shows were either created or produced by people of color, like many contemporary Black shows they also perpetuate the negative stereotypes associated with Black womanhood.

The characterization of Sapphire evolved beyond the situational comedies into an ideology that infiltrated board rooms, universities, and the political arena. Sapphire, as a result, evolved into the “angry Black woman” descriptor, which is frequently used as an affront to assertive Blackwomen. In contemporary depictions of Sapphire “[s]he is cold, hard, evil. And she is usually correct in her assessments and on point with her critiques. She is a walking, talking, thinking dialectic.”²¹² These modern-day jabs assault highly intelligent and accomplished Black women in efforts to minimize their influence. Pilgrim retorts, “indeed, [B]lack women who express any dissatisfaction and displeasure, especially if they express the discontentment with passion, are seen and treated as Sapphires. The Sapphire name is slur, insult, and a label designed to silence dissent and critique.”²¹³ The media coverage of Mrs. Michelle Obama is indicative of such a trend. Assuming the role of America’s First Lady presents its challenges, but the pressure

²¹¹ David Pilgrim, “The Sapphire Caricature,” in Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia (Big Rapids, MI: Ferris State University, 2012), <https://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/jezebel/>.

²¹² Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*, 61.

²¹³ Pilgrim, “The Sapphire Caricature,” <https://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/jezebel/>.

mounted substantially when history was made as the first ever Black First Family assumed leadership of the nation. Pilgrim writes,

Michelle Obama challenges the scripts that many Americans have for African American women. She is the antithesis of the Mammy caricature...Michelle Obama is a Harvard-trained attorney, a conscientious mother, physically attractive, and she critiques and challenges the culture. She also does not fit the Jezebel image or its modern variant: the butt-shaking Hoogie Mama—though Fox News tried to imply this when they referred to her in text as Senator Obama’s ‘Baby Mama.’ Michelle Obama is not a Tragic Mulatto; she’s a dark-skinned woman actively involved in civil rights and community activism. The so-called Tragic Mulatto was ashamed of her African heritage; Michelle Obama embraces her African American heritage and expresses her dissatisfaction with racial injustice.²¹⁴

Mrs. Obama suffered assaults to her character and identity as Blackwoman on a national level; yet, she found ways to challenge the negativity and assert her own truth. During a 2018 College Signing Day speech, she subversively owned the “forever First Lady” moniker given to her in order to encourage the high school seniors to dream big and make the most of their collegiate opportunities.²¹⁵

The social norms and responsibilities connected to her position as First Lady limited how she could address the racist and sexist attacks she faced during the presidency. She has become more candid since leaving the White House about her

²¹⁴ Pilgrim, “The Sapphire Caricature,” <https://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/jezebel/>.

²¹⁵ Lee Moran, “Michelle Obama Embraces ‘Forever First Lady’ Nickname, Sends Students into Meltdown,” *Huffington Post*, May 3, 2018, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/michelle-obama-first-lady-temple-university_n_5aead1c5e4b022f71a05678f.

experiences, including criticism for being an “angry Black woman.” In a recent Essence Festival interview with “CBS This Morning” co-host Gayle King, Mrs. Obama recounted the trope that was leveraged against her in the early days on the campaign trail to depict her as emasculating and detrimental to her husband’s political success.²¹⁶ Additionally, the strategy intensified as she gained popularity in the media and concerted bipartisan efforts to squash her influence centered on what she declared a source of American fear, “the strength of a Black woman.”²¹⁷ Perhaps the most significant and telling reflection of her experiences as a Blackwoman and as the first Black First Lady came from her assertion that:

I knew that it was up to me that I knew that I wouldn’t get the benefit of the doubt. I wouldn’t get the benefit of being treated as the gracious honored First Lady...I would have to earn my grace. I knew that very clearly and I knew that I would have to quickly define myself...I want all young girls out there to know because we all struggle with that people of color, working class folks, women, women of color. Where people work to try to define us in a negative way before we get out there and we get a chance to write our own stories. And it happened to yes, me too, Michelle Obama. But it is our job to tell our own stories. So I knew I had to come in rolling up my sleeves ready to work. I had to prove that not only

²¹⁶ CBS News, “Michelle Obama Talks Relationships, Time in the White House and What She Tells Her Daughters,” July 7, 2019, <https://www.cbsnews.com/live-news/michelle-obama-interview-gayle-king-exclusive-with-former-first-lady-live-stream-2019-07-07/>. Also see Mychal Massie, “Michelle Obama: Angry Black Harriidan,” Commentary, *WorldNetDaily*, February 26, 2008, <https://www.wnd.com/2008/02/57312/>.

²¹⁷ CBS News, “Michelle Obama Talks Relationships, Time in the White House and What She Tells Her Daughters,” <https://www.cbsnews.com/live-news/michelle-obama-interview-gayle-king-exclusive-with-former-first-lady-live-stream-2019-07-07/>.

was I smart and strategic, but I was going to work harder and faster and better and stronger than any First Lady in history. And I had to do that.²¹⁸

Mrs. Obama explained during the presidency pressure mounted to always be fully present, perform at levels above perfection, and lead without scandal, primarily due to double standards and contrived narratives about Blackness and the Black identity. Mrs. Obama eloquently clarified the realities of many Blackwomen, especially high powered and successful Black women.

In summation, the representation of Sapphire leveraged depictions of Black women as rude, bitter, and aggressively angry usually to distract from the underlying reasons of their frustration. The Sapphire caricature employs a doubly productive tool for maintaining ideologies of Black inferiority given she is paired with a lazy, unintelligent, or scheming Black man. In the cases where she is depicted alongside a successful Black man, such as is the case with Mrs. Michelle Obama, further attempts are made to diminish her intelligence, femininity, beauty, and aggressiveness. Other politicians such as Senator Kamala Harris and Congresswomen Maxine Waters and Ayanna Pressley also fall prey to this inherently racist and sexist trope. This caricature remains detrimental to future generations of Black girls and women who are passionate about social justice activism, are career oriented, or desire political success because it seeks to silence their agency, self-awareness, and critically needed voice in society.

Key Movements of the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries

²¹⁸ CBS News, “Michelle Obama Talks Relationships, Time in the White House and What She Tells Her Daughters,” <https://www.cbsnews.com/live-news/michelle-obama-interview-gayle-king-exclusive-with-former-first-lady-live-stream-2019-07-07/>.

Negative characterizations of Blackness remain only half of the story told within American society. Black bodies undermine further victimization by resisting these oppressive narratives. Loving the Black body, reclaiming Blackness, and flaunting an audacious self-love translates into the ultimate act of resistance. Understandings of Blackness, as with other symbols within society, are subjected to the fluidity of meanings from outsiders as well as understandings from the Black community itself. Until now the chapter chronicles societal definitions of Blackness and Black womanhood; however, despite these attacks Blacks found ways to embrace a radical sense of self-worth and identity to rise above the negative stereotypes and living conditions. A deep sense of spirituality travels across the oceans with the enslaved Africans, passes down through generations in their new homeland, and becomes the basis for Black resiliency. The next chapter addresses spirituality, but the remainder of this chapter focuses on key movements in Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries that help Black people fight White, patriarchal hegemony and re-define Black identity.

The Harlem Renaissance

The Harlem Renaissance Era took place from 1918 through the 1930s and represents the flourishing of Black people in literature and the arts during that time. The Harlem Renaissance occurred alongside what is known as the Roaring Twenties in America.²¹⁹ It is often referred to as “the New Negro Movement,” and the meaning is

²¹⁹ The Roaring Twenties highlights the time in American history when the women’s suffrage movement and prohibition are gaining steam. American society experienced changes as women finally exercised their right to vote beginning in 1920 and demonstrated liberation in their physical appearance, social customs of drinking and smoking, and sexual agency. The prohibition of the manufacture and sale of liquor gained support from the focus on temperance within the Methodist and Holiness movements at the close of the previous century. The Methodist and Holiness movements will be discussed in greater detail in the subsequent chapter.

two-fold. Firstly, the North—Harlem in particular, underwent transformation as many Blacks migrated from the South and Black culture was booming. The “Great Migration” from 1916 through 1919 increased Black population²²⁰ in major cities as many relocated to Northern cities. At times Black men found better opportunities in factories while Blackwomen primarily found domestic work. Racism prevented many Blacks from advancing despite credentials or skill; however, Blacks responded to racial injustices with new articulations of Blackness. The “New Negro” ideology emerged as a result and depicts the new attitude of Blacks proud of their racial heritage and willing to combat the narrative of Black inferiority.²²¹

Secondly, the Harlem Renaissance remained significant for creating a paradigm shift within the Black community. Various arenas in the Black community celebrated Black achievements, redefined conceptualizations of Blackness, and addressed the societal injustice of daily Black life in America.²²² Black artistic expression and intellectual thought were equally significant to the Harlem Renaissance. James Weldon Johnson penned “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” a song that later became the “Negro National Anthem,” jazz music emerged, and music legends in the Black community performed in concerts and musicals on Broadway, throughout the U.S. and Europe.²²³ Also at this time Black artists began using Black subjects regularly in various art mediums and organizations such as the Harmon Foundation formed to promote and assist Black artists.²²⁴ Literary works were critical to the Harlem Renaissance. Poet Langston

²²⁰ African Americans as well as thousands of African immigrants transplant in the North. See Nell Irvin Painter, *Creating Black Americans: African-American History and its Meanings, 1619-Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 174-75.

²²¹ Painter, *Creating Black Americans*, 173.

²²² Nathan Irvin Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance* Updated ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 5.

²²³ Painter, *Creating Back Americans*, 190-91.

²²⁴ Painter, *Creating Back Americans*, 195.

Hughes, novelist and anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston, and intellectual scholar Carter G. Woodson helped reclaim a sense of Black pride through their intellectual abilities. Hurston gained acclaim for folklorist novels that interrogated the tragedies and triumphs of Black people in the South, especially Blackwomen. Hurston used novels to critique the treatment of Blackwomen in society, both outside and inside of the Black community. The writings of Hurston paved the way for the next generation of Black women writers. Additionally, organizations such as the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), under the leadership of Marcus Garvey, incited hope for Black unity and for connecting the people of the diaspora with Africa.²²⁵ All these expressions of Black life added to the depth of this time in history. The Harlem Renaissance empowered Blacks to give voice to their lived experiences and to proudly embody the beauty of Blackness.

Civil Rights Movement and Black Power

The affirmation of Blackness and the Black identity, once again, becomes the context in the fight for social justice in modern America. The Civil Rights Movement (CRM) chronicled the strategic fight for equal rights and treatment of Black citizens within America during the 1950s and 1960s. The movement encompassed a series of events and legislation; however, for the sake of this dissertation a brief overview of the movement is given with attention to seminal points. The landmark *Brown v. Board of Education*²²⁶ case served as the initial catalyst for change in May of 1954. The ruling

²²⁵ Painter, *Creating Back Americans*, 188.

²²⁶ Thurgood Marshall argued the *Brown v. Board of Education*, which was a combination of five separate cases against school boards regarding segregation, before the US Supreme Court. For more see, Robert Cottrol, Raymond Diamond, and Leland Ware, *Brown V. Board of Education: Caste, Culture, and the Constitution* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2003).

from this US Supreme Court case overturned the previous *Plessy v. Ferguson*²²⁷ case and ruled in favor of public school desegregation.²²⁸ The new law becomes a large victory over the restrictive and subpar treatment the endured under Jim Crow. The following year tensions remained high particularly in the South. During the summer of 1955, Emmett Till, a young Black teenager visiting his extended family in Mississippi, allegedly whistled at a White woman, which resulted in his murder. Mamie Till-Mobley, his mother, chose an open casket viewing and permitted published photos of his corpse in a national Black magazine for the world to witness the atrocities of Southern racism. Later in the same year Rosa Parks²²⁹ became another hallmark of the Civil Rights Movement when she refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery bus. The arrest of Rosa Parks fueled the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which lasted over a year until segregation on buses is made a constitutional violation. In September 1957, nine students, known as the Little Rock Nine, integrated Central High School in Arkansas despite the use of the National Guard to dissuade integration. Shortly after President Eisenhower signed the Civil Rights Act of 1957 that enabled federal prosecution for voter suppression and created the Civil Rights Division in the Justice Department.

The decade of the Sixties represented very turbulent times for the movement. Two key streams guided the movement under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King,

²²⁷ The *Plessy v. Ferguson* Supreme Court ruling approves the segregation of public schools as long as they are equal.

²²⁸ C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*, 3rd ed., (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1994), 247.

²²⁹ Rosa Parks was not the first Black person to refute the segregation laws on public transportation. Montgomery teenager, Claudette Colvin, is first to challenge segregation laws facing arrest nine months prior to Rosa Parks. Colvin was inspired by her segregated school experience despite ostracism in the community ostracized. Later, she became pregnant, which may add to the reason she was not chosen as the face for the movement. See Margot Adler, "Before Rosa Parks, There Was Claudette Colvin," *National Public Radio, Inc.* <https://www.npr.org/2009/03/15/101719889/before-rosa-parks-there-was-claudette-colvin>.

Jr. and Malcolm X. King, a Baptist preacher, became synonymous with the non-violent, civil disobedience wave of the Civil Rights Era. Young people, particularly college students lead the way with non-violent protests and demonstrations. In Greensboro, North Carolina students from a local college staged one of many sit-ins at a segregated lunch counter in early 1960. College students in other cities followed and subjected themselves to physical and verbal abuse in attempts to desegregate public places. Malcolm X offered an alternative to King, with the militant philosophy “by any means necessary” to secure civil rights for Black people. Malcolm converted to the Nation of Islam while in prison and rose through the ranks of leadership. The Nation of Islam²³⁰ appealed to many Blacks because it confronted American racism with an empowering message of “[B]lack self-confidence through self-help and self-development.”²³¹ The most convincing lure for conversion to Islam was “personal rebirth.”²³² As a byproduct of conversion, a new way of Black Nationalism now enabled members to reclaim the true identity and power of Blackness. Many members chose to change last names in a symbolic shedding of old identity replaced with a new name denoting new identity. The Nation of Islam recruited from all arenas of Black life—even those considered taboo such as prisons, jails, barber shops, and on the street corners. This strategy helped repair parts of the Black community.²³³

The peak of the movement arrived during the March on Washington, DC for Civil Rights in August of 1963, when Dr. King delivered his “I Have a Dream Speech,” which

²³⁰ The formal name is The Lost Found Nation of Islam in the Wilderness of North America. See Vilbert L. White, Jr., *Inside the Nation of Islam: A Historical and Personal Testimony by a Black Muslim* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2001), 3.

²³¹ Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*, 258.

²³² Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*, 104.

²³³ Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*, 106.

presented a vision of a unified America triumphant over racism.²³⁴ The Civil Rights Act of 1964, under President Johnson, formally ended segregation and granted equal protection under the law against racial, nationality, or gender discrimination by employers.²³⁵ Malcolm eventually left the Nation of Islam; however, his assassination in 1965 dealt a gut wrenching blow to many radical Blacks. He represented one of the great leaders in the fight for civil rights and Black Nationalism. On the heels of Malcolm's assassination, "Bloody Sunday"²³⁶ occurred along the historic march from Selma to the capital in Montgomery. During this event civil rights activists faced mob violence and police intimidation in the fight. Victory came some time later with the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which prohibited discriminatory practices such as poll taxes or literacy tests as obstructions to voting. The climatic wound to the Civil Rights Movement was the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. on April 4, 1968. King travelled to Memphis, Tennessee to speak at an event for sanitation workers, when he was fatally shot while standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel.

The Civil Rights Movement ushered in an era of Black Power. Black Power became the rally cry of the 1960s and 1970s African American history. As implied by its name, the emphasis during this time was on economic uplift and the celebration of Blackness. The anthem from James Brown, "Say It Loud: I'm Black and I'm Proud," summed up the philosophy of Black Power. Blacks proudly owned their Blackness and

²³⁴ Martin Luther King, Jr., and James M. Washington, *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 217-20.

²³⁵ The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (E.E.O.C) is created from bill with the purpose of ending employment discrimination.

²³⁶ Bloody Sunday takes place on March 7, 1965. Bloody signifies the brutal attack at the hands of local and state police, who used tear gas, nightsticks, and bullwhips against march participants. See Peter B. Levy, ed., *The Civil Rights Movement in America: From Black Nationalism to the Women's Political Council* Movements of the American Mosaic (Santa Barbara, California: Greenwood, 2015), PDF e-book, p. 43-46.

the resurgence of trends such as the Afro and dashikis fabric became staples of Black representation. Blacks also gained a sense of empowerment through community organizations such as the Black Panther Party. The Black Panther Party (BPP) began in Oakland, California in October 1966 by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale. The group advocated for Black independence on the basis “that all blacks in America are ‘colonialized’ and oppressed by the white establishment.”²³⁷ The Black Panther Party became known for “its confrontational methods of ‘policing the police’ via community patrols of young black men in leather jackets and berets opening bearing loaded weapons.”²³⁸ Such practices caused the organization to be on the radar of local and federal governments as a threat to national security;²³⁹ however, the BPP’s commitment to projects for the economic advancement of Black people often was dismissed. The BPP addressed the physical concerns of Blacks, particularly the poor, through programs such as food drives, free medical and dental programs, and political information via their *The Black Panther* newsletter.²⁴⁰ The disintegration of the BPP was largely effective due to government interference as “the FBI’s COINTELPRO (counter-intelligence program) used informants, disinformation, and rumors to pit Panthers against each other and against other Black organizations.”²⁴¹ The Civil Rights and Black Power movements addressed racial disparities and promoted Black pride; however, the movements were unable to eradicate racial discrimination. Additionally, neither movement adequately addressed gender inequalities. Civil rights movements often failed to articulate the layered

²³⁷ Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*, 241.

²³⁸ Mary Potorti, “‘Feeding the Revolution’: The Black Panther Party, Hunger, and Community Survival,” *Journal of African American Studies* 21, no. 1 (March 2017): 86, doi: 10.1007/s12111-017-9345-9.

²³⁹ Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*, 241.

²⁴⁰ Painter, *Creating Back Americans*, 297.

²⁴¹ Painter, *Creating Back Americans*, 295.

dimensions of oppression, which is reflective of American society in general. In both, Black communities and the nation, gender discrimination remains pervasive and needs resolutions.

Feminism and Womanism

On the heels of the Civil Rights Movement, American feminists were already witnessing the second wave of revival. Feminism originated in late nineteenth century France by women's rights activist; however, in the early part of the twentieth century feminism emerges in the U.S. to address various injustices.²⁴² Organizations including the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the National American Women's Suffrage Association, and the National Association of Colored Women challenged voting discrimination, working conditions within factories, in addition to the promotion of temperance and alcohol prohibition.²⁴³ During the 1850s women's rights conventions convened throughout the North, and despite opposition successfully gained access to education, property ownership, and wage control.²⁴⁴ Freedman highlighted the irony of the feminist movement in that it has its origins during the abolition movement, yet these groups routinely failed to allow Blackwomen as members.²⁴⁵ Sojourner Truth addressed the hypocrisy of the movement in 1851 as she posed the question "Ain't I a woman?" at a Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio.²⁴⁶ The experiences of Truth, and many other Blackwomen of that time, point to the reality that they did not receive the same

²⁴² Kathleen C. Berkeley, *The Women's Liberation Movement in America* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 6.

²⁴³ Berkeley, *The Women's Liberation Movement in America*, 6.

²⁴⁴ Estelle B. Freedman, *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2002), 54.

²⁴⁵ Freedman, *No Turning Back*, 76-77.

²⁴⁶ Richard W. Leeman and Bernard K. Duffy, eds., *The Will of a People: A Critical Anthology of Great African American Speeches* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2012), 42.

benefits and protection granted to White women. Racial discrimination created divisions in the early stages of the movement, yet some Blackwomen identify as feminist.

Historically in the fight to secure women rights, White women failed to confront the compound racialized gender discrimination Blackwomen face.²⁴⁷ The same critique can be applied to racial equality movements, under predominately Black male leadership, which challenged racial injustice as a whole while dismissive of sexist practices within society and the Black community. These complexities illustrated the reality that Blackwomen face oppression at the hands of men—both White and Black, but additionally faced discrimination from White women.²⁴⁸ As a result, the layered oppression Blackwomen face at the intersections of gender and race were never fully addressed.

Black feminists during the 1960s and 1970s spoke to the intersections of Black womanhood. The National Black Feminists Organization (NBFO) joined the fight for racial and gender equality in 1973. As a group, they rejected “the perception of the Women’s Movement as solely white and their involvement in it as being disloyal to the race.”²⁴⁹ From the NBFO, a more radical feminist organization, The Combahee River Collective, emerged. The Combahee Collective pens “The Black Feminist Statement” in 1977, which asserted, “sexual politics under patriarchy is as pervasive in Black women’s lives as are the politics of class and race. We also often find it difficult to separate race from class from sex oppression because in our lives they are most often experienced

²⁴⁷ Berkeley, *The Women’s Liberation Movement in America*, 6.

²⁴⁸ Cannon, *Katie’s Canon*, 50.

²⁴⁹ Beverly Guy-Sheftall, “African American Women: The Legacy of Black Feminism,” in *Sisterhood is Forever: the Women’s Anthology for a New Millennium*, ed. Robin Morgan (New York: Washington Square Press, 2003), 183.

simultaneously.”²⁵⁰ The Black feminist movement spoke to issues specific to Black womanhood. Prominent Black intellectuals such as bell hooks, Jacqueline Grant, and Angela Davis adopted the designation of Black feminist; however, others preferred a term that sufficiently addressed the intersections of gender, race, class. One such term, womanism, has been able to articulate the unique and diverse plights of the Black womanhood in America.

The previous chapter outlined the ideological underpinnings of womanism as rooted in the responses that arise from the intersections of Blackwomen’s layered oppression. Floyd-Thomas also adds, “a common understanding of a womanist is that she is a Black woman committed to defying the compounded forces of oppression (namely, racism, classism, sexism, and heterosexism) that threaten her self-actualization as well as the survival of her community.”²⁵¹ The first generation of womanists gave voice to the lived experiences of Blackwomen, but the successive generations of womanists reflect on these experiences and call forth transformative practices in response to these realities. Layli Maparyan expounds: “the proverbial ‘changing of hearts and minds’ is the basic womanist modus operandi. Changed hearts and minds then create and sustain different physical, material, institutional, and ecological structures.”²⁵² Womanism is as concerned with dismantling the theories that reinforce oppression as it is with eradicating the practices and systems of injustice within society. The primacy of Blackwomen’s experience provides the parameters to explore and offer correctives to the oppression of

²⁵⁰ The Combahee River Collective, “A Black Feminist Statement,” in *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women’s Studies*, eds. Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith (Old Westbury, NY: The Feminist Press, 1982), 16.

²⁵¹ Floyd-Thomas, *Deeper Shades of Purple*, 3-4.

²⁵² Maparyan, *The Womanist Idea*, 52.

other marginalized groups within society. Womanism, in this manner, becomes distinctive from feminism in general. Looking ahead, chapter four of this project uses these presuppositions about womanism to examine formal theological education and lend both support and critique to theological institutional practices and methods.

Black Lives Matter

Blackwomen demonstrate a gift for articulating the harsh realities Black bodies encounter due to racism and sexism particularly through their writings.²⁵³ Blackwomen's literary tradition enables many writers to shed light on the practical wisdom these characters employ to survive such hostilities. Likewise, womanism and Black feminism provides the framework to critically assess and offer concrete solutions regarding the discrimination and oppression Blackwomen (and men) face. From these voices many contemporary activists can find courage and hope in the continual fight against injustice. Perhaps one of the most prominent articulations that addresses the assault on Blackness in the twenty-first century is the social justice movement named Black Lives Matter.

Black Lives Matter (BLM) develops from the creative genius of Black womanhood in 2013 after the acquittal of George Zimmerman for the murder of Trayvon Martin.²⁵⁴ Alicia Garza, Opal Tometi, and Patrisse Cullors co-founded the organization as

²⁵³ For example, Harriet Jacobs pens the book entitled *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, which illuminates the sexual violence and racism during antebellum slavery. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, by folklorist Zora Neale Hurston, becomes a seminal novel that addresses the suffering of Black women within society as well as at the hands of Black patriarchy. Other Black women writers from these traditions include but are not limited to: Toni Morrison, Maya Angelou, Audre Lorde, Gloria Naylor, Gwendolyn Brooks, Ntozake Shange, Jamaica Kincaid, and Carolyn Rodgers.

²⁵⁴ Trayvon Martin, a 17-year-old unarmed Black teen, was in town staying with his father in the same subdivision George Zimmerman, by self-appointment, participated in the neighborhood watch patrol. Trayvon was returning home from the store when with the infamous pack of skittles candy and Arizona drink, when he was murdered during a confrontation with Zimmerman. Despite objections from the 911 dispatcher Zimmerman confronted Trayvon, in which Trayvon was subsequently murdered.

a response to the anti-Black racism that permeates American society. The co-founders state, “Black Lives Matter is an ideological and political intervention in a world where [B]lack lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise.”²⁵⁵ BLM thus becomes an affirmation of Black humanity, the contributions of Black people to society, and celebration of Black resiliency in the face of often deadly oppression. The assertion that Black lives matter does not mean that only Black lives matter, nor does it mean that Black lives are of greater value than other lives. However, these assumptions are the basis for critiques from opponents of the movement. Cullors responds that the heart of the movement simply means understanding that Black lives matter too;²⁵⁶ hence, the group raises awareness to the deprivation of basic rights and human dignity of Black people within American society. Black Lives Matter has become as one of the leading voices concerning the injustices facing Black and Brown bodies, including but not limited to police brutality.

The fascination with Black Lives Matter as a movement grows exponentially from the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag on social media. The Ferguson, Missouri protests for the murder of Michael Brown²⁵⁷ prove its effectiveness. In less than two weeks, over six hundred people gathered in Ferguson for the protest and strategized about continued activism in their local communities after the Ferguson protest.²⁵⁸ As a result, social media

²⁵⁵ Black Lives Matters Herstory, accessed March 13, 2017, <https://blacklivesmatter.com/herstory/>.

²⁵⁶ Michel Martin, “Labeled a ‘Terrorist,’ A Black Lives Matter Founder Writes Her Record,” *This Week’s Best Stories From NPR Books*, *NPR*, January 27, 2018, <https://www.npr.org/2018/01/27/578980821/labeled-a-terrorist-a-black-lives-matter-founder-writes-her-record>.

²⁵⁷ Michael “Mike” Brown, an 18-year-old unarmed Black teen and recent high school graduate, was killed by police officer Darren Wilson. He was shot dead after verbal confrontation with the police while walking in opposite direction of Wilson. The case sparked national news coverage as several videos released showed his dead body slain in the street for hours.

²⁵⁸ Black Lives Matters Herstory, accessed March 13, 2017, <https://blacklivesmatter.com/herstory/>.

became the driving force for BLM to organize, with chapters in thirty-one cities by the year 2015.²⁵⁹ The movement has attracted participants from all walks of life as intellectual, political, and spiritual leaders joined the movement. It is possible social media could be the benefactor for this since “social media also serve[s] as places where conversations about race intersect with a number of issues, including pop culture, sports and everyday personal experiences.”²⁶⁰ Additionally, many Americans rely on social media as a tool to address societal concerns and garner the support of political and community leaders’ assistance.²⁶¹ BLM deserves credit for using social media as a space for people to join in dialogue regarding social justice issues. The ultimate objective is for this dialogue to create action that offers correctives to structural racism and injustice within present day society.

The early stages of group development enabled leaders to concretize values, vision, and future goals of the organization. BLM is no different. The co-founders opted for “a horizontal ethic of organizing, which favors democratic inclusion at the grassroots level...preference for ten thousand candles rather than a single spotlight.”²⁶² This choice ensured the end goal that social activism achieve widespread impact across the nation

²⁵⁹ Sara Sidner and Mallory Simon, “The Rise of Black Lives Matter: Trying to Break the Cycle of Violence and Silence,” *CNN*, December 28, 2015, <https://www.cnn.com/2015/12/28/us/black-lives-matter-evolution/index.html>.

²⁶⁰ Monica Anderson and Paul Hitlin, “Social Media Conversations About Race: How Social Media Users See, Share and Discuss Race and the Rise of Hashtags Like #BlackLivesMatter,” *Internet & Technology, Pew Research Center*, August 15, 2016, www.pewinternet.org/2016/08/15/social-media-conversations-about-race/.

²⁶¹ Monica Anderson, Skye Toor, Lee Rainie and Aaron Smith, “Activism in the Social Media Age: As the #BlackLivesMatter Hashtag Turns 5 Years Old, a Look at Its Evolution on Twitter and How Americans View Social Media's Impact on Political and Civic Engagement,” *Internet & Technology, Pew Research Center*, July 11, 2018, <http://www.pewinternet.org/2018/07/11/activism-in-the-social-media-age/>.

²⁶² Jelani Cobb, “The Matter of Black Lives: A New Kind of Movement *Found Its Moment. What Will Its Future Be?*,” *Political Scene, The New Yorker*, March 12, 2016, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/03/14/where-is-black-lives-matter-headed>.

simultaneously rather than focused on a concentrated area. Some supporters found the decentralized nature of the movement beneficial for allowing local chapters to advocate for the issues most pressing to their local communities.²⁶³ On the other hand, decentralization of the organization brings criticism from others usually concerning the diverse styles of protest. Most chapters engage in peaceful protest, but sometimes the protests turn physical. Some supporters utilize violence such as destroying property to convey their anger and frustration with current race relations.²⁶⁴ Wong highlights the history of Black civil rights activism in America proves that physical displays of anger more often capture the attention and action of political leaders in society, even when the dialogue is not always positive.²⁶⁵ Most frequently the coverage BLM receives from mainstream news showcases the violent protest, which tends to overshadow the non-violent activism and achievements of other groups in the movement.

Black Lives Matter is not welcome by all in society as some people criticize BLM as hate groups or terrorists²⁶⁶ or dismiss their claims all together. For example, reactionary groups such as All Lives Matter emerged, touting in its messages “colorblindness” and inclusion within society; however, such groups failed to address the systemic injustices present throughout American history as well as to hold practices,

²⁶³ John Eligon, “One Slogan, Many Methods: Black Lives Matter Enters Politics,” *New York Times*, November 18, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/19/us/one-slogan-many-methods-black-lives-matter-enters-politics.html>.

²⁶⁴ Dwayne Wong, “Black Lives Don’t Matter, But Black Anger Does,” *Huffington Post*, December 4, 2017, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/black-lives-dont-matter-but-black-anger-does_us_5a256fc1e4b05072e8b56b22.

²⁶⁵ Wong, “Black Lives Don’t Matter, But Black Anger Does,” https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/black-lives-dont-matter-but-black-anger-does_us_5a256fc1e4b05072e8b56b22.

²⁶⁶ Martin, “Labeled a ‘Terrorist,’” <https://www.npr.org/2018/01/27/578980821/labeled-a-terrorist-a-black-lives-matter-founder-writes-her-record>.

systems, groups, and individuals accountable for oppressive behaviors.²⁶⁷ Blue Lives Matter, another group, supports law enforcement and advocates for stricter punishment of crimes against police officers. It is a critical opponent of the Black Lives Matter movement. One critic, Heather MacDonald, who is the author of “The Ferguson Effect,” dismisses the claim of BLM regarding police brutality and claims that, following Ferguson, police activity has declined yet violent crimes have spiked in many major cities.²⁶⁸ Like MacDonald, critics of BLM readily use Black-on-Black crime statistics to negate the incidences about police brutality. Though these remain two different arguments, this criticism and the violence displayed from some BLM chapters contribute to the negative perception of the movement.

Last year, with the fifth anniversary of the group, two of the co-founders transitioned into other organizations to expand the reach of Black empowerment and activism in society. Garza launched her Black Futures Lab, which works to increase political engagement at all levels within the Black community; and Tometi serves as Executive Directors of the Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI).²⁶⁹ Cullors, the remaining co-founder, explains that BLM will engage in more work on “identity politics” as it moves forward. Considering the current divisions in America, the group must

²⁶⁷ David Smith, “The Backlash Against Black Lives Matter is Just More Evidence of Injustice,” *Politics + Society*, *The Conversation*, October 31, 2017, <http://theconversation.com/the-backlash-against-black-lives-matter-is-just-more-evidence-of-injustice-85587>.

²⁶⁸ Heather MacDonald, “The Ferguson Effect,” *Opinion*, *Washington Post*, July 20, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2016/07/20/the-ferguson-effect/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.b1e7b7ea9966.

²⁶⁹ Britni Danielle, “Black Lives Matter Announces Leadership Change as Co-Founder Alicia Garza Announces New Initiative,” *News*, *Essence Magazine*, February 27, 2018, <https://www.essence.com/news/black-lives-matter-leadership-change/>.

continue the work with respect and honor intersectionality and the layers of identity in in people.²⁷⁰ The notion of identity politics is integral to the group, she adds:

This is why, when we were founding Black Lives Matter, we created a mission statement that explains we are fighting for justice beyond extrajudicial killings of Black people by police and vigilantes and seeks to form a movement that affirms the lives of Black queer and trans folks, disabled folks, Black-undocumented folks, folks with records, women and all Black lives along the gender spectrum. It centers those that have been marginalized within Black liberation movements.²⁷¹

The identity of a person is critically influenced by their gender, race, class, age, sexual orientation, religion and other factors and must be considered when examining the identity of the person and as a nation.

Conclusion

In summation, the fragmentation of Blackness throughout American history is rooted in the denigration of Black bodies for economic profit and success. Black women suffer an additional dimension of oppression because of gender. This chapter examined the contextualized displacement of Black people in the American context. The totality of Black experience, however, cannot be examined without account of the movements and expressions that celebrate the beauty of Blackness. Hence, building upon the introductory chapter of the project, this chapter examined Black femininity considering the tension between oppression and affirmation of Blackness. Blackwomen sometimes echo the self-depreciating narratives about Black femininity consumed via wider culture and the

²⁷⁰ Patrisse Cullors, "Changing the Fabric of America Will Take All of Us," Culture, *Essence Magazine*, May 20, 2017, <https://www.essence.com/culture/patrisse-cullors-black-lives-matter-identity-politics/>.

²⁷¹ Cullors, "Changing the Fabric of America Will Take All of Us," <https://www.essence.com/culture/patrisse-cullors-black-lives-matter-identity-politics/>.

media. Yet, re-membering history showcases Blackwomen continuously finding ways to create spaces to affirm their value, beauty, and resiliency despite the attempts of wider culture to silence or mute their histories. The subsequent chapter utilizes this premise to explore the intersections of race and gender within Pentecostalism in America.

CHAPTER THREE. HOME IN THE SPIRIT: RACE, GENDER, AND PENTECOSTALISM

*Our stories as Black people and as Black women have power...The only thing is we don't often get to see ourselves and we don't hear ourselves because we don't get to control the narrative.*²⁷² -Michelle Obama

*It would be an error to simplistically equate the treatment of female clergy in the Black Church with the church's regard for women. Neither is the acceptance of or resistance to women clergy the definitive marker of the actual power women have in the business and liturgical aspects of congregational life. Women have exercised influence with or without the title 'preacher.'*²⁷³ -Daphne Wiggins

Pentecostalism is one of the fastest growing religious traditions in the world. From its modest beginnings until now Pentecostalism leaves a significant footprint globally. Harvey Cox explains that Pentecostalism is hard to ignore since “in all its varied forms [it] already encompasses over 400 million people...accounting for one in every four Christians. It is also the fastest growing Christian movement on earth, increasing more rapidly than either militant Islam or the Christian fundamentalist sects with which it is sometimes confused.”²⁷⁴ Although Pentecostalism is a little over a century old, its powerful influence is not the result of the founders alone; rather, the context from which it emerges duly influences its wide acceptance around the world. Over 500 million

²⁷² “Michelle Obama Interview at Essence Festival” CBS News. 2019. Accessed July 10, 2019. <https://www.cbsnews.com/live-news/michelle-obama-interview-gayle-king-exclusive-with-former-first-lady-live-stream-2019-07-07/>.

²⁷³ Daphne C. Wiggins, *Righteous Content: Black Women's Perspectives of Church and Faith*. Religion, Race, and Ethnicity (New York: New York University Press, 2005), PDF e-book, 113.

²⁷⁴ Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1995), 14-15.

Pentecostals and charismatic Christians now exist worldwide; Robert Hefner asserts this current number represents more than a quarter of the world's Christians and identifies Pentecostalism as "second only to Roman Catholicism in its demographic girth."²⁷⁵ Though the Pentecostal tradition is relatively young compared to its counterparts, it continues to grow and evolve.

North American Pentecostalism did not emerge from a vacuum; instead it was influenced by the various movements to hit U.S. soil. The previous chapter explored the intersections of gender and race within American society, particularly how these experiences shaped Black womanhood. This chapter builds upon the work in brief examination of the social environment of America during the nineteenth century, which contributed to religious expression. The religious climate then served as the breeding ground for Pentecostal origins, influence, and spread. The chapter chronicles the major waves of American Pentecostalism including the central tenets and practices. The chapter ends with an examination of two key themes of race and gender and underscores the historic schisms and divisions within the early Pentecostal movement. The distinctive nature of Black Pentecostalism, particularly in connection with two predominately Black denominations—the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) and the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, Incorporated (PAW)—offers the framework to explore Pentecostal womanhood and its current challenges. The exploration of racial and gender dynamics within the Pentecostal tradition provide the foundation to delve deeper into the analysis of race and gender, particularly of Pentecostal Blackwomen, and the quest for formal theological education in the subsequent chapter.

²⁷⁵ Robert W. Hefner, ed., *Global Pentecostalism in the 21st Century* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013), 1.

Precursors to American Pentecostalism

By the turn of the twentieth century, as discussed in the previous chapter, America already experiences the abolition of chattel slavery, a Reconstruction era that fails to end racial disparities, and new challenges of urbanization as many people relocate to the cities from rural areas. The religious underpinnings of America, as a result, give way to various religious expressions offering solutions to address and rectify societal problems. American Pentecostalism emerges as a byproduct of the climate of the nation and the influence several forerunning religious traditions. The national influence of Methodism, Revivalism, and the Holiness Movement pave the way for Pentecostalism. It is important to note that these faith traditions have influence outside the North American context; but, for the purposes of the work attention is given as it relates to their expressions within the United States.

Wesleyan Methodism

Wesleyan Methodism provides the framework for the Holiness movement and subsequent Pentecostal movement to begin through its founder, John Wesley. Pentecostal scholar Vinson Synan affirms that John Wesley deserves credit as “the spiritual and intellectual father of the modern holiness and Pentecostal movements, which arose from Methodism in the last century.”²⁷⁶ Wesley brought his personal experiences to the shaping and articulations of the denomination. In fact, several key events in the life of Wesley provide the critical underpinnings of Methodism and its influence on the religious traditions that follow.

²⁷⁶ Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 1.

John Wesley was one of nineteen children born to his father, Samuel Wesley, an Anglican clergyman, and mother, Susanna Wesley. His mother intentionally shaped the intellectual and spiritual formation of her children with her requirements of strict behavioral, spiritual, and academic excellence.²⁷⁷ Waller writes, “[h]er major aim was to get children away from what she called ‘self will’ into a disciplined life where duty to God and to others was paramount.”²⁷⁸ The spiritual discipline she instilled in John became apparent during his collegiate studies. John, per her request, pursued “practical divinity” in his academic studies, which “emphasize[s] personal faithfulness, the quest to understand the will and providence of God, and pious attrition to prayer and good works.”²⁷⁹ The pursuit of practicality led him and his younger brother Charles to create a “Holy Club” at Oxford to practice the spiritual disciplines and evangelistic visits to local prisoners.²⁸⁰ Participation in the “Holy Club” gave rise to his chief theological concern regarding the assurance or certainty of salvation and became paramount in his quest to achieve holiness.²⁸¹ John eventually changed the club name to “the Methodists” to reflect their methodical disciplined lifestyle of weekly fasting, prayer, religious study, societal evangelism, and encounters with supernatural occurrences.²⁸²

The introduction of Methodism into the New World began with his travels to Georgia on a missionary trip. The mission trip was unsuccessful in converting the native

²⁷⁷ Kenneth Cracknell and Susan J. White, *An Introduction to the World of Methodism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 6-7.

²⁷⁸ Ralph Waller, *John Wesley: A Personal Portrait* (New York: Continuum, 2003), 11.

²⁷⁹ Kenneth Cracknell and Susan J. White, *An Introduction to the World of Methodism*, 8.

²⁸⁰ Stephen Tomkins, *John Wesley: A Biography* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 33.

²⁸¹ Kenneth Cracknell and Susan J. White, *An Introduction to the World of Methodism*, 9.

²⁸² Tomkins, *John Wesley*, 34-39.

to his taxing spiritual disciplines.²⁸³ However, an interaction with German Moravian Pietists²⁸⁴ on the journey home transformed him. The Moravian Pietists remained unafraid of death despite the turbulent journey, by which “their assurance of salvation” inspired Wesley to learn more about their faith.²⁸⁵ They drew Wesley in by the emphasis on personal experiences and relationship with God. Tomkins writes:

There were many differences between Moravian religion and Wesley’s English kind. They had a strong hymn-singing tradition, more emotional than the English. They put far more emphasis on experience and feelings in the spiritual life and were keen on extempore prayer and preaching. Above all, there was an emphasis on justification by faith that the English Church had lost. Moravian spirituality was to have an impact on the shape of Methodism.²⁸⁶

Wesley encountered another Moravian missionary back in Europe that prompted him to change his teachings to the assurance of salvation by faith alone.²⁸⁷ Consequently, he held to these beliefs on May 24, 1738, John Wesley experienced conversion during a religious meeting, famously known as the Aldersgate experience, in which he described his “heart [felt] strangely warmed.”²⁸⁸ Wesley still struggled to believe he had attained holiness, or a state of Christian perfection and he experienced a second conversion

²⁸³ Tomkins, *John Wesley*, 56.

²⁸⁴ The Moravian movement is as an offshoot of Pietism. Pietism emerged during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and “stressed the importance of a personal experience of God or ‘new birth’ by the Holy Spirit, over and above what they saw as mere head-knowledge.” See Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 25.

²⁸⁵ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 4.

²⁸⁶ Tomkins, *John Wesley*, 46.

²⁸⁷ Tomkins, *John Wesley*, 58.

²⁸⁸ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 4.

experience during prayer a year later that convinces him. These experiences helped formulate to the doctrinal teachings of Wesleyan Methodism.

The crux of Methodism finds its roots in a personal conversion experience. Drawing from his personal experience, Wesleyan Methodism consists of “two separate phases of experiences for the believer: the first, conversion or justification; the second, Christian perfection, or sanctification.”²⁸⁹ During conversion, one feels or experiences an encounter with God, which creates an awareness of that salvation can only be received and never earned by works. The next step of Christian perfection points to the effects of salvation. The “second blessing” Wesley reiterated, does not make believers totally sinless; but that “the sanctified soul, through careful self-examination, godly discipline, and methodical devotion and avoidance of worldly pleasures, could live a life of victory over sin.”²⁹⁰ Wesley teaches the “second blessing” is a necessary seal for the conversion experience; however, not all Methodists affirmed this doctrine.²⁹¹ Wesleyan Methodism remained central to the discussions of American Pentecostalism.

Methodism shaped the religious fabric of America and garnered such influence by the nineteenth century that it became the majority denomination in America.²⁹² Methodism provided a religious structure for a moral code in society and offered a new form of religious liberation via emotion-filled conversion experiences. It captured an audience amongst the marginalized and poor as a “heart religion,” one that juxtaposed the rigid creedal and liturgical practices in early America.²⁹³ Methodism, Tomkins explains,

²⁸⁹ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 6.

²⁹⁰ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 7.

²⁹¹ George Whitefield, for example, a colleague of Wesley and member of the Calvinist branch of the Methodist societies rejected this teaching. See Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 7.

²⁹² Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 28.

²⁹³ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 10.

“though by no means uniformly, [is] a religion of dream and visions, healing, convulsions, ecstatic worship, exorcisms and messages and guidance from God. Such phenomena were exciting for participants and drew many spectators...much of its audience would come from the lower strata of society. As Methodism spreads its worship services gives way to an onset of revivals in American known as the First Great Awakening.²⁹⁴ These revivals connect with Blacks because it:

unwittingly emphasized key points of convergence between Western Christianity and African traditional religions. For instance, the prevalent belief in a Supreme Being, ancestral veneration, and animism within African traditional religions resembled the Trinitarian belief in the *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost* central to the mainstream Christian doctrine. Moreover, the pietistic style of preaching adopted by Whitefield and other evangelicals had some overt similarities to the forms of “spirit possession” that were commonplace in West African societies. Like their African and African American counterparts—both enslaved and free—the white evangelists and revivalists of the first Great Awakening emphasized singing, emotionalism, physical movement, and rebirth. The practice of total body immersion during baptism in lakes, rivers, and ponds...paralleled West African water rituals.²⁹⁵

Women and Blacks also connect with Methodism early on because “it extended its offer of religious power and autonomy to the ‘dispossessed’, to women, African

²⁹⁴ These mass revivals occur during the 1730’s and 1740’s when itinerant preachers including George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards delivered fiery, extemporaneous sermons and many colonists were converted.

²⁹⁵ Stacey Floyd-Thomas, Juan Floyd-Thomas, Carol B. Duncan, Stephen G. Ray, Jr., and Nancy Lynne Westfield, eds., *Black Church Studies: An Introduction* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007), 6-7.

Americans, and the poor.”²⁹⁶ Methodism often offered a sense of identity, community, and freedom to those who faced oppression and rejection by the wider society. Bearing Wesley’s experiences and contributions in mind, three things from Methodism that paved the way for Pentecostalism are a methodically disciplined lifestyle, the doctrine of the “second blessing,” and the lively worship style.

American Revivalism

Revivalism evolved from the lively worship practices of Methodism and a series of mass revivals. Although the First Great Awakening impacted American culture, the second one marked the onset of Revivalism as a movement.²⁹⁷ A year-long camp meeting in Cane Ridge, Kentucky in the 1800 ushered a “return to widespread popular piety”²⁹⁸ and became known as the Second Great Awakening. Cane Ridge is significant for its draw to multiple denominations and the camp meetings that emerged from it as a lasting trend in society. Historian Richard Shiels explains the camp meeting style was previously common to Methodism; however, this particular revival differed from previous ones in American history since it takes place outdoors, utilized a variety of preachers, and appealed to churchgoers and unchurched participants.²⁹⁹ Camp grounds, which were typically quiet during the day, significantly transformed under the power of God for evening services. These large gatherings included fiery preaching, supernatural phenomena of physical and spiritual healings, which frequently elicited emotional

²⁹⁶ Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 26.

²⁹⁷ J.D. Bowers, s.v. “Revivalism” in *Encyclopedia of the United States in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Paul Finkelman, vol. 3 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2001).

²⁹⁸ Richard Shiels, “America’s Pentecost,” *Cross Currents* 42, no. 1, (1992): 93-94.

²⁹⁹ Shiels, “America’s Pentecost,” *Cross Currents*, 94.

responses from attendees.³⁰⁰ Revivals consisted of lively worship services where many “shouted, jumped, and jerked”³⁰¹ as many experienced conversion.

Three key components of American Revivalism paved the way for the eventual Pentecostal movement: ecumenism, missionary endeavors, and eschatology. Ecumenism, or unity amongst Christian churches, became significant given revivalism infiltrated various denominations, as evident with the Second Great Awakening, which included Methodists and Presbyterians worshipping together. Protestant denominations³⁰² continued fellowshiping together during revivalism and other religious offshoots emerged such as Evangelicalism. Evangelicalism focused on “increased spiritual authority, social reform, and religious conversion.”³⁰³ The emphasis of Christian unity spread to other aspects of social life such as equality with emphasis on race and gender. Given this Revivalism, much like Methodism, appealed to women and Blacks. Charles G. Finney, for example, was a revivalist preacher known to host rivals where he allowed women to lead prayer before mixed-sex audiences.³⁰⁴ Women praying before mixed sex audiences was a taboo, but Finney challenged these practices drawing upon the persuasive power of female influence and leadership. As the “social conscience of the nation” during this time, women rallied for a “spiritual renewal” in order to turn the nation back to God.³⁰⁵ The call for abolition and temperance served as two key agendas

³⁰⁰ Tomkins, *John Wesley*, 71-72.

³⁰¹ James M. Volo, “The Period of Exploitation: Religious Life,” in *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Daily Life in America*, vol. 3 of *The Civil War, Reconstruction, and Industrialization of America, 1861-1900*, ed. Randall M. Miller (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2009), 457.

³⁰² This included Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Episcopalian, Baptist, and Methodist traditions.

³⁰³ Evangelicalism focused on “increased spiritual authority, social reform, and religious conversion.” For more see J.D. Bowers, s.v. “Revivalism” in *Encyclopedia of the United States in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Paul Finkelman, vol. 3 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2001).

³⁰⁴ Volo, “The Period of Exploitation,” 456.

³⁰⁵ Bowers, s.v. “Revivalism.”

to bring about social revival. The anti-slavery focus of many revivalist leaders appealed to many Blacks seeking racial equality and justice within society. Temperance also became crucial to the Holiness movement that intertwined with Revivalism and will be discussed in the next section of the work. The inter-worshipping amongst multi-denominations also created lasting effects on some faith traditions. During the Revivalist era some preachers chose to forgo theological education as preparation for ministry. Many Methodist, in particular, opted to pursue their “call to preach” with their Bible, hymn book, and Book of Discipline using travel preaching as a substitute for formal theological education.³⁰⁶ Perhaps this may serve as the seed for the anti-intellectual vein in Pentecostalism addressed in later parts of this dissertation.

Secondly, commitment to mission work is essential to Revivalism. Toward the turn of the century industrialization created many new issues in American society and urbanization gave rise to problems such as crime, drunkenness, lewdness, and social disorder.”³⁰⁷ Attention to American spirituality now became a point of concern and the Social Gospel emerged to provide a corrective balance within society. The Social Gospel worked toward justice and equality in society and fought to implement a just wage, equitable distribution of wealth, and reasonable working hours.³⁰⁸ It provided a contrast to the capitalistic greed associated with the economic excess of industrialism. Additionally, the Social Gospel advocated for: the total prohibition of alcohol in favor of temperance, pro-marriage and family values, social purity, women’s political and spiritual enfranchisement, and necessary reforms in education, healthcare, housing and

³⁰⁶ Volo, “The Period of Exploitation,” 459.

³⁰⁷ Volo, “The Period of Exploitation,” 622.

³⁰⁸ Volo, “The Period of Exploitation,” 626.

internal church structure.³⁰⁹ It uniquely empowered Christians to their honor social responsibility and challenge unethical practices within urban socialization.

The Social Gospel juxtaposed Social Darwinism ideology³¹⁰ prevalent in society, in efforts to protect the vulnerable and undervalued in society. Missionaries worked to convert people locally and internationally through Biblical teachings and serving the physical needs of the non-believers.³¹¹ Missionary efforts, particularly with the homeless and indigent population, simultaneously spread the gospel and improved society.

Organizations such as the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), the Salvation Army, and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) supported tenets of the Social Gospel by offering housing and programming designed to improve the socioeconomic success of many in society. The Salvation Army worked to combat inequalities and was one of the early groups integrating Blacks into their congregational structures.³¹² The movement provided a theological way for Americans to counter the distinctions amongst classes, yet de jure racism still permeated American culture well into the next century.

The missionary focus of revivalism worked hand-in-hand with the eschatological focus at this time. Premillennialist³¹³ thought influenced many religious traditions and Revivalism focused heavily on eschatology. The nation already experienced the manifestation of God during camp meetings of the Second Great Awakenings, so the next significant event became the anticipation of Christ's imminent return. This teaching

³⁰⁹ Volo, "The Period of Exploitation," 626.

³¹⁰ Social Darwinism builds upon Darwin's survival of the fittest, advocating market forces eventually eliminate the weak in society.

³¹¹ Bowers, s.v. "Revivalism."

³¹² Estrela Alexander, *Black Fire: One Hundred Years of African American Pentecostalism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic, 2011), 77.

³¹³ Premillennialism was the belief in the second return of Christ at the end of the century.

provided the foundation for revivalist preaching and preachers deliver fiery sermons urging non-believers to convert in order to save their souls from eternal damnation. The Pentecostal tradition later builds upon the eschatology focus with their push for global missionary efforts and Biblical restoration via racial unity within community, both of which connect to teachings about the imminent return of Christ.

Holiness Movement

There is a natural blending of Revivalism and the Holiness Movement given they occurred simultaneously during American history and contain similar elements. Two such similarities were teachings on sanctification and holiness. The pursuit for sanctification re-emerged at the end of the Second Great Awakening as Wesleyan doctrine became more applicable to the cultural climate.³¹⁴ Prevalent temperance campaigns and abolitionist efforts already prompted Americans to examine their moral behaviors within society. Conversations around how individuals lived out their beliefs produced opportunities for more teachings linking religious beliefs to concrete practices. The principles holiness living directly connected to the doctrines of sanctification that re-emerged and evolved.

Charles G. Finney, the revivalist preacher previously mentioned, also played a crucial role in the Holiness story. Finney began teaching that Holy Spirit baptism initiated entire and permanent sanctification that reflects in the life of a believer. Finney was revolutionary in “his increasing tendency to identify the ‘baptism of the Holy Spirit’ as a means of entering into entire sanctification.”³¹⁵ Entire sanctification then to empowered

³¹⁴ Jessica Warner, “Temperance, Alcohol, and the American Evangelical: A Reassessment,” *Addiction* 104, no. 7 (2009): 1078, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1360-0443.2009.02616.x>.

³¹⁵ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 15.

Christians to offer their bodies as a sacrifice to God in “total abstinence from sin.”³¹⁶ Entire sanctification did not equate to living a perfection life and never sinning. Anderson cautioned, “[r]ather, it meant perfect trust and consecration that expressed itself in social activism. Finney counseled his converts to join in the fight for good government, Christian education, temperance, abolitionism, and relief of the poor, asserting that the spirit of the Christian ‘is necessarily that of the reformer.’”³¹⁷ His teachings influenced the political culture of this time by addressing spiritual ills as well as advocating for personal transformations that positively impact the society as a whole.³¹⁸ This doctrine of sanctification passes down to the Holiness movement, which is the movement from which Pentecostalism is birth. His contribution earned Finney the title of “the grandfather of Pentecostalism”³¹⁹ by some scholars and his emphasis of a holiness lifestyle reverberate throughout the movement.

Holiness teachings influenced various denominational organizations and an additional key figure in the Holiness movement was Mrs. Phoebe Palmer. Palmer and her husband Dr. Walter, Methodist by affiliation, were drawn to the subject of holiness in the mid-1830s. Phoebe began facilitating “Tuesday Meetings for the Promotion of Holiness” and teaching on the tenets of holiness.³²⁰ She later travelled internationally preaching sermons that “stressed ‘perfection’ (sanctification) as an instantaneous experience for every Christian.”³²¹ The Palmers authored articles and eventually purchased a monthly

³¹⁶ Warner, “Temperance, Alcohol, and the American Evangelical,” 1079.

³¹⁷ Robert M. Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1979), 28-29.

³¹⁸ John Leroy Gresham, Jr., *Charles G. Finney’s Doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), 3.

³¹⁹ Gresham, *Charles G. Finney’s Doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit*, 78.

³²⁰ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 16.

³²¹ Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 26.

publication entitled *The Guide to Holiness*, which nationally circulated articles explaining holiness teachings.³²² The contributions of Phoebe Palmer were significant and common of the influence of women in the early Holiness and Pentecostal traditions despite the presumed subordinate status of women at this time in history.

The promotion of holiness initially worked toward social reform in the area of abolitionism, temperance, and women's rights as well; however, a shift toward conservatism influenced the agenda in society. The Businessmen's Revival of the late 1850s influenced anti-slavery agenda to be silenced in many Holiness groups in efforts to be less political.³²³ Ironically, the Holiness movement from its inception was political because it strove to shrink the gap between the sacred and the secular infiltrating every aspect of life with Christian perfection and teachings. The emphasis on holiness within the Methodist tradition continued but were dampened by the effects of the Civil War. After the war, Methodism led the way in uniting and healing the divided nation using principles of holiness and camp meetings to ignite the spark.

The holiness camp meetings contributed to the formation of the National Holiness Association and by late 1870s and 1880s multiple cities around the nation were hosting national camp meetings predominately at Methodist camp grounds.³²⁴ Black Methodists and Baptist churches joined the movement during this time including prominent Evangelist Amanda Berry Smith. Camp meetings were "bi-racial, interdenominational, and supportive of female leadership."³²⁵ The interdenominational composition of the National Holiness Association affected doctrines that surfaced, some of which were new

³²² Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 18.

³²³ Warner, "Temperance, Alcohol, and the American Evangelical," 1080.

³²⁴ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 26.

³²⁵ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 28.

to Methodism. Extreme measures of radical holiness such “come-outism” ideologies emerged and emphasized refraining from material indulgence and pridefulness as individuals and a church community.³²⁶ Other groups advocated against participation in worldly activities, dress, foods, and medicine and even doctors. Dissentions also arose with groups who opposed the Social Gospel, a movement that initially aligned with the holiness movement on the basis of renewal within the Church and society. Anderson argued, “the Social Gospel was considered another evidence of the overemphasis given “worldly” matters by the Church as a whole. In any event, by the time the Social Gospel was an important force, a portion of the most ardent Holiness believers were already breaking away from the denominations.”³²⁷ These issues ultimately led to the fragmentation of the Methodist tradition and from the National Holiness Association the holiness-Pentecostal tradition was birthed.

By the mid-1890s holiness denominations grew particularly in the Midwestern and rural Southern portion of America. One prominent denomination, the “Fire-Baptized Holiness Church” founded by Benjamin Irwin, who was influenced by the writings of Wesley’s colleague John Fletcher. Fletcher linked “the ‘second blessing’ with an experience of receiving the Spirit”³²⁸ and referenced it as a “baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire.”³²⁹ Irwin sought this baptism and after experiencing it for himself began preaching it to others. His teachings became central to the Holiness movement and many traveled to worship services to experience baptism with fire. Synan adds:

³²⁶ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 36.

³²⁷ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 31.

³²⁸ Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 26.

³²⁹ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 52.

The Fire-Baptized Holiness Church served as an important link in the chain that later produced the modern Pentecostal movement. By teaching that the baptism of the Holy Ghost was an experience separate from and subsequent to sanctification, it laid the basic doctrinal premise of the later movement. It is probable that Charles F. Parham, the man who initiated the Pentecostal revival in Topeka, Kansas, in 1901, received from Irwin the basic idea of a separate baptism of the Holy Ghost following sanctification. Indeed, for a time in 1899, Parham promoted the “baptism of fire” in his *Apostolic Faith* magazine.³³⁰

The Fire-Baptized Holiness Churches also paved the way for other holiness denominations as many sprung up under the moniker of holiness or Pentecostal. One of the most common names for many holiness churches was “the Church of God” with the first one originating in 1880 in Anderson, Indiana under the leadership of D.S. Warner.³³¹ Another significant church under this designation was the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) founded in 1895 by two Missionary Baptist Elders C.H. Mason and C.P. Jones.³³² COGIC later formed into the largest Black Pentecostal denomination and will be discussed in greater detail later.

The “fire baptism” became just one of the distinguishing features of holiness. Many holiness denominations adopted legalistic practices and prohibitions for their adherents. The restrictions varied with denominations but many involved food or eating. Some groups suggested holiness promoted appetite control where items such as tobacco, narcotics, alcohol, coffee, tea, and certain meat were restricted.³³³ The restrictions also

³³⁰ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 59.

³³¹ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 69.

³³² Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 70.

³³³ Warner, “Temperance, Alcohol, and the American Evangelical,” 1079.

extended to daily life. According to Synan, “[m]ost of the groups also denounced lodges, political parties, and labor unions as ‘instruments of Satan.’ Buying life insurance was frowned upon as an indication of lack of faith in God. Divine healing was taught in such a way that it was almost placed on a level with the new birth. The prevailing view was that physical healing for the body was provided ‘in the atonement’ along with salvation for the soul. Medicines were widely believed to be ‘poisons’ dispensed by doctors to the faithless.”³³⁴ Additionally, the demeaning nickname “holy rollers” became synonymous with holiness members, which referenced the physically expressed emotionalism of many holiness worship services.³³⁵ Much of the holiness lifestyle provided the basis for most Pentecostal faith traditions and holiness becomes the denomination which Pentecostalism is birthed and connected.

North American Pentecostalism³³⁶

The historical progression of Pentecostalism in North occurs in three distinctive waves: Classical Pentecostalism, Charismatic Renewal, and Neo-Pentecostalism/Neocharismatic Renewal. The waves serve as a great metaphor to represent the stages of the movement as there is an organic blending of some of the elements of each. Stephenson adds, “the term ‘three waves’ continues to be a helpful heuristic device for orientation to current pentecostal traditions, inasmuch as each of the three waves continue to present in various forms.”³³⁷ The three waves distinguish how

³³⁴ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 81.

³³⁵ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 70.

³³⁶ North American Pentecostalism references the movement within the United States of America. All subsequent references are the same.

³³⁷ Christopher A. Stephenson, “Pentecostal Theology: Retrospect and Prospect,” *Religion Compass* 5, no. 9 (2011): 493. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-8171.2011.00300.x>.

Pentecostalism became global; however, scholars realize the three waves intersect as many groups evolve and change over time.

The diversity of Pentecostalism as a movement voids it of a monolithic expression; however, there are several tenets that distinguish Pentecostalism as a tradition. North American Pentecostalism “was constructed out of the religious currents that most conservative Protestants had dismissed or deemphasized by the advent of the twentieth century: holiness, restorationism, bible prophecy, and healing.”³³⁸ Divine healings, lifestyle practices which emphasized holiness teachings, and eschatology-centric evangelism were coded in the traditions which paved the way, and these same practices became central to the early formation of Pentecostalism. However, the distinctive nature of Pentecostalism was its message to push religious tradition beyond primary religious prescriptions to transformations of the heart and action within society.

Pentecostalism emerges at a unique juncture in American history and the principle of its new message offers hope and direction to the world. Focus on a literal interpretation of the Scriptures prophesying Christ’s imminent return steered the push for a return to a “sanctified” life of holiness set apart from the world, and transformative to wider society. The restoration of unity amongst God’s creation became essential to Pentecostal teachings. Butler adds:

Where nationalism and colonial expansion were the rage, Pentecostal beliefs of xenoglossolalia and glossolalia were embraced not only to bring persons to the knowledge of Christ, but also to bridge the gap between cultures and continents.

³³⁸ David D. Daniels, III, “North American Pentecostalism,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Pentecostalism*, ed. Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. and Amos Yong (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 73.

Where politics and culture sanctioned Jim Crow, immigration policies, and the creation of homelands to house those whose lands had been stolen, Pentecostal practices of worship and missionary activity attempted to bridge the cultural and racial barriers that had been sanctioned by the dominant culture. Pentecostals sought not an earthly kingdom but one that considered the earthly plane in preparation for the promises of heaven. Where custom and culture dictated that women were not able to vote and that they were not equal to men, Pentecostal belief embraced the belief that the Spirit had been poured out on all flesh. And in that heady moment, it seemed, Pentecostalism could hold the promise of preparing people for both an internal cleansing and an external cleansing from the pollution of power and corruption.³³⁹

Pentecostalism offered Americans a way of uniting across genders, races and ethnicities for a shared goal, preparing the world for Christ's return. Like the prior religious traditions, Pentecostalism offered solutions to potentially rectify moral and societal ills.

The previous section detailed the Holiness movement in paving the way for Pentecostalism to experience rapid success in American history. The reality is there was a blending of Holiness and Pentecostal movements that connected them along similar veins. According to Anderson:

The immediate origins of the Pentecostal movement are to be found in the nineteenth-century Holiness movement. The outstanding characteristics of the Holiness movement—literal-minded Biblicism, emotional fervor, puritanical mores, enmity toward ecclesiasticism, and above all a belief in a “Second

³³⁹ Anthea Butler, “Pentecostal Traditions We Should Pass On: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly,” *Pneuma* 27, no. 2 (2005): 345.

Blessing” in Christian experience—were inherited and perpetuated by the Pentecostals. Initially a faction within the Holiness camp, the Pentecostal movement drew much of its membership and nearly all of its leadership from Holiness ranks. Except for the issue of speaking in tongues, in the early days there was little to distinguish the Pentecostal believer from his Holiness brethren.³⁴⁰

In short, given these similarities scholars sometimes reference the emergence of the Pentecostal movement as Holiness-Pentecostalism.

On the other hand, the most distinguishing difference of Pentecostalism is the evolution of belief in a “Second Blessing” that originated with Wesley. Holy Spirit inspired tongue speaking, or glossolalia, as evidence of a “Second Blessing,” is one of the distinguishing characteristics of Pentecostalism. Classical Pentecostals “were the first to proclaim that baptism in the Holy Spirit was an experience different than sanctification that empowered them to become witnesses and that it was *necessarily* evidenced by glossolalia.”³⁴¹ The significance of Holy Spirit baptism is that, “to outside observers, speaking in tongues can sound like nonsensical babbling...but pentecostal believers are convinced that speaking in tongues is a special form of communication inspired by God, and they derive profound meaning from the experience.”³⁴²

Speaking in tongues, according to research, fits into two types glossolalia and xenoglossy. Anderson explains, “[t]he term ‘glossolalia’ is used today to refer to both unintelligible vocalization and to the miraculous use of language the speaker has never

³⁴⁰ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 28.

³⁴¹ Stephenson, “Pentecostal Theology,” 491.

³⁴² Douglas Jacobsen, ed., *A Reader in Pentecostal Theology: Voices From the First Generation* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), 3.

learned. To avoid this ambiguity some scholars have limited the use of the term glossolalia to unintelligible vocalization only, and have adopted the term xenoglossy for speaking in a language unknown to the speaker.”³⁴³ Nevertheless, the understanding of tongue speaking is, “[e]very Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal tongue-speaker insists that he is speaking under the control, power, or influence of the Holy Spirit. It is not he himself who speaks, or at least not he alone, but the Holy Spirit who speaks through him or with him. He believes this because he feels himself to be under the control of some power other than his own.”³⁴⁴

Additionally, “[w]hen American Pentecostals use the term glossolalia, they almost always mean xenoglossy, but their claims to xenoglossy are unsupported.”³⁴⁵ It is difficult to determine exactly which language is being spoken given the diversity of languages and tongues globally. However, “[b]y 1909 many Pentecostals were becoming skeptical of missionary tongues, at least as a widespread phenomenon. Tongues—now primarily understood as glossolalia—served as proof of one’s reception of Holy Spirit baptism and, with the assistance of a divinely inspired interpreter, carried a message of hope and assurance to individual congregations.”³⁴⁶ Within Pentecostalism understandings of tongue speaking vary, “but most agree that the baptism of the Spirit is a distinct and unique inflowing of the Spirit of God that powerfully changes the person who experiences it.”³⁴⁷ The various articulations of the Holy Spirit baptism set the stage for the two stories of Classical Pentecostalism’s origin in America.

³⁴³ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 16.

³⁴⁴ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 12.

³⁴⁵ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 16.

³⁴⁶ James R. Goff, Jr., *Fields White Unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism* (Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press, 1988), 16.

³⁴⁷ Jacobsen, *A Reader in Pentecostal Theology*, 3.

Classical Pentecostalism

Classical Pentecostalism marked the genesis of the Pentecostal movement as a distinct tradition. According to Christopher Stephenson, “first-wave pentecostals started their own denominations, and some existing denominations became pentecostal denominations” as a consequence of many early members leaving Protestant churches or no longer feeling welcomed in their traditions after Holy Spirit baptism.³⁴⁸ Classical Pentecostalism represents traditional denominations such as the Assemblies of God, the Church of God, the Church of God in Christ, the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, and a host of other small denominational organizations. One of the prominent stories linked to Classical Pentecostalism is that of the Azusa Street Revivals, which takes place in 1906 in California. However, the beginning of this era of Pentecostalism linked to the stories of two prominent men. Almost all Classical Pentecostals trace their roots back to two individuals: Charles Fox Parham and William Joseph Seymour, both of whom receive credit with the founding of Pentecostalism. The spiritual formation of each of these leaders influenced their contributions to the tradition.

Charles Fox Parham was born in 1873 Muscatine, Iowa, to German and English parents.³⁴⁹ His spiritual formation began with his experiences as a sickly child. Parham battled a host of ailments including a viral infection as a baby, rheumatic fever, migraines, stigmatism in his eyes, and the lingering effects of these illnesses. One researcher suggested, “[h]is career as a faith healer was predicated upon his own experience with the enemy of disease” as by the age nine, he accepted his call to ministry

³⁴⁸ Stephenson, “Pentecostal Theology,” 490.

³⁴⁹ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 47.

after having rheumatic fever.³⁵⁰ He developed a close relationship with his mother, possibly due to his sicknesses, which served as a catalyst for his conversion. Her death during childbirth when he was twelve, prompted him to fulfill his oath to her regarding conversion and preaching soon after.³⁵¹ Parham also vowed to become an African missionary, which pursued academic studies for Methodist ministry. Parham switched from theological studies to study medicine while in college and faced another battle with rheumatic fever. According to Goff, Parham attributed this second episode to his disobedience but is divinely healed again after repenting and reaffirming his commitment to preach.³⁵² Parham returned to theological studies but never completed the program since he felt school work distracted from the commitment to preach.³⁵³ Upon leaving school Parham successfully pastored within the Methodist church.

Teachings on holiness infiltrated many Methodist churches, but as previously mentioned the two groups soon fragmented on doctrinal differences. Parham drew close to holiness principles and experienced firsthand how the teachings created tension amongst some colleagues. One area that intrigued Parham was Holy Spirit baptism, which he began prioritizing over water baptism. From the interest in Holy Spirit baptism Parham later formulated the doctrine around glossolalia,³⁵⁴ which remained central to Classical Pentecostal teachings. Additionally, another source of contention for Parham was denominationalism. Parham countered Methodist's emphasis on denominationalism by teaching that "[m]embership into God's family came by conversion." He used this to

³⁵⁰ Goff, *Fields White Unto Harvest*, 25.

³⁵¹ Goff, *Fields White Unto Harvest*, 26.

³⁵² Goff, *Fields White Unto Harvest*, 29.

³⁵³ Goff, *Fields White Unto Harvest*, 31.

³⁵⁴ Tongue speaking, or glossolalia, is discussed in greater detail a few paragraphs below.

support his new eschatological teachings of eternal punishment and “[total] destruction of the wicked.”³⁵⁵ Both of these doctrines became foundational to his teachings. Parham eventually left Methodism—and denominationalism as a whole, believing he “received his orders directly from heaven.”³⁵⁶ However, he continued developing these doctrines through his preaching and teaching. The significance of his influence on Pentecostalism began with a Bible college he opened in Texas.

The influences of holiness teachings continuously resonated with Parham when he opened his school. Parham was primary instructor using only the Bible as a textbook; additionally, intense prayer sessions and practical application of learning was demonstrated as students evangelized local areas in the city. A primary teaching for Parham centered on “true” baptism, or baptism of the Holy Spirit, which he instructed students to seek after second revelatory experience that differed from their initial conversion experience. Holy Spirit baptism represented a belief, “that those who have this post-conversion experience will speak in strange tongues as ‘initial physical evidence.’ Although this reflects the doctrinal position of most ‘classical’ Pentecostals (but by no means all), this way of defining Pentecostalism narrows to include only what we call ‘classical’ Pentecostals of the North American type, or those who speak in tongues.”³⁵⁷ The climatic corresponding incident of this occurred at the college when Agnes Ozman reportedly spoke in tongues for the first time in either 1900 or 1901,³⁵⁸

³⁵⁵ Goff, *Fields White Unto Harvest*, 35.

³⁵⁶ Goff, *Fields White Unto Harvest*, 36.

³⁵⁷ Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 10.

³⁵⁸³⁵⁸ Research found the exact date of when she spoke in tongues is unclear. Reports of January 1, 1901 are not reliable as Anderson details the earliest primary source, a newspaper interview with Parham dated on January 9, 1901, mentioned Ozman first spoke two weeks prior. If this is the case, the first account of her speaking in tongue transpired in 1900 rather than 1901. For more see Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 56.

which resulted with others being filled shortly after. This experience is significant to Classical Pentecostalism for the following reasons:

The miraculous story of Bethel College gives insight into the Pentecostals' self-image. Their movement, according to the accepted story, was founded in nearly the exact manner in which the Church was founded on the day of Pentecost. The 40 students plus about 75 visitors at the time of Miss Ozman's Spirit baptism made roughly 120 persons, the same as on the day of Pentecost. The outpouring of January 3rd in an "upper room," the speaking in tongues, the visible tongues of fire, and the multitude of newspapermen and linguists alleged to have flocked there, are almost exactly as Pentecost is described in the second chapter of Acts. In addition, there is much symbolism in the story, some of it based on sacred numerology, a popular topic with Pentecostals to this day. It was about three days from the time the students began to search the Bible for the "true" doctrine of the Baptism until they reached their verdict, another three days till Agnes Ozman spoke in tongues on January 1, and still another three days till the general outpouring of January 3rd. The number three symbolizes the Trinity, and three times three the numerical equivalent of perfection. Parham and the twelve ministers who were in the "upper room" on the night of January 3 correspond to Jesus and the disciples.³⁵⁹

In addition to Parham's emphasis on "true" Baptism of the Spirit, he offered further rationale for the tongue speaking.

³⁵⁹ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 56-57.

Parham connected the doctrine of tongues to the evangelistic arc of Pentecostalism. Speaking in tongues occurs as a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit for the specific purpose of aiding missionary work. Parham believed, the “gift of tongues was given to Spirit-filled Christians in order to allow them to preach the gospel in other human languages that they had never learned.”³⁶⁰ This type of tongue speaking, defined as xenoglossa, is speaking in foreign language without prior teaching of that known language.³⁶¹ Hence, Parham continued teaching that xenoglossa is evidence of God calling and subsequently equipping people for missionary work in foreign areas. The teachings of Holy Spirit baptism caught the ears of many holiness adherents, one such was William J. Seymour.

William Joseph Seymour, a Black man, was born in Centerville, Louisiana to Catholic parents, but his family also attended the local Baptist church.³⁶² A product of Louisiana culture, Seymour experienced the syncretism of tradition religion and Catholicism, which included African influences in music, dance, and the supernatural.³⁶³ Seymour traveled North in search of better opportunities like many Blacks at this time and eventually settled in Indianapolis. The KKK influence though spread and infiltrated Indiana as well. Seymour connected with Methodism, but he realized the congregational practices like most mainstream churches were a microcosm of the racism in society.

Seymour eventually joined the Holiness movement that spread across the nation. By this time he relocated to Cincinnati and became a member of the Evening Light

³⁶⁰ Jacobsen, *A Reader in Pentecostal Theology*, 32.

³⁶¹ Goff, *Fields White Unto Harvest*, 15.

³⁶² Jacobsen, *A Reader in Pentecostal Theology*, 45.

³⁶³ Alexander, *Black Fire*, 112.

Saints. This tradition emerged during Reconstruction, radically opposing racial prejudice through theological critique that affirmed “interracial worship was a sign of the true church.”³⁶⁴ In light of their beliefs, the Saints engaged in interracial worship amongst the leadership. For Seymour, this ideal became a formative conviction would radically shape the Azusa Street Revivals and future Pentecostal tradition under his leadership. Another event shaped his spirituality while in Cincinnati was his experience with divine healing. Seymour suffered from a bout of smallpox but received healing after a dream and subsequent commitment to preaching the gospel.³⁶⁵ He received healing of everything except an eye condition, which caused him to wear glasses given blindness in his left eye.³⁶⁶ Seymour became licensed within the tradition and traveled as an itinerant preacher. One of the hallmarks of the Evening Light Saints was the communal living arrangements that enabled members to work “together to support each other and carry out ministry.”³⁶⁷

The Evening Light Saints communal way of life encouraged teamwork amongst members and leaders. As a result, Seymour connected with Pastor Lucy Farrow, a Blackwoman who pastored a Holiness church in Texas. Farrow worked for Charles Parham at his Bible school as cook, and she introduced Seymour to teachings about Holy Spirit baptism.³⁶⁸ Farrow initially left Seymour as interim pastor while away, but Seymour eventually enrolled in his school. Despite his Christian views, Parham was a staunch racist and, keeping with the segregation practices, only allowed Seymour to

³⁶⁴ Alexander, *Black Fire*, 83, 113.

³⁶⁵ Alexander, *Black Fire*, 115.

³⁶⁶ Alexander, *Black Fire*, 114.

³⁶⁷ Alexander, *Black Fire*, 113-14.

³⁶⁸ Alexander, *Black Fire*, 115.

attend from outside the classroom”³⁶⁹ Parham’s racism was complex. In addition to upholding societal segregation, he believed and taught that Anglo-Saxons were the superior descendants of Israelite tribes.³⁷⁰ On the other hand, Seymour did not allow the discrimination to squelch his interest as listened intently from the hallway to Parham’s teachings on Holy Spirit, he was greatly influenced and actively sought to his personal experience for himself.

After leaving the school and continuing assisting Farrow, Seymour met another Black Holiness woman, Neely Terry. Terry convinced her pastor Julia Hutchins to invite him to Los Angeles to assist with their ministry. There Seymour began preaching about the speaking in tongues as the evidence of Holy Spirit baptism, an expanded version of what he learned from Parham, and later got kicked out of the Holiness church because of this doctrine.³⁷¹ Terry assisted Seymour with living accommodations in the aftermath of being removed from the church. Seymour remained in the Los Angeles area and continued teaching about the Holy Spirit baptism in a Bible study at 214 Bonnie Brae Street, the home of Terry’s extended family.³⁷² This home played a significant story in Classical Pentecostalism. Seymour up until this point had yet to receive the Holy Spirit baptism, but he continued teaching and actively seeking it. Brother Lee, the member who he stayed with and Bible study attendee, was the first to receive the experience of tongues and then others in the group.³⁷³ Seymour received it days later and as the news spread, the curiosity many people attended seeking a similar experience. The success of the

³⁶⁹ Jacobsen, *A Reader in Pentecostal Theology*, 45.

³⁷⁰ Alexander, *Black Fire*, 115.

³⁷¹ Alexander, *Black Fire*, 116.

³⁷² Alexander, *Black Fire*, 118.

³⁷³ Alexander, *Black Fire*, 118.

meetings outgrew the house and the group purchased a building at 312 Azusa Street, which became the place of the infamous Azusa Street Revivals and Missions.

The Azusa Street Revivals launched Pentecostalism onto the national scene. The revivals continued for seven years and many travelled across the nation to participate in the worship experiences. Alexander explains:

The first three and a half years were the most intense...they came...to take part in an unparalleled move of God reminiscent of the Upper Room on the Day of Pentecost. Daily camp-meeting style worship lasted for several hours, and it generally ran from ten in the morning until at least midnight and sometimes for several hours past that. These ecstatic services were characterized by impromptu sermons by a number of people, prophesying, singing in English and in tongues, conversions, divine healings and exorcisms. No count was taken, but most reports estimated that, at least in the early days of the revival, attendance ran in the hundreds and that the mission was scarcely large enough to contain the anxious seekers. Many stood for several hours around the perimeters of the walls; others stood outside on the porch or listened in through the glassless windows.³⁷⁴

The revivals were a mix of racial groups including Blacks, Whites, Mexicans, other nationalities; however, it was predominately Black which was reflected in the worship style. Conversely, Robeck explains that during this time two different worship experiences existed within African American Christianity primarily along social class. The Azusa Street Revivals fell along the “folk church” tradition that favored acapella

³⁷⁴ Alexander, *Black Fire*, 119.

singing, hand clapping, rudimentary instruments,³⁷⁵ which contrasted the formal worship practices of the bourgeois Black Methodist and Baptist traditions in that area.³⁷⁶

Likewise, leaders rarely wore customary religious vestments, obtained formal academic training, and avoided titles with the exception of “Brother,” “Sister,” “Elder,” or “Pastor.”³⁷⁷ The overall atmosphere of the revival found its heart in traditional Black “folk church” singing, emotion, and fervent preaching.

The Azusa Street Revivals were like nothing the nation had ever witnessed before. As a result, not everyone welcomed the revivals. The secular press outlets around Los Angeles penned articles about the revivals that dismissed the experiences as fanatical and uncouth due to racial and gender mixing, both socially unacceptable for the time.³⁷⁸ Revivalists faced harassment from local law enforcement as neighbors complained about the noise.³⁷⁹ Some Holiness preachers found issue with the new movement based on the initial evidence doctrine of tongues. Parham traveled to initially support the Azusa Street Revivals and Seymour. After a brief visit, however, he denounced Seymour and his teachings as counterfeit, asserting that his own teachings solely were genuinely Pentecostal.³⁸⁰ The incidents with Azusa further splintered their relationship and they parted ways. Seymour, despite the resistance from Parham, continued the publication of

³⁷⁵ These instruments include washboards, drums, spoons, and tambourines.

³⁷⁶ Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., “The Azusa Street Mission and Historic Black Churches: Two Worlds in Conflict in Los Angeles’ African American Community,” in *Afro-Pentecostalism*, ed. Amos Yong and Estrelida Y. Alexander (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 30-31.

³⁷⁷ Robeck, “The Azusa Street Mission and Historic Black Churches,” 31.

³⁷⁸ Alexander, *Black Fire*, 133.

³⁷⁹ Alexander, *Black Fire*, 142.

³⁸⁰ Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., “The Origins of Modern Pentecostalism: Some Historiographical Issues,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Pentecostalism*, ed. Cecil M. Robeck, and Amos Yong (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 19.

Apostolic Faith newspaper as to disseminate the teaching and doctrinal beliefs, which effectively spread Pentecostalism as a global phenomenon.³⁸¹

The histories and accomplishments of Parham and Seymour are paramount to Classical Pentecostalism. Together, both men contributed to development and spread of the phenomenon for which they deserve respect. The distinction as “Father of Pentecostal theology” is traditionally given to Parham “because he was the first person to clearly articulate the thesis that speaking in tongues was the necessary physical evidence of the baptism of the Spirit.”³⁸² Goff adds, “Parham, then, is the key to any interpretation of Pentecostal origins. He formulated the connection between Holy Spirit baptism and tongues, oversaw the initial growth and organization, and initiated the idyllic vision of xenoglossic missions. The story of his life and ministry reveals the sociological and ideological roots of Pentecostalism.”³⁸³

Seymour expands the teachings of Parham to further articulate the Holy Spirit baptism, as evidenced by glossolalia, represents the assurance of sanctification and being spirit filled. Of importance was the inter-racial and gender equality of ministry emphasized within the structure of his leadership style. McCylmond adds,

Seymour in later life had second thoughts about appeals to tongues-speaking as evidence of Spirit baptism, and ultimately concluded that tongues-speaking could not be considered an evidence of Spirit baptism unless accompanied by a manifestation of brotherly love and the fruit of the Spirit... Seymour came to believe that *external manifestations*, including that of tongues, were never *self-*

³⁸¹ Robeck, Jr., “The Origins of Modern Pentecostalism: Some Historiographical Issues,” 20.

³⁸² Jacobsen, *A Reader in Pentecostal Theology*, 31.

³⁸³ Goff, *Fields White Unto Harvest*, 16.

interpreting. On the contrary, a process of spiritual discernment was needed in each case to see if any particular spiritual manifestation was from God or else not from God.³⁸⁴

With time, Seymour understood the focus is not much on the gift of tongues as much as how the gift impacts and pours out of the daily life of the recipient. His success is attributed to the fact that he “grasped *the underlying meaning of the manifestations*, and so he was decades ahead of other observers in perceiving how God’s purpose of creating a socially inclusive community was coming to pass in racially and ethnically divided America...Seymour—perhaps more than anyone else at this time—perceived the movement as a reflection of God’s heart of unity and God’s desire to break down every social barrier.”³⁸⁵ For these reasons Seymour deserves credit for building up the tradition and spreading it abroad through commissioning of missionaries via the Azusa Faith Missions, the push for racial reconciliation in the nation, and gender equality within the tradition.

Charismatic Renewal

The Charismatic Renewal represented the crossover effect of Pentecostalism into mainstream denominations. In the 1960s and 70s charismatic gifts began impacting historic Protestant churches and the Roman Catholic Church.³⁸⁶ Goff explains:

By 1964 Pentecostal theology was invading the traditional Protestant camp;

Episcopals, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Methodists, and Baptists learned to pray in

³⁸⁴ Michael McClymond, “I Will Pour Out of My Spirit Upon All Flesh: An Historical and Theological Meditation on Pentecostal Origins,” *Pneuma* 37, no. 3 (2015): 370-71. doi: 10.1163/15700747-03703001.

³⁸⁵ McClymond, “I Will Pour Out of My Spirit Upon All Flesh,” 371.

³⁸⁶ Michael J. McClymond, “Charismatic Renewal and Neo-Pentecostalism: From North American Origins to Global Permutations,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Pentecostalism*, ed. Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. and Amos Yong (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 32.

private cell groups for the onset of a spirit-filled life manifested by spiritual gifts. By 1970, the Roman Catholic Church was likewise infected. Seminary students and innovative priests sponsored the small—but rapidly growing Charismatic renewal which, surprisingly for many observers, has remained within the church with the guarded approval of the Catholic hierarchy.³⁸⁷

Up until this point limited occurrences of hallmark Pentecostal experiences happened outside of the denomination; however, McClymond credited the revival of healing evangelists³⁸⁸ for the appeal of the Charismatic Renewal to non-Pentecostal groups.³⁸⁹

Another cause for this newfound interest resulted in the changes America faced.

Hallmarked as a “post-Christian America”, both Protestant and Catholic denominations experienced decline within their traditions as well as in parochial education and religious orders.³⁹⁰ Mainstream Protestant denominations and Catholics sought ways to rectify these challenges.

Pope John XXIII initiated the Second Vatican Council to address the need for renewal within Roman Catholicism. The Council took place from 1962 through 1965 and the Pope gave the charge for Catholics to return to daily prayer. Leon Joseph Cardinal Suenens, a participant within the council, also advocated for the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit, and both these moves set the tone for the Charismatic Catholic movement.³⁹¹ Vatican II ushered in several changes regarding the celebration of Mass, and most notably is the encouragement for unity via ecumenical dialogue and prayers with other

³⁸⁷ Goff, *Fields White Unto Harvest*, 3-4.

³⁸⁸ The healing evangelists include Kathryn Kuhlman, Oral Roberts, William Branham, and many others affiliated with the Voice of Healing Network in the US and Canada.

³⁸⁹ McClymond, “Charismatic Renewal and Neo-Pentecostalism,” 35.

³⁹⁰ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 234-35.

³⁹¹ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 245.

Christians.³⁹² The Eucharist remained administered to Catholics only, but the door opened for other traditions to participate in mass services and vice versa. Prayer services also created ecumenical fellowship amongst Catholic and other Protestant traditions. As a result, in 1967 the first Catholic Pentecostal prayer meeting occurred at Duquesne University in Philadelphia when participants experienced glossolalia and other classical Pentecostal expressions.³⁹³ The movement spread to Notre Dame University and eventually numerous Catholic churches. These individuals were known as Charismatic Catholics who engage in tongue speaking.

The Catholic distinction remained an important moniker and critical to the doctrinal beliefs. Second wavers most often opt to remain in their traditions rather than joining Pentecostal denominations. Stephenson adds, “[t]hey also tended to have divergent views from first-wave pentecostals about the baptism in the Holy Spirit—sometimes rejecting the terminology altogether—and its relationship to glossolalia. In general, charismatics did not accept initial evidence theology, although they viewed glossolalia itself as a viable and important gift of the Holy Spirit.”³⁹⁴ Tongue speaking, consequently, is only another expression of spiritual gifts and is not a criterion for salvation. This distinction separated them from Classical Pentecostal groups, and the groups favored the term “Charismatic” over “Pentecostal” to reference the mainline denominations within this movement.³⁹⁵ Within Roman Catholicism, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal “is especially noteworthy since it exemplified the efforts of

³⁹² Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 236.

³⁹³ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 247.

³⁹⁴ Stephenson, “Pentecostal Theology: Retrospect and Prospect,” 492.

³⁹⁵ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 216.

charismatics to theologize about gift and experiences of the Holy Spirit within the theological contexts of the church traditions affected by the second wave.”³⁹⁶ In other words, Stephenson is clarifying, how Charismatic Catholics understood the baptism in the Holy Spirit not as an additional sacrament, but as providing richer understanding and experience of the other sacraments and grace in the life of believers. The excitement of the Charismatic Renewal fizzled by the late 1970s and early 1980s, but there remains some Charismatic Catholics and Charismatic Protestant groups today.

³⁹⁶ Stephenson, “Pentecostal Theology: Retrospect and Prospect,” 492.

Neo-Pentecostalism and the Neocharismatic Renewal

Neocharismatics, also known as third-wavers,³⁹⁷ encompassed the third evolution of Pentecostalism into many present-day expressions. The “third wave” occurred during the 1980s when “pentecostalized experiences” spread to evangelical Christians and independent groups who practiced spiritual gifts.³⁹⁸ Pentecostalism experienced a shift and faith healings became more prominent with charismatic manifestations rather than tongue speaking.³⁹⁹ The emphasis of healing over glossolalia contributed to exponential growth during the third wave as those healed often join organizations with their family members. Neo-Pentecostalism resembles aspects of the previous waves. The prominence of divine healings became reminiscent of similar manifestations within the early days of Classical Pentecostalism. Additionally, third-wave groups often reject the “initial evidence” doctrine and accept glossolalia as one of the many spiritual gifts, which is very similar to stance mainline denominations during the Charismatic Renewal.⁴⁰⁰ The alignment with similar understandings of charismatic gives way the usage of neo-Pentecostalism and Neo-charismatic renewal interchangeably within field of Pentecostal studies. Neocharismatics find their expression in many variations, but this section of the work focuses on a couple distinctive groups to describe the third wave of Pentecostalism.

Word-Faith churches are one prominent subgroup in the neocharismatic renewal. The Word-Faith church movement dates back to Kenneth Hagin, Sr. and his Rhema Bible Institute; however, Kenneth Copeland and Frederick K.C. Price expanded the global

³⁹⁷ The third wave term and third-wavers name was coined by C. Peter Wagner in 1983 who is a prominent figure in the movement.

³⁹⁸ McClymond, “Charismatic Renewal and Neo-Pentecostalism,” 32.

³⁹⁹ McClymond, “Charismatic Renewal and Neo-Pentecostalism,” 40.

⁴⁰⁰ Stephenson, “Pentecostal Theology: Retrospect and Prospect,” 493.

influence of the movement with their prosperity gospel rooted in word-faith teachings.⁴⁰¹ According to “word-faith” teachings “[o]ne actualizes benefits such as financial prosperity by making a confession with one’s mouth in connection with Jesus’ name and believing it wholeheartedly, even—rather, *especially*—when the confession contradicts what seems to be undeniable on the basis of sense perception.”⁴⁰² Thus, believers are able to “name and claim” desired material blessings upon the confession of their faith in God to bring it to pass. A main attraction of Word-Faith churches is that they offer “simple answers to life’s tough questions, offers, practical advice and rules for living, and provides rich social interaction with other positive individuals in a warm, affirming atmosphere.”⁴⁰³

On the other hand, the prosperity gospel message is not always welcomed by outsiders of the word-faith tradition. One critique remains with the lack of accountability by many of the spiritual leaders. Within this subgroup leaders, who are designated as “anointed” by God, often created a hierarchal structure of independent churches within neo-Pentecostalism where pastors remain unrestricted in their authority.⁴⁰⁴ These independent churches, created by the inspiration of their founders, then, rarely have the governing checks-and-balances present within most mainline denominations and classical Pentecostal organizations. Consequently, some view these preachers as “spiritual entrepreneurs” profiting off the marginalized masses that attend their services and very rarely addressing social justice issues such as racism, sexism, or class discrimination.⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰¹ McClymond, “Charismatic Renewal and Neo-Pentecostalism,” 39-40.

⁴⁰² Stephenson, “Pentecostal Theology: Retrospect and Prospect,” 493.

⁴⁰³ Robert M. Franklin, *Another Day’s Journey: Black Churches Confronting the American Crisis* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1997), 72.

⁴⁰⁴ McClymond, “Charismatic Renewal and Neo-Pentecostalism,” 40.

⁴⁰⁵ Robert M. Franklin, *Crisis in the Village: Restoring Hope in African American Communities* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 118-120.

The emphasis instead is on Christian unity, particularly through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, by which believers utilize the Scriptures and biblical principles live victorious lives daily. Word-Faith churches are not exclusively neo-Pentecostal since some groups identify with other mainline traditions such as the Full Gospel Baptist or neo-Pentecostal Methodists.⁴⁰⁶ Present day Word-Faith preachers include Creflo Dollar and Anthony (Tony) Evans in addition to the ones listed above.

Evangelicalism, as previously mentioned, arose during American revivalism toward the turn of the century. Evangelicalism focused on the spreading of the “Good News” of the Gospel to others in attempt to persuade sinners to enter into a relationship with Christ as their Savior. Early American evangelicals such as Billy Graham and Oral Roberts paved the way for modern evangelicals including Pat Robertson, Jim Bakker, Paul Crouch, and Jimmy Swaggart during the third wave. For many of these leaders, media technology offered a primary method for sharing the gospel message. Charismatic evangelists and preachers in the third wave employed radio and television broadcasts, podcasts, live streaming of church services, and more recently social media to aid in the massive success of media ministries in local congregations. Televangelists still understand that “[m]odern media makes it possible to penetrate new public and private spaces and thus goes hand in hand with missionary impulse.”⁴⁰⁷ The spread of the prosperity gospel coupled with media resources proved beneficial to Neo-Pentecostal churches and many congregations grew exponentially.

⁴⁰⁶ Franklin, *Another Day's Journey*, 71.

⁴⁰⁷ McClymond, “Charismatic Renewal and Neo-Pentecostalism,” 41.

The Vineyard Church movement is another sect within the third wave. This subgroup emerged from congregations that resonate with the neocharismatic influence within American Evangelicalism. The term “Empowered Evangelicals”⁴⁰⁸ likens the group as a fusion of Pentecostalized experiences and Evangelical theology.⁴⁰⁹ The early days of the pre-Vineyard organization arrived on the heels of the Jesus People Movement⁴¹⁰ when John and Carol Wimber began hosting religious meetings in their home. The home fellowship grew into a congregation, Calvary Chapel of California, and later joined leader Kenn Gulliksen and six other “Vineyard” churches to officially become the Association of Vineyard Churches in 1985.⁴¹¹ The Vineyard organization, like other Pentecostal waves, also grew into a world-wide movement with Vineyard churches planted globally. The neocharismatic influence of this tradition emphasized prophetic gifts via signs and wonders; and as a result, many services and conferences included healing service and personalized prophecies to congregants for spiritual guidance.⁴¹² Encounters with healing and supernatural phenomenon remained the foundation for this group. Prophecy was not limited to individual prophecies only, and some prophets shared words of knowledge “predicting a harvest both of wickedness and

⁴⁰⁸ Empowered Evangelical encompasses the divine healings, tongue-speaking, prophecy and supernatural encounters familiar within the Vineyard Church movement. See Rich Nathan and Ken Wilson *Empowered Evangelicals* (Boise, ID: Ampelon Publishing, 1995), 7.

⁴⁰⁹ Bill Jackson, *The Quest For the Radical Middle: A History of the Vineyard* (Cape Town: Vineyard International Publishing, 1999), 14.

⁴¹⁰ The Jesus People Movement occurred during the late 1960s and early 1970s as a result of many hippie youth, charismatic encounters with the Holy Spirit transformed their lives bringing them peace and happiness. This was significant because during this time youth culture relied on drugs to achieve this type of euphoria and peace. For more see Richard Bustraan, “The Jesus People Movement and the Charismatic Movement: A Case for Inclusion,” *PentecoStudies: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Research on the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* 10, no.1 (2011):29-40. doi: 10.1558/ptcs.v10i1.29.

⁴¹¹ Stanley Burgess and Eduard M. van der Maas, *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, revised and expanded ed., (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2001), s.v. “Vineyard Christian Fellowship.”

⁴¹² McClymond, “Charismatic Renewal and Neo-Pentecostalism,” 41.

of souls to be saved before Christ's return."⁴¹³ The eschatological focus of this subgroup centered around on Kingdom theology. Kingdom theology is rooted in inaugurated eschatology, which focuses on ushering in God's kingdom in the present world, and the future kingdom ushered in by the Second Coming of Christ. Hence, evangelism, or missionary activity to convert unbelievers, remained a critical component of third-wavers. Central to Vineyard beliefs is the Church exists to fulfill God's mission in the world by "observing and imitating the love of God for the world."⁴¹⁴ Church planting, or launching of churches in strategic areas, provided a way to effectively evangelize and sustain membership growth. The Vineyard organization typically includes churches co-led by husband and wife teams and the current national directors of Vineyard USA are Phil and Jan Strout.

Two themes remain central to neo-Pentecostalism: dominionism and Christian unity. According to McClymond, dominionism slightly varies in understanding amongst neocharismatics groups; but it essentially represents the impact believers are called to have within society.⁴¹⁵ Prosperity gospel messages become a key principle for teaching dominionism. The teachings of dominionism empowers churches to influence public sectors of business, government, media, arts and entertainment, the family, education and religion, also known as the "seven mountains' of human life."⁴¹⁶ A successful model of this is mega-church pastor T.D. Jakes of the Potter's House church in Dallas, TX. Jakes established a storefront sanctified church in his home state of West Virginia in the early 1980s. His initial success emerged from a Sunday school class entitled Woman Thou Art

⁴¹³ McClymond, "Charismatic Renewal and Neo-Pentecostalism," 41.

⁴¹⁴ Jackson, *The Quest for the Radical Middle*, 368.

⁴¹⁵ McClymond, "Charismatic Renewal and Neo-Pentecostalism," 43.

⁴¹⁶ McClymond, "Charismatic Renewal and Neo-Pentecostalism," 43.

Loosed, designed to address the painful situations many church women experience. Over time Woman Thou Art Loosed developed into a bi-annual international women's conference, several studio films, study bible, and more Jakes, embodies the spiritual dominion associated with neo-Pentecostalism.

The theme of Christian unity reflects in the ecumenical flair of Neo-Pentecostal groups. Neocharismatics often rejected stringent Pentecostal doctrines and practices but uplifted supernatural encounters and miracles.⁴¹⁷ Therefore, the tradition emphasized spiritual warfare as an effort to counter demonic influence within individuals as well as communities. In a global context, neo-Pentecostalism garnered success in areas such as Africa where exorcisms and deliverance ministry were common place; however, in America these teachings find their expression in “warfare prayers” that aid in evangelistic efforts.⁴¹⁸ Warfare prayers take the form of confessional statements and/or declarations that emphasize the supernatural authority and victory of God over the schemes of the devil in the life of Christians. Another expression of Christian unity occurs with revival services. During the 1990s in Canada and Florida major revivals took place and drew millions of visitors to experience physical manifestations such as laughter, crying, shouting, and trembling.⁴¹⁹

The worship experience within the third wave churches illustrated another trend in neo-Pentecostalism. Neo-Pentecostal churches created worship atmospheres where “worshippers do not petition God with specific requests, but instead seek to ‘draw God’s

⁴¹⁷ Burgess and van der Maas *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, s.v. “Neocharismatics (or Third-wavers).”

⁴¹⁸ McClymond, “Charismatic Renewal and Neo-Pentecostalism,” 41-42.

⁴¹⁹ McClymond, “Charismatic Renewal and Neo-Pentecostalism,” 42.

presence.”⁴²⁰ Third wave churches witness a shift from traditional choirs who sing hymns to the emergence of praise teams singing contemporary Christian music. The Vineyard church movement introduces a new style of worship into the neo-Pentecostal wave. Worship includes a simplistic and relational style facilitated by worship leaders, yet it ushers in transcendent experiences for cultivating deeper intimacy with God.⁴²¹ Music groups such as Hillsong and Bethel Music, which emerge from independent churches, modernize this shift; notably, these groups ditch the formality of robes in exchange for casual dress and concert style atmosphere. Many of these churches draw massive congregations and offer multiple services weekly. The mega church phenomenon⁴²² conducive for creating these seeker friendly worship experiences for attendees.⁴²³ Lathrop adds these technologically enhanced services are produced using modern language to present the gospel message in a practical yet invitational manner.⁴²⁴ Giant screens displaying lyrics and readings, cutting edge lighting and layout, relevant sermons, practical resources, and sometimes multi-site locations contribute to the appeal of these ministries. Mega churches are regarded for going the extra mile to extend hospitality to the stranger while encouraging full participation in the worship experience. Current examples of these congregations are Relentless Church pastored by John Gray, Free Chapel pastored by Jentezen Franklin, Gateway Church pastored by Robert Morris, and Lakewood Church pastored by Joel Osteen.

⁴²⁰ McClymond, “Charismatic Renewal and Neo-Pentecostalism,” 42.

⁴²¹ Jackson, *The Quest For the Radical Middle*, 371.

⁴²² A mega church is defined as a large American Protestant church with a typical weekly attendance of two thousand or more members. See Mark Chaves, “All Creatures Great and Small: Mega Churches in Context,” *Review of Religious Research* 47, no. 4 (June 2006): 329. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20058102>.

⁴²³ Chaves, “All Creatures Great and Small: Mega Churches in Context,” 332.

⁴²⁴ Gordon W. Lathrop, “New Pentecost or Joseph’s Britches? Reflections on the History and Meaning of the Worship Ordo in Mega Churches,” *Worship* 72, no. 6 (Nov 1998): 527.

Influence of Race and Gender in North American Pentecostalism

Religious traditions as with other organizations within society were susceptible to the influence of society. Although Pentecostalism emerged largely as a result of the experiences and encounters critical to the turn of the century; race and gender certainly informed the time. Daniels retorts, “[t]he racial climate of the United States should not be underestimated in its effects of undermining the interracial and multiracial impulse within early North American Pentecostalism and pressuring Pentecostals to conform to the patterns of racial and gender equality practiced in conservative Protestantism.”⁴²⁵ One early racial tension begins with a great organization in Pentecostal tradition.

The Church of God in Christ, Incorporated (COGIC) is the largest Pentecostal denomination in the US and it is a predominately Black tradition.⁴²⁶ COGIC began from the Black Baptist stream of the Holiness movement, eventually splitting and becoming an independent holiness denomination. The group operated under the leadership of Charles Harrison Mason and from 1904-1924 several White and Latino ministers and churches joined the denomination.⁴²⁷ COGIC attempted several methods to maintain its interracial composition, but they proved largely unsuccessfully. Often the attempts reconfigured the denomination in order to accommodate White clergy by granting them greater degrees of leadership and power. The initial reconstruction enabled COGIC to function “as a federation of three clergy networks” one for Blacks under Mason’s leadership, another all-White subgroup, and another all-White subgroup with a few Black leaders.⁴²⁸ The

⁴²⁵ Daniels, “North American Pentecostalism,” 78.

⁴²⁶ Margaret Poloma, “The Future of American Pentecostal Identity: The Assemblies of God at a Crossroad,” in *The Work of the Spirit: Pneumatology and Pentecostalism*, ed. Michael Welker (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2006), 147.

⁴²⁷ Daniels, “North American Pentecostalism,” 78.

⁴²⁸ Daniels, “North American Pentecostalism,” 78.

restructuring did not appease the frustrations of many White members of COGIC and each of the groups continued having their separate annual meeting.

A General Council meeting in 1914 steered by E.N. Bell and Howard Gross designated the formation of the Assemblies of God, which became a predominately White organization. In addition to racial dissatisfaction, the Assemblies of God adopted a Methodist understanding of sanctification as a second work of grace emphasizing a “finished work”⁴²⁹ theology. During the conference the organization, “adopted a statement of faith that included the usual Pentecostal article concerning speaking in tongues, but stated in another article that ‘entire sanctification’ should be ‘earnestly pursued’ as a ‘progressive’ rather than an instantaneous experience...this statement placed the new ‘Assemblies of God’ outside of the Wesleyan tradition, thus creating the first formal doctrinal division in the Pentecostal movement. The Assemblies of God Constitution became the model of the subsequent ‘finished work’ denominations that coalesced after 1914.”⁴³⁰ The Assemblies of God remains a predominately White denomination today. The racial tensions and eventual split contradicted the Pentecostal hope of racial reconciliation advocated by Seymour.

The Assemblies of God also encountered division, which left their young organization split. The root of the initial division was not race, but a new wind of doctrine. The “oneness” doctrine was initially coined as the “new issue” within the Assemblies of God denomination.⁴³¹ It derived from a baptismal service in 1913, in

⁴²⁹ The Finished Work controversy was led by Baptist minister, William Durham, whom both Parham and Seymour rejected. This doctrine asserted because of “the finished work of Christ at Calvary” sanctification simultaneously occurs at conversion.

⁴³⁰ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 155.

⁴³¹ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 156.

which R.E. McAlister shared one time the apostles' usage of the name of Jesus Christ over the Trinitarian formula for baptism into the Christian faith.⁴³² By 1914, Evangelist Frank Ewart had developed a doctrinal movement, Oneness Pentecostalism, centered in "the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."⁴³³ Reed explains,

[t]hree beliefs and practices are fundamental to OP [Oneness Pentecostal] identity. First the singular name "Jesus" is the revealed proper name by which God chooses to be known in the age of the New Covenant. Second, water baptism is to be administered in the name of Jesus as the central, uncompromising, and only valid name to be invoked in Christian baptism. This act constitutes *identification* with Christ (Rom 6:4) and, for the majority of OPs, an essential element in the *new birth* when accompanied by repentance and Spirit-baptism (Acts 2:38). Finally, OP teaches a non-Trinitarian, modalistic theology of God. As God's name is one, so is God's nature one without distinction.⁴³⁴

Glenn A. Cook, a convert of Ewart, assisted him in spreading this message and leading efforts to rebaptize Pentecostals under the new formula. Cook continued spreading the oneness message when his path intersects with Garfield Haywood in Indianapolis. Haywood, a Black pastor with the Assemblies of God readily accepted this teaching and rebaptized his parishioners under the new doctrine despite objection. Under the leadership influence of a Black pastor, Garfield T. Haywood, adherents of Oneness Pentecostalism eventually split from the Assemblies of God to form the General Assembly of the

⁴³² Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 156.

⁴³³ David A. Reed, "Then and Now: The Many Faces of Global Oneness Pentecostalism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Pentecostalism*, ed. Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. and Amos Yong (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 52.

⁴³⁴ Reed, "Then and Now," 52.

Apostolic Churches.⁴³⁵ The leaders soon found it was necessary to merge with an incorporated church to gain credence within the government, so they merged with the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (PAW) in 1917.⁴³⁶

The PAW began as an interracial organization; however, as precedent of the previous denominations unresolved racial discriminatory practices further divided the group. Synan explains, “[f]or nine years the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World operated as a completely interracial church with roughly equal numbers of black and whites serving as both officers and members.”⁴³⁷ Blacks soon comprised the majority of Pentecostals in the Northern states and the racism within society soon infiltrated the organization.⁴³⁸ Given the Jim Crow segregation laws of the South, northern cities hosted the annual meetings in the early years. The Southern Bible Conference, which convened in 1921 and 1924, dealt the final fatal blows to racial unity, as White ministers held exclusive meetings without any Black leadership participation.⁴³⁹

The initial split of the PAW happened after White constituents formed the Pentecostal Ministerial Association (PMA) in February 1925⁴⁴⁰ and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ (ACJC) over the next decade.⁴⁴¹ There was a brief reunion of ACJC and the PAW to form the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ (PAJC); however, racial inequities during the annual conference of 1937 resulted in mass Black exodus and return to the PAW.⁴⁴² The PAJC and the PMA (under the new name Pentecostal Church, Inc.)

⁴³⁵ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 173.

⁴³⁶ Reed, “Then and Now,” 53.

⁴³⁷ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 174.

⁴³⁸ Reed, “Then and Now,” 53.

⁴³⁹ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 174-75.

⁴⁴⁰ Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 175.

⁴⁴¹ Reed, “Then and Now,” 53.

⁴⁴² Reed, “Then and Now,” 53-54.

combined in 1945 to form the largest Oneness Pentecostal organization North America, the United Pentecostal Church—which presently remains predominately White.⁴⁴³ The PAW, Inc exists to this day and spread internationally though it remains a predominantly Black organization. Despite the growth of Oneness Pentecostalism, the vast majority Pentecostals remain classical Trinitarians.⁴⁴⁴ Amidst the fractional splits, the failed attempts of Reconstruction, and the new era of Jim Crow discrimination deemed it necessary for Blacks to reclaim their rich African heritage and Black identity.

Race

Race remains crucial to the origins of Pentecostalism as it is the only worldwide church with the exception of early Christianity to be founded by a Black man.⁴⁴⁵ The influence of Charles Parham Fox and William Seymour including the implications of the racism from early days of Pentecostalism were previously outlined in this section of the project. Addressing the debate surrounding the origins of Pentecostalism has greater effects than giving Seymour the credit he deserves. Rather, Iain MacRobert asserts:

It matters—though they may not realize it—for many [W]hite Pentecostals who in the denial of their Movement’s roots perpetuate the racial arrogance and support for an oppressive socio-political and economic *status quo* which makes them the enemies of the Gospel to the poor. And it matters so that Pentecostalism does not become—or indeed remain—an individualistic ideology used by the powerful to control the powerless, or an alien ideology internalized by the powerless to

⁴⁴³ Reed, “Then and Now,” 54.

⁴⁴⁴ Daniels, “North American Pentecostalism,” 76.

⁴⁴⁵ Walter J. Hollenweger, “The Pentecostal Elites and the Pentecostal Poor: A Missed Dialogue?” in *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture*, ed., Karla O. Poewe (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), PDF e-book, p. 201.

control themselves, but returns to its original emphasis on God’s pneumatic empowering of the powerless to be agents of transformation in both the Church and wider society.⁴⁴⁶

The origin story of Pentecostalism offers an identity and history to a people, but also offers a renewed identity to a subgroup within the movement.

Black Pentecostalism⁴⁴⁷ is colored by the experiences of Black people in the American context. Their history as a marginalized group within the nation nuances the ways in which they embody their spiritual practices. Religious expression during the antebellum period became a method of survival amidst the harsh realities. Enslaved Blacks slipped away to the hush harbors along the outskirts of plantations to create these invisible institutions where they secretly worshipped and experienced transformative encounters with God. There outside the gaze of White oppressors they reclaimed their voice—acknowledging their worth and personhood—as they freely shouted, dance, and sing. From these practices, the Black Church tradition emerges as a historical safe space within the Black community that offered hope and reaffirmed their personhood. The Black church experience persisted and influenced many mainline traditions including Pentecostalism. Black Pentecostalism, in some ways, served as an extension of this response to the plight of Blacks within wider society. The Jim Crow practices of society necessitate the presence of the Holy Spirit to infiltrate daily life and provide an eschatological hope for the future.

⁴⁴⁶ Iain MacRobert, “The Black Roots of Pentecostalism” in *African-American Religion: Interpretive Essays in History and Culture*, eds. Timothy E. Fulop and Albert J. Raboteau (New York: Routledge, 1997), 307

⁴⁴⁷ Black Pentecostalism is used interchangeably with Afro-Pentecostalism throughout the project.

Afro-Pentecostalism is distinctive in nature because it rests on the presupposition that Pentecostals are to be in the world but not of it. This displacement created a wrestling between the here-and-now against the yet-to-come, and so Black Pentecostalism, in its origins, required synthesis of its displaced African identity and American identity. In other words, the potential advantage of Black Pentecostalism meant, “that it can ‘seek the peace of the city’ by drawing from a vaster reservoir of resources than available to either Africans or to Americans alone.”⁴⁴⁸ Black Pentecostalism offered a way for Blacks to envision and embody a more whole self and integrated identity. Estrela Alexander adds, “the roots of African American Pentecostalism draw from the deep wells of African spirituality, slave religion, the independent black churches that came out of reconstruction and the nineteenth-century black Holiness movement that unfolded among free Methodists and Baptists. Each of these elements contributed unique qualities that would give black Pentecostalism its collective character and make it a force deserving our attention.”⁴⁴⁹ Mason intentionally connected Black Pentecostals to their African heritage through its infusion in COGIC. Worship services within the denomination included elements associated with Africanized spirituality, most notably the rhythmic music and shouting. Divine healings within Afro-Pentecostalism also included a natural element including Mason’s uses of herbs and plants in healing rituals.⁴⁵⁰ Another connection, Holy Spirit baptism, is similar yet distinctive, from African traditional religion is spirit possession. Simply put, “[i]n African

⁴⁴⁸ Amos Yong, “Justice Deprived, Justice Demanded: AfroPentecostalism and the Task of World Pentecostal Theology Today,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 15, no. 1(2006):144. doi:10.1177/0966736906069260.

⁴⁴⁹ Alexander, *Black Fire*, 16.

⁴⁵⁰ Alexander, *Black Fire*, 49.

traditional religion, to be possessed by the Spirit implies a merger of the sacred and profane. In the Pentecostal experience of Holy Spirit baptism, the Spirit is always still the Spirit of God.”⁴⁵¹ Although Mason connected to the other tangible elements of African heritage, he maintained the Holy Spirit Baptism was divinely Christian. Bishop Mason also drew upon African influences in the formation and structuring of COGIC. The West African dual sex system provided Mason the basis to create space for women within the organization that “was progressive in defining gender roles and generous in allowing women the freedom to walk worthy of whatever calling God’s plan desired them to fulfill.”⁴⁵² Women participated in the services and development of the tradition early on.

The distinctive nature of Black Pentecostalism extended beyond the different worship styles, musical, and congregational demographics. Pentecostalism, from Seymour’s understanding, was not only responsible for displaying biblical unity but also offering theological critique to racist and sexist practices. Pneumatology, or the presence of the Holy Spirit, and eschatology are central theological elements of Pentecostalism. Furthermore, within Afro-Pentecostalism the significance of these terms increases given the Holy Spirit as empowerment for survival amidst the realities of life. Afro-Pentecostalism became liberating as it:

provides an alternative *polis* or way of being the people of God that responds not only to the dominant secular culture but also the dominant ecclesial cultures that have participated in the oppression of an exilic people... World pentecostalism

⁴⁵¹ Alexander, *Black Fire*, 57.

⁴⁵² Glenda Williams Goodson, “Church of God in Christ Leader-Activists: Major Progenitors of African American Pentecostal Female Leadership,” *The Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center* 44 (Fall 2016): 24-25.

cannot lose its prophetic edge, and a pentecostal theology for the world also cannot allow the work of the spirit to be quenched.⁴⁵³

Understanding the subversive nature of Pentecostalism was crucial for Mason, as he empowered Blacks within the tradition to reaffirm their Christianity and Blackness simultaneously. While Mason succeeded in emphasizing the rich African heritage, he fell short in many ways. The emphasis for interracial worship held very little weight given his prohibitions of political activism was primarily based on literal biblical interpretations of government support.⁴⁵⁴

Mason's stance on political activism presented a conundrum within the COGIC church. Despite his view COGIC has a long-standing connection with events in the Civil Rights Movement. Mamie Till-Mobley, mother of Emmett Till, is credited for "her prophetic action [that] helped mobilize the Civil Rights movement in the South by provoking thousands of persons to face directly the evil effects of racial hatred."⁴⁵⁵ Rather than quietly submitting to the culture of the time, Mamie Till Mobley displays courage when she hosts his open casket funeral at Roberts Temple COGIC in Chicago. Her decision to host his open-casket funeral service garnered national acclaim and support in the protest of racial discrimination. Also, Mason Temple COGIC, the headquarters of the tradition, have connections to the Civil Rights Movement. Ironically, Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s final "Mountaintop Speech" prior to his assassination was delivered there while in town to support the Memphis sanitation worker's strike.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵³ Amos Yong, "Justice Deprived, Justice Demanded," 143.

⁴⁵⁴ Jonathan Langston Chism, "'The Saints Go Marching': Black Pentecostal Critical Consciousness and the Political Protest Activism of Pastors and Leaders in the Church of God in Christ in the Civil Rights Era," *Pneuma* 35, no. 3 (2013) 430-31. doi:10.1163/15700747-12341350.

⁴⁵⁵ Chism, "The Saints Go Marching," 435.

⁴⁵⁶ Chism, "The Saints Go Marching," 438.

Given the aforementioned events, one might assume political activism would be integral to Black Pentecostalism; however, Mason's perspective prompted many young adults to leave COGIC and join faith traditions that affirmed civic engagement. Things changed during the 1970s, when First Presiding Bishop James O. Patterson revised the official church manual in support of non-violent direct protest "because it promoted love and reconciliation between the races and did not condone violence or bloodshed."⁴⁵⁷ It was a major step for the tradition nationally acknowledged and incorporated social and civic justice work into the core of their faith. From then individuals from lay members to leadership actively participated. COGIC educator, Arenia Mallory, collaborated with Mary McLeod Bethune and the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) to develop a critical consciousness amongst women for civic engagement. Mallory's unique position as president of the Saints Academy and subsequent college afforded her the opportunity to shape the social and political engagement of future COGIC leaders, men and women alike.⁴⁵⁸ Some, even those who later became bishops within the tradition, participated in civil rights marches and campaigns directly influenced by Mallory's leadership at the school.

The Black Church historically served as a prophetic voice for the community. The present concern then for Black Pentecostalism is particularly with the shift of the neocharismatic renewal. Pentecostalism shifted toward multiculturalism and actively building multiracial denominations, which is not bad. The challenge comes in the muting aspects of prophetic witness to champion multiculturalism without social justice accountability. It seems Pentecostalism as a whole, including Black Pentecostalism have

⁴⁵⁷ Chism, "The Saints Go Marching," 439-40.

⁴⁵⁸ Chism, ""The Saints Go Marching," 434.

lost its voice and influence present day. Race still fractures wider society and Pentecostal denominations remain largely segregated amongst the races. Within Black Pentecostalism sexist ideologies and practices continuously suppress Black women in the tradition.

Gender

Prevalent gender constraints in society and religious traditions are most often undergirded by ideologies about women as subservient and the weaker sex.

Pentecostalism originated as a liberating tradition that empowered many women for in ministry and spiritual leadership, but in time, the tradition too, accommodated patriarchal practices and policies. As previously noted around Pentecostalism's inception women championed causes within their homes, society, and religious traditions. The Holiness movement paved the way female participation in leadership roles as many led Bible studies or public prayer services amongst mixed sex audiences. Likewise, Classical Pentecostalism historiography is inundated with the many women, especially Blackwomen, who assisted both Parham and Seymour in the formative days of the tradition. These women rarely receive the respect or treatment they deserve in historical accounts, yet their impact remained vital.

From its inception Pentecostalism contained feminist and womanish⁴⁵⁹ grounding. Womanist theology emerges during the third wave of Pentecostalism; yet, there is an undeniable correlation between Womanist and Pentecostal theologies. Both privilege the context of human experience in relation to understanding God, Scripture interpretation, and the influential ministry of the Holy Spirit in the daily lives of women.⁴⁶⁰ Conversely,

⁴⁵⁹ The term womanish is used as Womanist thought originates in the latter half of the twentieth century, which means it was not in existence at the birth of Pentecostalism.

⁴⁶⁰ Yolanda Pierce, "Womanist Ways and Pentecostalism: The Work of Recovery and Critique," *Pneuma* 35, no. 1(2013): 27. doi: 10.1163/15700747-12341266.

Womanism offers a lens to critique the sexist practices of Pentecostalism. Womanism, if utilized, can resolve gendered injustice that has long plagued the tradition. The problem is that there must be a greater concerted effort to acknowledge the sexism Pentecostal Blackwomen face. Pierce declares, “the question of women’s ordination or women’s treatment within church bodies is not solely a theological question; rather, it is an issue of justice.”⁴⁶¹ The debate regarding ordination is merely a symptom of a more prevalent problem within the tradition. So how exactly did things change? The development of denominations created structures that curtailed women in leadership roles and silenced the womanist pneumatology of early Pentecostalism. Denominations often reasoned biblical interpretations prohibited women exercising authority over men completely dismissing the story of American Pentecostalism given “women were intimately involved in every aspect of this revival movement serving as pastors, missionaries, lay leaders, and editors of early Pentecostal newspapers.”⁴⁶²

Historically Black Pentecostal denominations often mimic the sexist practices and ideologies of wider society. Anomalies such as the Mount Sinai Holy Church of America, a Holiness Pentecostal denomination founded by Mother Ida B. Robinson do exist.⁴⁶³ Her organization is the sole Classical Pentecostal organization founded by a Blackwoman, which was created as a corrective to the gender oppression and restriction of female leadership within many Black Churches.⁴⁶⁴ The bodacious act of creating a tradition gave voice and legitimacy to the experiences of Blackwomen who faced hindrance associated with owning their call to ministry. Pentecostal scholarship around lesser known

⁴⁶¹ Pierce, “Womanist Ways and Pentecostalism,” 29.

⁴⁶² Pierce, “Womanist Ways and Pentecostalism,” 26.

⁴⁶³ Yong, “Justice Deprived, Justice Demanded,” 142.

⁴⁶⁴ Pierce, “Womanist Ways and Pentecostalism,” 25.

Pentecostal denominations are emerging, but the major works completed are on the larger denominations such as COGIC and PAW. The focus of gender dynamics within Black Pentecostalism will draw from these two traditions, as they often reflect the traditional practices within most of the Afro-Pentecostal traditions.

Within Black Pentecostalism, women face censure on multiple levels. The most notable is in relation to their physical bodies. Values of modesty and emphasis placed on inner beauty were lasting marks of the Holiness movement supported by biblical passages. These trends disseminated to Pentecostalism as women adorned themselves modestly through practices such as forgoing makeup and nail polish, wearing long dresses and skirts, and well covered blouses. Modest dress codes distinguished holiness believers from “worldly” non-believers. Within Afro-Pentecostalism, sanctification became essential subverting the stereotypical images of Black womanhood in society. Moultrie adds, “[f]or those seeking a sanctified body, modest clothing was a means of representation. Clothing stood for something much larger than acceptance in white society—it served as a code in a master language of participation in the COGIC community.”⁴⁶⁵ Adherence to dress codes and the expectation of Black womanhood came with the coveted ticket of acceptance and participation within the community. Teachings on the importance of chastity and preserving the sanctity of femininity were stressed by Black pastors and teachers; and additionally, many African American churches created respected positions of honor, which subverted the vilification of black womanhood imbedded in society’s glorification of White femininity.⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶⁵ Monique Moultrie, “After the Thrill is Gone: Married to the Holy Spirit but Still Sleeping Alone,” *Pneuma* 33, no. 2 (2011):243, doi:10.1163/027209611X575032.

⁴⁶⁶ Anthea D. Butler, *Women in the Church of God in Christ: Making a Sanctified World* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 35.

Additionally, the practice of dressing up to attend church, a revolutionary practice derived from antebellum slavery, provided Blacks the opportunity to challenge the disparaging ideologies Whites constructed about Black identity. The trend of dressing up remains in many Classical Pentecostal churches where older women don their suits with hats faithfully to attend Sunday services. But some Black Pentecostal churches assimilate to societal fashion trends and exercise relaxed dress codes. Neo-Pentecostal expressions give way to the variety of dress amongst the membership. Older women may follow traditional styles of dress minus the hats while the younger generation fluctuates between traditional and trendy casual dress including pants and jean attire during Sunday morning worship services.

Censure of the physical body also is evidenced in the policing of the Black female body. Moultrie asserts, “[a] sanctified black body is both a representational and signifying practice. A sanctified black body signified morality and acceptance by white society, but it was also representative of the move from an evil, sinful nature to a holy, spiritual nature.”⁴⁶⁷ Black female bodies are a source of fascination and contempt in society and the church. Black female bodies bear witness to joy and simultaneously represents the site of pain based on its perception in the world. As a result, these bodies are governed by many Pentecostal practices. The affirmation of scriptural infallibility within Black Pentecostalism supports its traditional understanding of chastity and normative heterosexuality. The shame implicit in the demonization of the Black female body within Pentecostal extends beyond the modest dress codes and celibacy promotion. The dangers of these policies and teaching are paramount scholars warn as:

⁴⁶⁷ Moultrie, “After the Thrill is Gone,” 244.

[o]ne of the major theological and ethical implications of women choosing to live solely for the Holy Spirit is that they experience a division of their spirituality and sexuality...-this overspiritualization of black women's lives can result in black women choosing to stay in circumstances that are oppressive to their physical bodies and psyches. This tangible result is evidenced in women who participate in ministries and churches whose conservative ideology negates their ability to be treated as full citizens in these communities...Instead, they acquiesce to restrictions on their capacity to be fully human because the goal is heavenly not earthly.⁴⁶⁸

Hence, the created division of spirituality and sexuality have damning consequences for Blackwomen's emotional and spiritual well-being. The consequences do not affect individual women alone but impede the overall community. Teachings that no longer account for the realities of modern society hinder women from affirming their identity and wholeness as rooted in Christ. It also dismantles safe spaces within the community where women can authentically share their experiences without judgement or ostracism.

Another form of censure for women is reflective in the leadership roles. The ecclesiastical structure within COGIC reflects the American government composition with Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches of governance.⁴⁶⁹ The Executive branch includes the current the Presiding Bishop Charles E. Blake, Sr., the General Board, General Secretary, National Adjutancy, and Trustee Board. The latter two groups are the only within this branch to permit female members. Within the Judicial Branch the

⁴⁶⁸ Moultrie, "After the Thrill is Gone," 249.

⁴⁶⁹ "About: Administration," The Church of God in Christ, Inc., accessed December 2, 2019, <http://www.cogic.org/administration-2/>.

positions include the Board of Bishops, the Judiciary Board, and the General Council of Pastors and Elders. There are a few female pastors within COGIC, and women are permitted to participate on the Judiciary Board. The Board of Bishops, however, which oversees the teaching, practices, and discipline of the organization remains restricted to male clergy members.⁴⁷⁰ The Legislative Branch is comprised of the General Assembly of COGIC members, which includes male and female members-at-large. Over half of the organization are female members⁴⁷¹ according to the 2014 Religious Landscape Study by Pew Research Center; yet, the primary leaders shaping the policies, infrastructure, and strategic visioning for the organization are predominantly male voices. One possible way chosen to address this challenge is through the creation of auxiliary groups. The Youth Department of COGIC created the Young Women in Ministry as a commitment “to the development of young women leaders. It is designed to cultivate the gift of preaching and a holistic ministry. The mission is to emerge Effective Ministers!”⁴⁷² Their webpage cites no specific details for how the organization logistically fulfills the objective.

The structure of the PAW differs somewhat from that of COGIC.⁴⁷³ Currently, the organization is led under the administration of Presiding Bishop Theodore L. Brooks, Sr. and two other elected officers, First and Second Presiding Bishops, all of which are male clergy. The remaining four national leadership positions—Secretary, Assistant

⁴⁷⁰ “About Administration: Board of Bishops,” The Church of God in Christ, Inc., accessed December 2, 2019, <http://www.cogic.org/boardofbishops/>.

⁴⁷¹ “Racial and ethnic composition among members of the Church of God in Christ,” Pew Research Center, Religious Landscape Study 2014, Accessed December 3, 2019, <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/religious-denomination/church-of-god-in-christ/racial-and-ethnic-composition/#demographic-information>.

⁴⁷² “The Youth Department,” The Church of God in Christ, Inc., accessed on December 3, 2019, <http://www.cogic.org/iyd/about-us/commissions/young-women-in-ministry/>.

⁴⁷³ “About Officials,” The Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, accessed on December 3, 2019, <https://pawinc.org/officials/>.

Secretary, Treasurer, and Assistant Treasurer—have only one held by a female Bishop. Conversely, only three of the fourteen support auxiliaries responsible for the daily functioning and regulation the organization, are headed by male leaders leaving the remaining eleven are governed by women. PAW made history with its appointment of two female bishops, Bishop Mona Reide and Bishop Gwendolyn Weeks, both of whom oversee dioceses in and govern male pastors.⁴⁷⁴ The women live in the United States, but they serve dioceses in African countries. These two women are not the first to be ordained a bishop, but they are the first to receive full governing authority within a diocese. In 2009, the Board of Bishops originally voted to ordain female bishops; however, the actual ordination of Bishop Aletha Cushinberry occurred in 2015.⁴⁷⁵ The gain was short lived as Cushinberry only served in an honorary capacity since she was older than denomination’s age restriction for bishops; however, she was given voting privileges. Sadly, Cushinberry died later that year. Ordination rites and the role of women in leadership remain a crucial component of Pentecostalism as a whole. On the other hand, many neo-Pentecostal denominations override the traditional restrictions of women, by allowing women to function in variety of leadership roles. However, the system of patriarchy within religion still remains present; and despite these advances, are very few, if any megachurch female pastors.

Resolution does not only lie in placing women in leadership position but requires creating lasting structural changes within to dismantle systems of patriarchy in operation.

⁴⁷⁴ Holly Meyer, “2 women picked as first female bishops to lead Pentecostal denomination's dioceses,” *Tennessean*, July 27, 2017, <https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/religion/2017/07/27/2-women-picked-first-female-bishops-lead-pentecostal-denominations-dioceses/470135001/>

⁴⁷⁵ Meyer, “2 women picked as first female bishops to lead Pentecostal denomination's dioceses,” <https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/religion/2017/07/27/2-women-picked-first-female-bishops-lead-pentecostal-denominations-dioceses/470135001/>.

Women comprise the vast majority of the congregation but hold limited executive power to the way denominations function and minister. There are three leadership roles that Black Pentecostal women remain at the height of aspiration: the Women's Missionary department, Nurses' Guild, and Pastor's (minister's) wife. The Women's Missionary department played a huge role in COGIC tradition for producing the top tier leadership. Mason appointed Mother Lizzie Woods Robinson as the first overseer of the Women's Department within COGIC. Her strategy for effectiveness was in recognizing the influence of women to the organization and community. Under Robinson's leadership, the group contributed to the fundraising for the national headquarters building project and she developed missionary efforts both local and abroad. In the early days of the women's department the focused on prayer and Bible studies via the Prayer and Bible Bands and emphasized practical application of sharing the gospel. Perhaps one of Robinson's major accomplishments is that her organizational skills led to the formation of the Women's International Convention, under her successor Mother Lillian Brooks Coffey.⁴⁷⁶ Coffey built upon the legacy of her predecessor and "the Women's Department reported supplied one-third of the national church budget."⁴⁷⁷ The Women's Department also became responsible for teaching younger and new converts the values of the tradition, for this cause many of the women were often affectionately referred with the "Mother" title.

The Nurse's Guild, another prominent group within Black Classical Pentecostalism, served the health and educational components of the churches. Nurses regularly dressed in white uniforms and sat together as they served during church services. They are significant given the emotive nature of Pentecostalism and were on

⁴⁷⁶ Goodson, "Church of God in Christ Leader-Activists," 28.

⁴⁷⁷ Goodson, "Church of God in Christ Leader-Activists," 30.

standby for anyone who might need attention during the services. Nurses were a status symbol as well because of the training associated with these women. Health initiatives extended beyond the church services. Arenia Mallory served as a prominent educator within the COGIC tradition. She served as principal of the Saints Industrial School, an eventually Black college, as well as partnered with Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.⁴⁷⁸ to provide medical assistance to those in need in the Mississippi Delta region.

Marriage is an honored act Black Pentecostalism, as it contributes to the family system and the biblical command of fruitfulness. Within the Pentecostal tradition there is a certain degree of status attributed to women who marry ministers, but especially pastors or higher leadership roles. Marriage to these men brings prominence and favor from many other women. It is also a source of contention because sometimes the opposition faced can be very great and taxing. Pastor's wives usually participate at some levels of leadership within the various women's auxiliaries. Some denominations, for example the PAW, create separate auxiliaries around these group of women. The group is International Minister's Wives and Minister's Widows Association and its purpose:

is to unite wives and widows of our Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, Inc. ministers into a common fellowship for support, encouragement and personal growth. To provide programs of excellence that will educate, inform and inspire them to the highest degree of spiritual, intellectual, and social development. To also provide each ministers' wife with an opportunity to gain confidence and

⁴⁷⁸ Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. is the oldest African-American Greek letter organization. It was founded at Howard University in 1908 for the promotion of academics, moral and ethical standards, and to promote unity and friendship amongst college women. They were responsible for establishing the Mississippi Health Project that provided health care to impoverished areas.

experience through expression and exercise of her talents and skills on the International level. Ultimately preparing ministers' wives and widows for greater and more effective service to God, their husbands, and their congregations.⁴⁷⁹

The irony of this auxiliary is that it reinforces the narrative of patriarchy in leadership inherent in its conceptualization. Despite the progressive nature of the organization in ordaining female bishops and many female pastors, the supporting auxiliary does not mirror this progression.

Women in Afro-Pentecostalism despite these restrictions have made strides and excel. Both issues of racial discrimination and gender oppression peppered the Pentecostal movement. The Pentecostal history demands a re-membering of Pentecostalism in order to heal the its dismembered body. Without a redacted history that includes gendered and racial counternarratives, then the fragmentation continues. In short, womanism may hold the framework for completing such task. Pierce asserts, “[a] womanist approach to Pentecostalism insists that by (re)covering the stories of women of color, and critiquing the forces that silence(d) these stories in the first place, the truth-telling, revealing, sanctifying, and transforming power of the Holy Spirit will truly be poured out on all flesh.”⁴⁸⁰

Conclusion

In summation, this chapter illustrated how Pentecostalism emerged from the religious climate in American history. The changes brought by industrialization toward the turn of the century created a need for a new religious phenomenon that impacted

⁴⁷⁹ “About: Auxliaries/Departments,” The Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, Inc. accessed December 3, 2019, <https://pawinc.org/auxiliaries-departments/>.

⁴⁸⁰ Pierce, “Womanist Ways and Pentecostalism,” 34.

churches and society alike. Particularly, the teachings of Pentecostalism, which focused restoration and unity, ushered in one of the greatest revivals of the twentieth century on a little Californian street. Pentecostalism continued spreading globally despite the challenges American Pentecostalism faced in light of racial divisions. Pentecostalism splintered and forged predominately racialized denominational subgroups. The early founders of predominately Black Pentecostal denominations upheld the spiritual tenets of the movement, but also incorporated practices to reaffirm the Black identity and a sense of pride in their heritage. In addition, Blackwomen found ways to empower themselves often through educational achievement although they faced gendered oppression and discriminatory practices in society and Black Pentecostal traditions alike. Many Pentecostal Blackwomen still sensed a personal call and draw to ministry amid the antiquated traditions regarding women in leadership. The subsequent chapter will examine the call to ministry within the tradition as explore the nature of theological education. The following chapter in this project builds up for the final chapter, which offers solutions for the enhancement of theological education for Pentecostal Blackwomen.

CHAPTER FOUR. THE SEARCH FOR HOME IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

“Being a Black woman in the academy necessitates that one knows who she is, whose she is, and how it is that she came to be if remaining sane, safe, and successful are her goals. Learning is not a luxury for Black women, nor is the academy an ivory tower. Our work is an endeavor of the head and heart that is done for and with our communities in mind, if not in tow.”⁴⁸¹

The previous chapters of this work chronicled the experiences of Blackwomen through American history and with emphasis on the Afro-Pentecostalism. Each section detailed the navigation between the balance of gender and race considering spiritual and physical identity. Race within American society is socially constructed, and gender is also defined taking into consideration norms and roles. These factors and experiences enter the classrooms and seminars in theological institutions across the U. S. but are not always heard. This chapter of the project listens to the wider story of theological education. It is important to listen for how contextuality shapes those who attend theological institutions and how it shapes lives upon graduation. For this chapter research and data from the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) provide the primary foundation to gather a current picture of theological education.

The Current Picture of Formal Theological Education in America

⁴⁸¹ Floyd-Thomas, ed., *Deeper Shades of Purpose*, xiii.

The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) completes annual data collection from its member schools throughout Canada and the United States. This project focuses on the data information specific to the U.S. member institutions and utilizes information from the 2018-2019 Annual Data Table⁴⁸² as well as the Total School Profile for Entering Student Questionnaires and Graduate Student Questionnaires. The annual data tables include information regarding institutional characteristics, enrollment, faculty composition and personnel compensation, finances, and development for the academic year. The several charts and tables within the report include information up to five years prior, this report contains information from the 2014-2015 academic year until 2018-2019 school year.

Institutions

As of the 2018-2019 academic year 238 schools operated in the U.S., and the majority were affiliated with Protestant denominations and independently structured institutions instead of being a part of larger universities or colleges.⁴⁸³ ATS divides theological institutions into three different institutional types: independent schools, university-affiliated schools, and college-affiliated schools. Independent schools remain freestanding institutions, but “may have consortial relationships with colleges or universities, ...[but] are not controlled by or subsumed within formal governance structure of a college or university.”⁴⁸⁴ University-Affiliated schools operate within larger teaching or research institutions, offer multiple graduate programs or professional

⁴⁸² The Association of Theological Schools (ATS), “2018-2019 Annual Data Table,” 2019, accessed January 4, 2020, <https://www.ats.edu/uploads/resources/institutional-data/annual-data-tables/2018-2019-annual-data-tables.pdf>.

⁴⁸³ ATS, “2018-2019 Annual Data Tables,” Table 1.3.

⁴⁸⁴ ATS, “2018-2019 Annual Data Tables,” Table 1.3.

schools, and have doctoral programs in more than one area. College-affiliated schools are a part of teaching universities or four-year colleges and have limited graduate or professional degree programs. The 2018-2019 ATS data tables record a total of 138 independent schools, sixty-seven university-affiliated schools, and thirty-two college affiliated schools in the United States. Of the 238 U.S. member schools, close to 68% of institutions have a primary racial/ethnic student-body composition of White Non-Hispanic identity, whereas institutions with primarily minority racial/ethnic student-body composition is around 10% of overall institutions.⁴⁸⁵ ATS does report around 4% of institutions serve multiracial populations, another 4% primarily Visa or Nonresident Alien student populations, and 14% of institutions did not have data available or include in their reports.

Secondly, institutions are identified according to their religious or denominational affiliation. ATS categorizes institutions as following:

Protestant Denominational schools are affiliated with a single or primary Protestant denomination. Inter/nondenominational includes schools with multiple or no denominational affiliation. Roman Catholic schools are diocesan, university departments of theology, and religious order (including union) seminaries in the United States and Canada. Orthodox schools represent Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and Orthodox Church in America.⁴⁸⁶

Most institutions primarily belong to the Protestant tradition and these 132 Protestant institutions account for 55% of all theological institutions nationally. ATS indicates

⁴⁸⁵ The primary minority racial/ethnic student-body composition institutions includes: 5 Asian or Pacific Islander, 13 Black Non-Hispanic, 6 Hispanic, and 0 American Indian, Alaskan Native or Inuit.

⁴⁸⁶ ATS, "2018-2019 Annual Data Tables," Table 1.3.

Roman Catholic and Non/Inter/Multidenominational institutions represent 20% and 22% of theological institutions nationally. The remaining 3% of theological schools include 1.6% Orthodox institutions, 0.4% Catholic, Eastern Rite Traditions, and 1% not reported. Of the Protestant denominational universities, around 3.7% self-identify as Pentecostal institutions. These five member schools are in midwestern and southern states: Tennessee, Florida, Georgia, and two in Missouri. Of the Pentecostal institutions only one is affiliated with an Afro-Pentecostal tradition. The Charles H. Mason Seminary located in Atlanta, Georgia, and is a part of the Interdenominational Theological Consortium (ITC). On the other hand, some smaller Afro-Pentecostal denominations or Black church traditions may create smaller Bible colleges and “universities” that awards degrees in addition to denominational ordination. The trouble with these institutions is accreditation by lesser known governing agencies nullifies the legitimacy of the degrees awarded. The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) refers to certain institutions as degree mills because individuals who matriculate through these institutions receive degrees unrecognized by larger academic institutions.⁴⁸⁷

Degree mills emerged in the late 19th century but continued to grow throughout the country in the next century. Degree mills are not primarily religiously affiliated institutions but also include other fraudulent universities on the rise in higher education. These institutions now offer degrees at all levels including undergraduate and graduate and are problematic given their degrees hold little value. Most degree mills are not affiliated with legitimate accreditation boards and offers the substitution of life

⁴⁸⁷ Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), “Degree Mills: An Old Problem & A New Threat,” accessed on January 4, 2020, <https://www.chea.org/degree-mills-old-problem-new-threat>.

experience in place of select classes to obtain the degrees quicker.⁴⁸⁸ According to CHEA, the issue with degree mills are these institutions either defraud some individuals who attend their schools or devalue higher education by allowing people to simply pay for a degree. Though many spend billions in these institutions the degrees earned are often not transferrable to other institutions. For student seeking formal theological education within some Black or Afro-Pentecostal traditions, this presents another barrier to overcome for individuals awarded degrees from church sponsored Bible colleges or universities lacking accreditation.

The final denotation amongst institutions references the types of degrees offered. ATS boasts an offering of over 300 approved degree types collectively and they fall into four major categories: basic programs oriented toward ministerial leadership; basic programs oriented toward general theological studies; advanced programs oriented toward ministerial leadership; and advanced programs primarily toward theological research and teaching. The basic ministerial leadership programs fall into the major groupings the Master of Divinity (M.Div.), Master's in Religious Education, Master's in Church Music, or the Master's in Pastoral Studies. The Master of Arts (MA) is the primary basic program oriented toward general theological study. Advanced programs with focus on ministerial leadership include the Doctor of Ministry (DMin), Doctor of Education (EdD), Doctorate in Church Music (DMA), and areas of specializations such as Doctor of Missiology (DMiss) and Doctor of Educational Ministry (DEdMin). Finally, the advanced programs offered in theological research and teaching two within degree levels. The Master of (Sacred) Theology degrees include: Master of Theology

⁴⁸⁸ CHEA, "Degree Mills," <https://www.chea.org/degreemills-old-problem-new-threat>.

(ThM/MTh), Master of Sacred Theology (STM), and Doctor of Theology (ThD). The Doctor of Theology or Philosophy includes the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

Students

Students enter theological institutions from various educational backgrounds, life experiences, and with many vocational goals in mind. ATS provides a clearer picture of the students embarking upon theological education through their annual data tables and Entering Student Questionnaires (ESQ). The annual data tables note that between 67-72% of accepted students enrolled for degree programs throughout the U.S in the 2018-2019 school year and account for the 16,409 students entering theological education.⁴⁸⁹ Combined with all other degree programs totals 68,885 overall students, the majority enrolled in full-time M.Div. programs and the smallest grouping pursuing advanced research degrees full-time.⁴⁹⁰ There is a consistent increase in student enrollment and total student population since 2014, but a notable increase of 9.6% in total enrollment occurred in the 2018-2019 academic school year.

Additionally, increased diversity within theological institutions necessitates for understanding exactly who is pursuing theological education. Students completing theological education are largely White Non-Hispanic men followed by White women; however international male students studying on visas were the third largest racial/ethnic group in the U.S.⁴⁹¹ Black Non-Hispanics do represent the second largest according to overall racial/ethnic group and accounts for 13% of the total student population. For the previous academic year, a total of 4,439 Blackwomen were enrolled in theological

⁴⁸⁹ ATS, "2018-2019 Annual Data Tables," Table 2.1-B.

⁴⁹⁰ ATS, "2018-2019 Annual Data Tables," Tables 2.2-B and 2.3-B.

⁴⁹¹ ATS, "2018-2019 Annual Data Tables," Table 2.12-B.

programs including: 50% M.Div programs, 19% Basic Ministerial Non-M.Div, 10% General Theological Studies, 14% Advanced Ministerial Research, 3% Advanced Theological Research, and 4% Certificate or Special programs.⁴⁹² Although women tend to face challenges within religious leadership, the trends show women remain a steady demographic within theological institutions. Age demographics also help to better understand the shape of theological education. For male students the top three age groups of students were: 40-49, 20-25, and 50-64, which might indicate that many men pursue theological education as a second career. For women the age groups were the same but ranked differently: 50-64, 40-49, and 25-29.⁴⁹³ It seems women also pursue theological education as second career also, but the delay in attendance until later ages may account for the challenges many women face advancing into religious leadership within denominational organizations.

The demographic information also accounts for students entering theological institutions according to religious affiliation. There were 2,196 self-identified Classical Pentecostal students attending theological institutions in the previous academic year and they accounted for 2-4% of all students across various degree programs.⁴⁹⁴ The largest number of Pentecostal students seeking Ministerial Non-M.Div. degrees; however, within COGIC more students were seeking M.Div. and other degree programs. One interesting trend found in the questionnaire amongst Pentecostals more students students indicated upbringing in the COGIC denomination, but only a few remained current members when they enrolled.⁴⁹⁵ The data collected does not account for reasons why individuals left

⁴⁹² ATS, "2018-2019 Annual Data Tables," Table 2.13-B.

⁴⁹³ ATS, "2018-2019 Annual Data Tables," Table 2.14-B.

⁴⁹⁴ ATS, "2018-2019 Annual Data Tables," Table 2.16.

⁴⁹⁵ ATS, "ESQ 2018-2019 Profile of Participants," Table 13.

tradition or even the gender breakdown of the response, but perhaps for those leaving gender might be a contributing factor.

Additionally, the ESQ questionnaires are distributed to incoming students at member institutions to gain a deeper look into the incoming student group and pinpoints trends shaping theological education. The focus of the questionnaire examines four major areas: general student demographics, church and educational backgrounds, financial factors, vocational plans. In the 2018-2019 school year, for the fall semester about 61% of member schools submitted ESQ from over 5,000 entering students, which represented about 30% of the incoming ATS student population.⁴⁹⁶ However, given the questionnaires are voluntary some programs or demographics are not represented in reflection to the annual report data table numbers for the incoming student class. For the 2018-2019 ESQ responses M.Div students were the largest participators leaving doctoral students in both D.Min and PhD/ThD programs underrepresented. For some questions surveyed, such as questions regarding vocational plan, this is not problematic as most doctoral level students anticipate more concrete plans for after graduation. White Non-Hispanics were a group largely overrepresented, and Blacks and Asians groups were slightly overrepresented in comparison to actual percentages of total student population. Lastly, the questionnaire was more often completed by younger students and female students than other groups.

Students enter theological institutions with undergraduate degrees in academic discipline outside of the expected major of theology or religion. The years of 1998 to

⁴⁹⁶ Jo Ann Deasy, "Fall 2018 ATS Entering Students: Insights and Trends from the ESQ," ATS, January 30, 2019, webinar, 1:29:09, https://zoom.us/recording/play/teBjs_Q8K3xy6r2eCPOLf7Di2pp-IL_uCpus3G_QzLv02Zj852DafX5FSpTxQwPN.

2008 showcased the largest dip in students entering with undergrad degrees in religion or theology; but, over the past ten years the number increased to 26% of incoming students studying religion/theology in undergrad.⁴⁹⁷ Philosophy on average ranks in the lower percentages, but Roman Catholic students were the exception to this rule as many were philosophy majors. Another increase was incoming students with undergraduate degrees in the fields of fine arts and natural and physical sciences. The students entering from programs outside traditional fields might provide new ways for theological disciplines to integrate disciplines not traditionally linked to theology and contribute to broadening the understand of ministry work as including work outside the four walls of the church.

If theological education serves the primary goal of training religious leaders, then leadership becomes a central subject. The diverse age range of students entering seminary presumes most students enter with some form of leadership experience. Two-thirds of students indicated serving in leadership capacities within their church including but not limited to preaching and pastoring.⁴⁹⁸ In the five years prior to theological education additional leadership experience included serving in school or college organizations, civil or fraternal organizations, other leadership positions, and only 16% indicated no recent leadership position.⁴⁹⁹ The most significant amount serving in local churches were the 70% of Black incoming students.

On average most students confirmed participation within local congregations or perishing in the previous two years. Master level students within worship communities or

⁴⁹⁷ Deasy, "Fall 2018 ATS Entering Students" webinar.

⁴⁹⁸ Deasy, "Fall 2018 ATS Entering Students" webinar.

⁴⁹⁹ "Entering Student Profile (ESQ): 2018-2019 Profile of Participants," ATS, accessed January 4, 2020, Table 14, <https://www.ats.edu/uploads/resources/student-data/documents/total-school-profiles/esq-total-school-profile-2018-2019.pdf>.

congregations described themselves as: 69% very active in a worshiping community, 19% active, 8% moderately active, 3% not very active and only 1% inactive. Of this group, Blacks and Hispanics were the largest demographics currently engaged in ministerial work and close to 74% planned to continue working while studying.⁵⁰⁰ Only 37% of PhD/ThD/STD students entering are currently engaged in ministerial work and less than a quarter plan to continue throughout their students. The data does not indicate whether students are required to continue serving or it is voluntary, but from other data might indicate financial obligations necessitate working throughout theological education.

The financial picture of students within ATS schools are based on entering and leaving theological education. ATS assesses educational debt as well as non-educational debt. Black Non-Hispanic students are more impacted by education debt and non-educational debt upon entering theological education; however other minority groups such as multiracial students, Hispanic/Latino(a), and Native North Americans/First Nation students also bring large percentages of education debt and/or non-educational debt into theological institutions.⁵⁰¹ Unfortunately, systemic inequities within wider culture also impacts theological education. Given student debt is a reality many students indicate financial aid significantly influences decisions to attend seminary for the following demographics: female students, younger students in 20s, Black students and Hispanic students, students at mainline students.⁵⁰² Possibly to combat debt and sustain

⁵⁰⁰ Deasy, "Fall 2018 ATS Entering Students" webinar.

⁵⁰¹ ATS, ESQ 2018-2019 Profile of Students, Table 9.

⁵⁰² Deasy, "Fall 2018 ATS Entering Students" webinar.

self, 49% of all students are planning of work more than 20 hours week an increase of 12% over the past eleven years.⁵⁰³

In addition to leadership experience, theological institutions experience diverse in church backgrounds based on geographic locations and congregation types. The research gathered over the past two decades consistently illustrates close to 40% of students come from churches in urban areas; but also small increase in students coming from smaller congregations of less than 100 members.⁵⁰⁴ The trend of smaller churches investing in theological education provides contrast to the steady growth of megachurches within American society. But overall many of the racial/ethnic minority students were coming from urban settings. Theological institutions and administrators should keep these factors in mind as they cultivate university culture amongst the institutions as well as while they prepare student for future professional or vocational goals. Attending to the community within and surrounding theological institutions helps to foster community and creates spaces for deeper learning of self and others.

The road to pursue theological education is shaped by many factors. On average most responded the consideration of theological education began during undergraduate studies; however, MA Professional and MA Academic programs noted significant increase in student considering after two or more years of working. The number has almost double for MA students in this group in the last 10 years. Additionally, women are more likely to consider theological education after two or more years of work across all Master level programs.⁵⁰⁵ These statistics indicate reflection and consideration most

⁵⁰³ Deasy, "Fall 2018 ATS Entering Students" webinar.

⁵⁰⁴ Deasy, "Fall 2018 ATS Entering Students" webinar.

⁵⁰⁵ Deasy, "Fall 2018 ATS Entering Students" webinar.

student invest into discerning and decision-making regarding theological education. Consistently over the past decade the reasons for pursuing theological education center around three major themes. Both female and male students articulated experiencing a “call” from God, wanted the opportunity to study and grow, and had a desire to serve others as top reasons for pursuing theological education.⁵⁰⁶ These top reasons for pursuing indicate a blending of spirituality, academic, and social justice concern, which theological institutions can continue shaping curriculum and field educations to encompass these areas.

Potentially one of the most pressing questions regarding theological education is focused on student plans upon graduation. The focus of ATS data for students often highlights master level students only because most doctoral degree students already anticipate specific career paths. A quarter of Master level students anticipate positions as a pastor or priest upon leaving the seminary, and women only account for one-quarter of that group.⁵⁰⁷ Only 10% of entering students are undecided vocationally, but also do not desire congregational or parish ministry. The primary vocational categories for entering students were 71% ministry work, 9% teaching, and 20% other including non-profit, social justice or social work and medicine or law.⁵⁰⁸ Across all degree type the students were more likely planning for ministerial careers but the MA Academic students illustrated an increase in students planning to pursue teaching after graduation. In short, ministerial work is the primary anticipated goal for students completing theological education but other career paths including teaching, social work or social justice, and

⁵⁰⁶ ATS, ESQ 2018-2019 Profile of Participants, Table 18.

⁵⁰⁷ ATS, ESQ 2018-2019 Profile of Participants, Table 23B.

⁵⁰⁸ Deasy, “Fall 2018 ATS Entering Students” webinar.

self-employment continue to factor into vocational discernment for entering students. The data illustrates most students bring their religious traditions and experiences within theological institutions can benefit from the wealth of knowledge students bring. Theological education is not only a time for students to learn from professors but also students can learn from the diverse experiences and skills each bring to theological studies.

Graduates

Retention and graduation statistics help higher education institutions discern effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. Annual data tables also provide information about graduating students. Member schools in the United States averaged a 12.2% increase in total degrees awarded in this 2018-2019 academic year to include a total of 15,425 graduating students.⁵⁰⁹ The primary degrees awarded were M.Div, but the general theological study, advanced ministerial, and advanced research degree completions experienced the exponential growth also. Blackwomen represented around 19.7% of all female graduates and 6.5% of all 2018-2019 graduates. Blackwomen were the fourth highest awarded group M.Div. degrees, trailing White men, White women, and Black men respectively. ATS does not further distinguish the degree completion based on religious tradition, which presents challenges in how many Blackwomen graduates belong to traditions that welcome theological education and women in leadership.

Additionally, member schools use the Graduating Student Questionnaires (GSQ) to track overall demographics, student debt, program satisfaction, and vocational goals of each graduate. The results are compiled and presented in the annual graduating student

⁵⁰⁹ ATS, 2018-2019 Annual Data Tables,” Table 2.17-B.

profile and annual data tables. Unless otherwise noted the data from this section references the most recent total school profile of the annual GSQ representing the 2018-2019 academic school year.⁵¹⁰ Around two-thirds of the member schools submitted around 5,700 completed GSQs. The respondents were primarily M.Div. students (44%), but 19% represented the MA Academic, 14% MA Professional, 11% DMin, and 12% all other degrees. Doctor of Ministry graduates provided the bulk of data regarding doctoral level programs. Graduate participation from the M.Div. and DMin programs increased this year, and other degree graduates participation notably decreased by as much as 9%. There was an increase in the number of female respondents, which accounted for 40% of overall respondents.⁵¹¹ Unlike the ESQ data mentioned in the previous section, the GSQ for the 2018-2019 academic year included more accurate representation across age groups including about 30% of respondents for each group in 20s and 30s, 19% in the 40s, and 25% in 50 or above category.

The graduating class of 2019 was: 61% White Non-Hispanic, 14% Black, 11% Asian or Pacific Islander, 4% Hispanic/Latino(a), 4% Visa or Nonresident, 4% preferred not to disclose, 2% Multiracial, and 0.30% Native North American/First Nation.⁵¹² Of graduates majority were married with 42.8% men and 21.6% women and the remaining 35.6% singles accounted for 17% men and 18.6% women. Four percent of the American graduating class were members of Pentecostal denominations which included a total of

⁵¹⁰ “Graduating Student Profile (GSQ): 2018-2019 Profile of Participants,” ATS, accessed January 4, 2019, <https://www.ats.edu/uploads/resources/student-data/documents/total-school-profiles/gsq-total-school-profile-2018-2019.pdf>.

⁵¹¹ Jo Ann Deasy, “2018-2019 ATS Graduates: Insights and Trends from the GSQ,” ATS, August 22, 2019, webinar, 1:24:01, https://zoom.us/recording/play/GMkbAX-SkCSXGPe_oK8yiHFVcD8nC0Xfsx0rrRQEUjfhHgjXuo-VXaNFG3wAingw?continueMode=true.

⁵¹² GSQ 2018-2019 Profile of Participants, Table 3.

220 graduates.⁵¹³ Most students remained in the degree programs they entered theological education with only 15.7% switching primarily affecting the M.Div., MA Professional, and MA Academic degree programs.⁵¹⁴ Completion of programs averaged around 3-4 years for M.Div. grads, 2-3 years for MA Professional and Academic grads, and all others programs from two years to more than five years. In each degree program there were several outliers and many who took longer than the six-year selection option to complete their program. The longer completion rates can account for the 16.2 % of graduates taking an academic leave, which majority noted was for personal reasons.⁵¹⁵

In terms of financing theological education, full-time male students typical on average entered theological education with less debt than full-time female students. Only 36% of these women began studies with no student debt compared to close to 63% of men with no student debt.⁵¹⁶ For male full-time students the highest percentage of debt were none, less than \$10,000, and 30,000 to 39,999 compared to the students with highest ranges including more than \$60,000, \$20,000 to \$29,999, and none.⁵¹⁷ By the time graduates leave theological education many have added to individual educational debt. Surprisingly, 70% of graduates entering theological institutions with no debt were able to leave without adding any debt.⁵¹⁸

On average students incur from \$15,000 to \$30,000 in student debt completing seminary.⁵¹⁹ ATS reported average student debt has decreased by 8% and number of

⁵¹³ GSQ 2018-2019 Profile of Participants, Table 12.

⁵¹⁴ GSQ 2018-2019 Profile of Participants, Table 1.

⁵¹⁵ GSQ 2018-2019 Profile of Participants, Table 2.

⁵¹⁶ GSQ 2018-2019 Profile of Participants, Table 8.

⁵¹⁷ GSQ 2018-2019 Profile of Participants, Table 8.

⁵¹⁸ GSQ 2018-2019 Profile of Participants, Table 7.

⁵¹⁹ GSQ 2018-2019 Profile of Participants, Table 7.

borrowers since 2015 which they attribute to their economic challenges facing future ministers initiative.⁵²⁰ The group is currently examining several approaches in response to decreasing financial burden including offering residency programs that shorten amount of time in school or increasing online programs which does not require relocation and students can remain working. Additionally, ATS found economic inequities within society also impact the finances of students. Black Non-Hispanic graduates were the highest group of borrowers and incurred the most debt of overall graduates averaging \$43,040 in student debt and ATS is currently working on a Black Student debt initiative to address this issue.⁵²¹

To gauge a fuller picture of theological education questions regarding student experiences and personal satisfaction were included. Across all degree levels the most influential impacts on educational experience were personal life experience and interaction with students.⁵²² The third influential impact for M.Div. students was experiences in ministry, but for all other degree groupings the most influential impact was introduction to different perspectives. Graduate responses noted experiences personally and in community attributed to greater satisfaction. For theological institutions, this highlights the importance of cultivating community but also attending to struggles in addition to the challenges of those matriculating throughout the institution. On way in which institutions must be more intentional are considering the technological advances shaping the way theological study is completed. One major trend within higher education is the increase of hybrid programs or complete online/distance learning

⁵²⁰ Deasy, “2018-2019 ATS Graduates” webinar.

⁵²¹ Deasy, “2018-2019 ATS Graduates” webinar.

⁵²² GSQ 2018-2019 Profile of Participants, Table 17.

programs, which reduces the actual in-person requirements for students within programs. The number of graduates completing degrees completely online has almost tripled since 2013, but still most students complete programs on main campus.⁵²³

In addition to surveying experiences other questions consider institutional support and resources, both academically as well as for campus life in general. Most student ranked their institutions above average and satisfied with the institution's ability to teach skills including thinking theologically, relating social issues to faith, using and interpreting scripture, effectively relating with both men and women, and knowledge of church history and doctrine.⁵²⁴ The areas lowest rated were pastoral or practical skills such as conducting worship/liturgy, parish administration, integrating ecological concerns or science into ministry, in addition to technical skills regarding specifics of church polity and canon law. It can be presumed that graduates desired more support in developing in the aforementioned areas. Regarding campus services, surprisingly many graduates were somewhat dissatisfied with the availability of child care resources at institutions.⁵²⁵ This possibly accounts for the growing demographic of students pursuing theological education with families. Other areas for improvement from graduates' perspectives were student debt and financial counseling, health and wellness, and career and vocational training.⁵²⁶ Oddly enough, graduates felt institutions were more effective with spiritual formation and promoting personal growth as the students aged. Yet, every age group strongly perceived personal spiritual growth and increased faith as a result of theological

⁵²³ GSQ 2018-2019 Profile of Participants, Table 13.

⁵²⁴ GSQ 2018-2019 Profile of Participants, Table 15.

⁵²⁵ GSQ 2018-2019 Profile of Participants, Table 20.

⁵²⁶ GSQ 2018-2019 Profile of Participants, Table 20.

education.⁵²⁷ In short, most students across all programs were satisfied with the overall theological education experience and agreed they would make the same choice if given the chance again.⁵²⁸

Lastly, the research on graduates focused on anticipated vocations and future goals. Most graduates anticipated ministry work primarily within congregations or parishes. The largest percentage of graduates had professional goals of full-time or part-time pastoring, but when gender examined men doubled the percentage of women seeking pastoring positions or serving within congregations.⁵²⁹ Black graduates in particular ranked fourth out of seven racial/ethnic groups either looking to serve or currently serving in congregations and the remaining 35% sought employment outside congregations.⁵³⁰ Whites as well as multiracial students were more likely to be serving outside of congregations. Positions where graduates were close across genders were campus ministry and teaching positions including secondary, seminary, and other higher education areas. One surprise amongst gender was that more women graduates pursued hospital chaplaincy and self-employment than their male counterparts. Black grads were the largest percentage without job offers followed closely by Multiracial and White Non-Hispanic grads, and Native North American/First Nation graduates were the lowest demographic without job offer.⁵³¹ Around 40% of female students compared to around 30% male students left school without job placement and only 4% of overall graduates were completely unsure about their plans upon graduation.⁵³²

⁵²⁷ Deasy, “2018-2019 ATS Graduates” webinar.

⁵²⁸ GSQ 2018-2019 Profile of Participants, Table 21.

⁵²⁹ GSQ 2018-2019 Profile of Participants, Table 23.

⁵³⁰ GSQ 2018-2019 Profile of Participants, Table 22.

⁵³¹ Deasy, “2018-2019 ATS Graduates” webinar.

⁵³² GSQ 2018-2019 Profile of Participants, Table 23.

Long-term planning also demonstrated most graduates expected to remain in ministerial work. When surveyed about five-year plan post-graduation the greatest number of graduates still desired positions within religious leadership and congregational ministry and over half of Master level students anticipated further education and training.⁵³³ Though many plan to remain in ministry the realities include the need for some graduates to incorporate bi-vocational work. Over 50% of taking positions in congregational ministry did not anticipate bi-vocational work compared to 31% working outside of congregations.⁵³⁴ Black graduates are the highest group anticipating bi-vocational ministry followed by other minority groups whereas Whites are the lowest racial/ethnic groups anticipating bi-vocational ministry.⁵³⁵ Overall only close to 30% of graduates anticipated the need for bi-vocational work either within or outside of congregational ministry. In short, the data shows on average Black students (and Blackwomen) are more vulnerable than other racial/ethnic groups given the large debt brought and incurred as a result of theological and the challenges securing positions upon graduation.

Faculty

Faculty are vital members of theological institutions. Students routinely select theological institutions often influenced by the research interests and academic accomplishments of faculty members. Research additionally indicates many students were influenced by the quality of interaction with the faculty members.⁵³⁶ As previously mentioned, students commonly attributed to interactions with members in theological

⁵³³ GSQ 2018-2019 Profile of Participants, Table 26.

⁵³⁴ GSQ 2018-2019 Profile of Participants, Table 22.

⁵³⁵ Deasy, "2018-2019 ATS Graduates" webinar.

⁵³⁶ Deasy, "Fall 2018 Entering Students" webinar.

communities for making education more effective. So exactly who are those faculty members teaching within theological institutions?

Annual ATS reports divides faculty along the following rankings of: Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Full Professor, and others. The primary examination of full-time professors overlooks the trend of many institutions to contract adjunct faculty members to teach as well. White Non-Hispanic males hold the majority of full-time faculty positions at all levels and consistently represented 79-80% of all male faculty members and 60% of total faculty members at theological institutions in the U.S.⁵³⁷ The second largest demographic were White Non-Hispanic females, who also represented majority female full-time faculty positions, and held 18% of overall faculty positions. The remaining 22% of faculty members positions were held by persons of color, faculty who identified as multi-racial, and visa faculty member. Black Non-Hispanic men and Asian or Pacific Islander men each represented close to 5% of total faculty positions and were trailed by Hispanic/Latino men with 3.5% of total full-time faculty positions. Amongst the women of color Black women represented 3%, Asian or Pacific Islander women represented 2%, and Latinas represented only 1% of all full-time faculty positions. The American Indian, Alaskan Native or Inuit group is severely underrepresented with a total of four full-time faculty members across all theological institutions through the U.S.

It is almost guaranteed that all member schools within the U.S. could have more than one White male and female faculty based the numbers alone, but no other racial ethnic group is guaranteed that based on the total number of faculty positions held by

⁵³⁷ ATS, "2018-2019 Annual Data Tables," Table 3.1-B.

persons of color. In many cases, especially women of color faculty, each group accounts for less than 100 total positions to represent their demographic. Diversity amongst faculty impacts theological education in many ways, but composition of faculty translates to representation or lack of effective representation.

Challenges of creating “home” in formal theological education

The overall challenge of theological education is understanding the overall shape of what both theological education and ministry means. Trends from society infiltrate theological institutions and colors how ministry and education must adapt in order to remain relevant and in-step with society. For example, social media began primarily for social interaction with younger generations, but now morphed into strong communication tool utilized by businesses and organizations alike. Social media decreased the physical distance required for connecting with others. Likewise, social media has increased in impact for entering students connecting with theological schools to request information and apply and has resulted in decrease of traditional ways people previously requested institution information such as phone calls or campus visits.⁵³⁸ Additionally, technological advances impacts how services are also provided including the increase in hybrid and online programming and these also shape how ministry has transformed. These provide examples of how theological education has adapted to incorporate technological advancement in society, but the final section of this chapter addresses challenges for theological institutions in creating “home” within theological education. The challenges fall into two major categories: diversity inclusion and vocational/career planning.

⁵³⁸ Deasy, “Fall 2018 ATS Entering Students” webinar.

Diversity Inclusion

Diversity and inclusion become trending topics because theological education has grown more diverse in the past twenty years. National data anticipates that by 2040 racial/ethnic demographics in the U.S. population will shift to minorities representing the majority population. Based upon this prediction the Committee on Race and Ethnicity (CORE) and the Woman in Leadership (WIL) initiatives within ATS are working to address diversity concerns important to theological education.

Understandings of diversity inclusion almost often include focus on physical representation marked by race and gender. The data above illustrated the growing diversity in student populations but the limited diversity amongst faculty stunts long-term effectiveness. Over 70% of graduates ranked their institutions as effectively equipping them to interact with other racial/ethnic or cultural contexts and other religious traditions.⁵³⁹ Additionally, graduates overwhelming ranked high their experiences with diversity including institutions attempt to be diverse and inclusive, overall respect for religious diversity (both the faith tradition of individual and others), and diversity amongst students. But the challenges of ATS data is it captures the bulk of information during students first semester of attendance at theological institutions and then of those graduating. There is limited data captured on those who discontinue theological education including the reasons why and additionally unexamined is the context of alums after graduation. Follow-up and assessment with alums in the years post-graduation provides insightful clues to true effectiveness theological institutions.

⁵³⁹ Deasy, "2018-2019 ATS Graduates" webinar.

Conversely, longitudinal studies show theological education still faces many challenges on the issues of race and gender. Research with faculty members indicate that White faculty members were the least likely than other professors regularly incorporate multicultural education into their curriculum.⁵⁴⁰ According to the same study, Black and multiracial professors never failed to include varying amounts of multicultural education into their pedagogy, and most Hispanic/Latino(a) professors often incorporated multicultural education. Student demographics, faculty and upper administration composition influence practices within theological institutions. However, personal and professional development, and institutional commitments can provide effective support too. For example, the requirement by theological institutions to include diversity in every course creates institutional support in ensuring theological education includes resources from diverse backgrounds.

Diversity training is a commitment many organizations participate in, but corporate trainings can become ineffective at addressing grassroots practices. One model suggests providing diversity mentors to White faculty members as a solution. Diversity mentors are a trusted individual who colleagues can talk and receive feedback from about their racial awareness.⁵⁴¹ The use of diversity mentors create intentional dialogue around inequities within the university but also provide opportunity to build diversity resources and language for understanding and addressing diversity challenges in higher education in teaching and structurally within institutions.

⁵⁴⁰ Deborah H.C. Gin, "Embracing Diversity: Two Models of Faculty Engagement," *Theological Education* 52, no. 1 (2018): 81.

⁵⁴¹ Gin, "Embracing Diversity," 88.

The topic of gender in diversity inclusion impacts theological institutions at all levels. For students, attending to diversity challenges means first recognizing the road to ministry for women is often laden with challenges. There is an increase in women entering seminaries, but many women, especially Blackwomen, many belong to faith traditions who still oppose the ordination of women or formal theological education. To address the challenges of women some theological institutions create women's centers or community groups dedicated to women and addressing gendered issues. Women often use these spaces to gather sharing meals or for public and private discussions. Additionally, these groups host guest speakers to address issues pertinent to gender and intersectionality. But not all theological institutions have centers dedicated to supporting and offering resources for women. Smaller institutions might not have such centers and many institutions additionally lack diverse female faculty members. On the other hand, the WIL initiative regularly hosts conferences and conducts research addressing challenges and strategies for women in upper administrative leadership positions within theological institutions.

The area where theological institutions can improve to create home amongst female students come directly from WIL. Focused concentration of initiatives for women are placed within upper administration leadership such as presidents and deans, but it misses the scores of women who matriculate throughout theological institutions nationally. Women on average tend to be more relationally focused than men and a frequently mentioned success strategy amongst the group is mentorship.⁵⁴² Mentorship establishes a relationship where a seasoned woman is able to affirm gifts and talents, but

⁵⁴² Diane Kennedy, "Leadership Success Strategies for Women," *Colloquy* 19, no.1 (Fall 2010): 38.

also provides feedback for improvement and guidance when facing challenges. In addition to creating institutional support for diversity within courses, theological institutions can benefit from implementing networks of community and support for female students. For schools with established women mentorship networks, improvements in the programming can include greater diversity including various racial/ethnic groups, career and vocational backgrounds, and religious traditions via partnership with outside community organizations in addition to faculty members.

Finally, diversity inclusion is impacted by finances. An adage states “money makes the world go ‘round.’” The demand of theological institutions to balance budgets is one area of concern, but perhaps a greater ethical concern is student debt. Within higher education and theological institutions conversations around student debt have become hot topics and many individuals find themselves drowning in the cost of financing education. The Economic Challenges Facing Future Ministers Initiative originated in partnership between The Lily Foundation and ATS to gather information regarding theological educational debt in hopes to offer solutions at decreasing the overall debt. Of all students entering seminary in 2018 around 57% of students brought no debt with them, but the 8% bringing more than \$60,000 in debt was a source of concern.⁵⁴³ According to an ATS rule of thumb is “students should not graduate theological education with more educational debt than they would earn in their first year.”⁵⁴⁴

Financial debt was also impacted by ecclesial families and citizenship. Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions included students least likely to bring debt or the lower amounts of student debt from undergraduate studies possibly because of institutional

⁵⁴³ Deasy, “Fall 2018 ATS Entering Students” webinar.

⁵⁴⁴ Deasy, “Fall 2018 ATS Entering Students” webinar.

hierarchies and endowed support. Also, international students and Canadian students each had over 74% of students entering theological education with no debt. International students tend to have lesser amounts of debt based on the financial requirements needed for studying within U.S. school and acquire less debt based on the inability to incur federal student aid. Younger students as well are more likely to bring debt simply because they have not had enough time to repay undergrad loans; but older students do borrow on par with younger students to fund education.

The greatest financial concern impacting diversity reflects the alarming trend of marginalized populations. Previous sections the chapter indicated Black and Hispanic/Latino(a) students are the biggest percentage of borrows and have the highest amount of debt. Furthermore, factoring gender into the equation creates an additional layer. Blackwomen represents one of the most potentially vulnerable populations within theological institutions considering student debt and limited job opportunities for some within religious leadership. For theological institutions without Black faculty members, the effects can be more detrimental because it becomes difficult finding a mentor who can address the intersections of gender, race, and class in vocational discerning and professional development. This does not mean that all Blackwomen can only connect with a Blackwoman faculty mentor, but at times connecting with commonalities might offer additional insight or comfort.

In short, the impending reality of a largely diverse population also impacts the future of ministry. Over the next twenty years theological students will be working primarily in congregations and institutions affected by the national shift. Theological students and faculty not adequately formed and prepared for this creates long-term

problems arise. As theological institutions create space to include the integrative identities of those pursuing formal theological education students are better equipped for various types of ministerial work. Additionally, theological communities become better at effective education because institutions learn from the wisdom and experiences of students attending and can re-new various ineffective structures or barriers from old theological models.

Alternative career and vocational paths

The second challenge to creating home within theological institutions considers vocational and career development. One primary goal of seminaries is educating and training religious leaders, but what happens as increasing numbers of student enroll into these institutions without the desire to become religious leaders? Religious leadership represents ordained clergy and ecclesiastics including “priests, pastors, imams, rabbis, chaplains, missionaries, nuns, sacred musicians, and anyone else who works within the religious world to produce religious capital or religious goods and services.”⁵⁴⁵ It raises the question if seminaries ought to transform mission statements and/or objectives to be inclusive of vocations outside of religious leadership. Little research is completed on individuals attending theological education without the desire to become religious leader. The need to understand the various reasons individuals pursue theological education is critical as institutions and the academic study of religion develops and evolves. The section following examines the M.Div. degree program offered by theological institutions. Advanced theological degrees were not included primarily because most

⁵⁴⁵ Todd W. Ferguson. “Failing to Master Divinity: How Institutional Type, Financial Debt, Community Acceptance, and Gender Affect Seminary Graduate’ Career Choices,” *Review of Religious Research* 57, no. 3 (September 2015): 342. doi:10.1007/s13644-015-0202-2.

individuals pursuing advanced graduate programs desire careers in religious leadership of some sort.

Black Protestant traditions and Evangelicals typically do not require theological education, but as the religious leadership becomes more professionalized many from these groups pursue theological education.⁵⁴⁶ With the creation of ATS seminaries often serve partially as the “gatekeepers” in credentialing of the profession of religious leadership.⁵⁴⁷ Using the data from ATS, Ferguson include a sampled size of 3,015 completed student responses that represented 46% of the overall M.Div. graduating class of 2012-2013.⁵⁴⁸ The overall graduating class demographics included:

Thirty-seven percent of the graduating M.Div. students were female. The average educational debt load was over \$30,000. Over half of the students range between 25 and 40 years old, and 13% began programs immediately following undergraduate studies. More than one-third of the group are Mainline or Evangelical Protestants and 13% Black Protestant. Fifteen percent of M.Div. graduates were part-time status. Sixty-six percent of seminarians were White. Sixty percent of overall graduates were married. Of the 136 schools sampled: fifteen percent were connected to larger research and teaching universities; seventeen percent were 4-year colleges; and sixty eight percent were independent schools not affiliated with another institution. The average seminary enrollment is

⁵⁴⁶ Ferguson, “Failing to Master Divinity,” 342.

⁵⁴⁷ Ferguson, “Failing to Master Divinity,” 343.

⁵⁴⁸ Ferguson, “Failing to Master Divinity,” 348.

308 students, with the range from 33 to 79. The seminaries fell into three major traditions: 10% Catholic; 46% Evangelical; and 44% Mainline Protestant.⁵⁴⁹

In short, less than one-fifth of graduates desired a religious leadership career five years after graduation.⁵⁵⁰ Those who withdrew from seminaries were not included in the data.

Ferguson offered four potential contributors (institutional type, financial strain, community acceptance, and gender) to the breakdown in M.Div. graduates choosing to forgo religious leadership. Firstly, institution type factored into the program selection by M.Div. students. Students who graduated from independent institutions more often desired a career religious leadership than those at university-affiliated institutions. The reasoning may lie in university-affiliated seminaries placing greater emphasis on research and the study of religion rather than on practice or practical application. Ferguson adds, “independent seminaries might be better able to professionalize their students into a religious career.”⁵⁵¹ Independent institutions appear to better cultivate and hone the pastoral skills attributed to religious leaders and supports religious leadership identity.

Secondly, Ferguson disproved his original hypothesis that student debt pressures M.Div. graduates away from religious leadership careers. Instead graduates still desired to be a religious leader after graduation motivated by a deep sense of calling.⁵⁵² M.Div. graduates expressed a vocational call to ministry as a religious leader and were not swayed by financial debt or strain. The burden of excess student debt can become problematic for individuals over time. Some seminaries incorporate elective course on

⁵⁴⁹ Ferguson, “Failing to Master Divinity,” 351.

⁵⁵⁰ Ferguson, “Failing to Master Divinity,” 354.

⁵⁵¹ Ferguson, “Failing to Master Divinity,” 356.

⁵⁵² Ferguson, “Failing to Master Divinity,” 356.

financial literacy for congregations and many of the principles translate to good financial stewardship at the individual level.

Additionally, Ferguson found subjective experience factored into professional choices. Greater feelings of acceptance and support contribute to the likelihood of a religious leadership career. This factor correlates with additional findings about gender especially given the patriarchal influence within religion and religious traditions. Female M.Div. graduates may opt out of religious leadership in attempts to adhere to denominational practices and others simply to avoid pressure associated with being a minority in the field.⁵⁵³ More women from Catholic institutions than Mainline Protestant traditions do not desire religious leadership position, possibly because the limited roles for women within Catholic leadership. Another surprising correlation with gender was regarding marriage. Married female M.Div. graduates were more likely than non-married female graduates to desire a religious leadership career, which Ferguson suggest marriage may provide “a buffering effect to experience of marginalization for women in seminary.”⁵⁵⁴ The differences in responsibilities associated with marriage and families suggests the need for solid post-graduation plans and decisive career commitments.

Marriage and feelings of acceptance did not affect male responses the same. Male M.Div. graduates’ responses were influenced by race, age, and religious affiliation. White males, more than others male minority groups, desire religious leadership, who Ferguson notes benefits most from White male privilege within society and institutions.⁵⁵⁵ Males within the Evangelical faith tradition demonstrated a stronger desire

⁵⁵³ Ferguson, “Failing to Master Divinity,” 357.

⁵⁵⁴ Ferguson, “Failing to Master Divinity,” 357-58.

⁵⁵⁵ Ferguson, “Failing to Master Divinity,” 358.

for religious leadership possibly due to the construction of gender roles within the institutions. Age factors into the results because the data shows men over forty have stronger desire to be religious leaders than their younger colleagues. Theological education is a costly endeavor requiring both time and financial resources. For women, age is not a factor like it is for men, given women usually do not make the decision to pursue theological education lightly. Ferguson suggests regardless of age, women across all age groups “are likely to have an educational goal in mind after they graduate with a M.Div.”⁵⁵⁶

Finally, the research found that male M.Div. respond differently to the isomorphic pressure within theological institutions. By definition isomorphic pressure represents the “constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions.”⁵⁵⁷ Seminaries are both academic and religious institutions, and face pressure to conform to at times competing expectations. Both produce pressure “to adopt characteristics that would establish them as legitimate members of their field,” but the expression of each differs.⁵⁵⁸ Religious pressure represents the constraint to mirror other religious organizations; whereas, educationally seminaries are pushed to mimic standards within other higher education institutions. The results about isomorphic pressure found variations between genders and based on university type. In university-related seminaries, the pressure to select a career outside religious leadership is greater; hence, an indicator for why men responded very unlikely

⁵⁵⁶ Ferguson, “Failing to Master Divinity,” 358.

⁵⁵⁷ Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell, “The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields,” *American Sociological Review* 48, no 2 (April 1983), 149. doi:10.2307/2095101.

⁵⁵⁸ Ferguson, “Failing to Master Divinity,” 344.

to choose a career in religious leadership. The effect was not the same at independent seminaries, where lower amounts of isomorphic pressure creates a protective buffering effect for men, and many male M.Div. graduates desire a career in religious leadership.⁵⁵⁹ Isomorphic pressures across all institution types provide no protective buffer to women as evidenced from the data and most recognize “[t]he road toward entering religious leadership for women is difficult.”⁵⁶⁰

So, what does all this really mean to theological institutions? Why should theological institutions be concerned for those who want careers outside of religious leadership? Ferguson offers several takeaways from the research: Firstly, theological institutions must reconsider the branding and implementation of the M.Div. degree. The primary goal of M.Div. program is to train future of religious leaders, but in university-affiliated seminaries students are more likely to select other career goals. Developing research is frequently becomes the primary goal that at these institutions, and the university ethos then mutes the objective of training religious leaders. Secondly, university culture matters, and faculty and administrators influence the professional development and career goal of students after graduation. Thirdly, theological institutions and denominations must account for the challenges women face in the journey to religious leadership and theological education. Providing resources that assist women with vocational training and support for other careers in the religious field for women in traditions closed to female leadership. Lastly, the influence of student debt may be small, but institutions should monitor and participate in faithful financial stewardship.

Addressing the national student debt crisis ought to be an ethical concern of theological

⁵⁵⁹ Ferguson, “Failing to Master Divinity,” 358.

⁵⁶⁰ Ferguson, “Failing to Master Divinity,” 358.

institutions. While most view “calling” to take precedence over debt amassed, the long-term consequences can create ripple effects such as need for bi-vocational work or eventually lead to clergy burnout, health challenges, etc. These long-term effects prove particularly challenging for vulnerable and marginalized demographics. The goal of theological education does not always have to be religious leadership; however, Ferguson brings greater awareness to how theological education can be rebranded to offer solutions to current challenges.

Theological institutions benefit in creating homes for students attending theological institutions by accounting for expanding understanding of ministerial work. Revamping understandings of ministerial work to include more non-traditional and innovative approaches to theological education to account for students. There is an increasing trend of students coming from disciplines outside of religion and theology. Incorporating the sciences, both natural and social sciences, into more basic theological degree programming can prepare students for a variety of ministerial work outside of congregations. Graduates included professions such as lawyers, doctors, and military positions as anticipated career vocations. Although most students pursuing theological education desire careers in religious leadership, gender norms within many conservative traditions, such as Black Pentecostalism, make it hard for women to secure leadership positions let alone paid leadership positions. Creating resources within theological institutions addresses the realities gender exclusion but carves out a home that welcomes the diversity of ministerial work.

Summary

In conclusion, this chapter effectively built the case for theological institutions working to create spaces for students in attendance. The data provided from ATS research helped to identify the areas in which theological institutions are effectively listening to their students and can gauge the overall strength of theological education. Theological institutions have recognized that certain student populations such as women and Black students who are impacted by societal inequities are working to improve their experiences and supportive resources. Additionally, while ATS is working to address national issues such as student debt and gender gap inequality, it is up to member schools also to take intentional steps in listening to and offering resources of support to students in attendance. This chapter offered insights for consideration in the final two steps of the pastoral circle in the next and final chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE. FAITHFULLY RE-MEMBERING HOME WITH HOPE

*The revolutionaries are Black women scholars, who have armed themselves with pen and paper, not simply to dismantle the master's house, but to do the more important work of building a house of their own.*⁵⁶¹-Stacey Floyd-Thomas

Most of the project has been dedicated to listening to the stories of Blackwomen in America, Pentecostalism, and theological institutions. The skill of deep listening arms religious leaders with the tools to see the acoustics of the overall group, and hopefully offers more than answers to theological issues including advocating for enriched dialogue with all voices in the community present.⁵⁶² The previous chapters of this project listened intently to the experiences of Blackwomen within American society, recognizing that Blackwomen have negotiated the intersection of race and gender from their displaced arrival to this country. The new “home” nation became a space of hostility and marginalization; yet, Blackwomen found ways to honor their survival, dignity, and many successes. Likewise, the story of American Pentecostalism in chapter three illuminated how the religious fabric of the nation served as the breeding ground for this new religious phenomenon to be birthed and spread throughout the world. Pentecostalism, though, soon acquiesced to the racial discrimination and sexism prevalent in U.S. culture despite being championed for its radical diversity during the early days. As a result, the Black Pentecostal tradition emerged and highlighted its syncretic ability to affirm an integrated Black and Pentecostal identity. Blackwomen were afforded some opportunities to celebrate their personhood within the Black Pentecostal tradition; however, some

⁵⁶¹ Stacey Floyd-Thomas, *Deeper Shades of Purple*, 1-2.

⁵⁶² Whitehead and Whitehead, *Method in Ministry*, 68.

limitations circumvent the full participation of women in all levels of leadership within the tradition. The last chapter listened to the story of theological education in America particularly examining race, gender, and challenges to constructing a space for home.

But only listening to the stories of each conversation partner falls short of the goal of the pastoral circle. Once each group is given the chance to speak, then dialogue amongst the three must occur. The Whiteheads refer to this second step in their method as assertion and this crucible serves as the space for “honest confrontation among differing views and values.”⁵⁶³ Assertion becomes a critical component of theological reflection. The first portion of this chapter will examine theological understandings of home. The discussion of home helps to create understanding of home as representing both space and identity. The final section of the chapter offers concrete practical ways to address fragmented identity of within theological institutions, through a resource I have named A Sistah’s Network.

Theological Understandings of “Home”

The understanding of “home” is a central theme of this work and the opening narrative created the space for further discussion of home. One goal of this dissertation is to offer ways to create communities of home within theological institutions for Pentecostal Blackwomen. The previous chapters examined the broader context of home for Blacks and Blackwomen within the nation and Pentecostalism, but the grounding of home begins with a theological discussion of home. Home is usually connected with comfort in the sense that home allows people to be unrestrictedly themselves and feel loved. The privacy within the physical home structure creates this opportunity and

⁵⁶³ Whitehead and Whitehead, *Method in Ministry*, 76.

connects the intimacy affiliated with home. At home often individuals can remove the masks of pretense and undress from the weight of existing in the world. Home provides the space to rest away from the masses and is the place where individuals can control certain aspects. Regardless of one's status and authority in society, homes allow many a measure of freedom over how the space is decorated, entered, and maintained. Home is also associated with protection because of the physical shelter and the barrier that homes provide from the outside world and elements. Despite these connotations, home is not always a safe place. There are times when home no longer remains home, and one must leave. Other times people are forced or kidnapped from their homes. The latter scenarios represent the theme of displacement, and displacement is not a stranger amongst theological discussions of home.

Numerous biblical stories offer conceptualization of home, but the primary story used in this project is the Exodus account.⁵⁶⁴ The Exodus story is the account of the delivery from Egyptian captivity of the children of Israel, God's chosen people. The central character of the Exodus story, Moses, emerged as a young Israelite born under Egyptian captivity. After the Pharaoh issued a death decree for all Hebrew boys his mother hides him and later send him down the river in a basket.⁵⁶⁵ As divine providence had it, the Pharaoh's daughter retrieved him and unknowingly hired Moses' biological mother to nurse him.⁵⁶⁶ Moses grew up in the palace but fled Egypt as an adult after killing an Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew slave.⁵⁶⁷ Moses spent decades isolated as

⁵⁶⁴ The Exodus account primarily takes place beginning in the book of Exodus and chronicles the key events leading up to and proceeding the Israelites being released from Egyptian captivity.

⁵⁶⁵ Exodus 1:3 (New King James Version).

⁵⁶⁶ Exodus 1:5-10 (New King James Version).

⁵⁶⁷ Exodus 1:11-15 (New King James Version).

a shepherd before he experienced his divine call via a burning bush to become the liberator of the Israelites from Egyptian captivity.⁵⁶⁸ After much hesitation and with the assistance of his brother Aaron, Moses returned to Egypt to confront Pharaoh.⁵⁶⁹ A series of ten plagues finally convinced Pharaoh to heed Moses' instructions and release the Israelite people.⁵⁷⁰ Pharaoh changed his mind and pursued the freed Israelites, but is drowned with his army at the Red Sea that God miraculously parted for the Israelites to safely cross.⁵⁷¹ The Israelites journeyed over the next forty years wandering through the wilderness until Joshua, Moses' successor, led them into the Promised Land.⁵⁷²

Two themes regarding home are prominent in the Exodus story. Identity and displacement remained central for both Moses and the Israelites. Moses faced an identity crisis when his ethnic heritage clashes with his new identity as an adopted royal family member. Home became central to Moses' sense of a fragmented identity. Judy Fentress-Williams highlights that because Moses had two mommies "his upbringing demanded multiple consciousness."⁵⁷³ The influence of both these women impacted the understanding of his ethnic identity and his future identity leading the nation out of Egyptian captivity. The given name Moses, an Egyptian derivative of Thutmose, reflected his story as a child drawn out of the water by his adoptive mother; however, in

⁵⁶⁸ Exodus 2:1-4:8 (New King James Version).

⁵⁶⁹ Exodus 5:1-4; 6:28-7:13 (New King James Version).

⁵⁷⁰ The ten plagues included: (1) water becoming blood (Exodus 7:14-25), (2) frogs (Exodus 8:1-5), (3) lice (Exodus 8:16-19), (4) flies (Exodus 8:20-31), (5) livestock diseased (Exodus 9:1-7), (6) boils (Exodus 9:8-12), (7) hail (Exodus 9:13-35), (8) locusts (Exodus 10:1-20), (9) darkness (Exodus 10:21-29), (10) death of Egyptian firstborn (Exodus 12:29-30). The Exodus, or release from Egyptian bondage occurs in chapter 12:31-51 (New King James Version).

⁵⁷¹ Exodus 14:1-30 (New King James Version).

⁵⁷² Exodus 13:17-20, Numbers 14:33-34, and Joshua 1:1-17; 3:1-5:15 (The New King James Version.)

⁵⁷³ Judy Fentress-Williams, "Exodus," in *The Africana Bible: Reading Israel's Scriptures from Africa and the African Diaspora*, eds. Hugh R. Page, Jr. and Randall C. Bailey (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010), 82-83.

Hebrew it represented “the one who draws out” reflective of his later identity as a deliverer.⁵⁷⁴ These two identities shaped his life experiences. Although palace life afforded him the privileges of Egyptian royalty, Moses still identified with his biological racial identity. This is precisely why he sought to protect the Hebrew slave from the harsh oppression of the Egyptian captivity. Home reemerged in the story when he is instructed to return to Egypt, his homeland to advocate for the release of his fellow people.⁵⁷⁵ Upon returning home he prepared the Israelites to make the journey to their new home, the Promised Land.⁵⁷⁶ As he returned and stood before Pharaoh he owned his integrative identity as one rescued from premature death in order to later become a rescuer of God’s chosen nation.

The period between leaving captivity and possessing the Promised Land characterizes the second theme of displacement. Displacement remains central to theological understanding of home although it seems antithetical at first glance. Displacement perfectly articulates the forty-year lapse of the wilderness wanderings where Israelites wrestled to adapt to their temporary homes of makeshift tents and booths despite provisions from God.⁵⁷⁷ The presence of God, in the form of pillar of fire and cloud, guided them along the journey and provided the necessary elements to ensure their arrival to and possession of the Promised Land.⁵⁷⁸ Although displaced Moses and the Israelites created a “home” through the structure and order provided by governing

⁵⁷⁴ Fentress-Williams, “Exodus,” 83.

⁵⁷⁵ Exodus 3:10-22 (New King James Version).

⁵⁷⁶ The Promised Land of Canaan, a place foretold to the patriarch of the Israelites, represented the promise of fertile and fruitful territory the Israelites would possess after four hundred and thirty years of captivity. Genesis 15:13-16; Exodus 3:7-9 (New King James Version).

⁵⁷⁷ Joshua 24:1-18 (New King James Version).

⁵⁷⁸ Exodus 14: 19-24 (New King James Version).

commandments during their travel.⁵⁷⁹ The provisions from God along the journey deepened their covenant with God and reaffirmed their identity as God's chosen people. The Exodus account offers theological understanding of home as a physical space and an integrated space of being.

Re-membering the entire Exodus story contributed to the identity of the children of Israel. The text is often re-membered with focus on the experiences of those participating in the exodus from Egypt. Yet, within Biblical scholarship the impact is not just on the immediate group experiencing freedom but extends to identity of future generations through the Passover feast. The Passover memorial is instituted prior to their release from captivity and they are commanded "to celebrate (Exodus 12:14), observe (12:24; 13:10), remember (13:3ff), and tell future generations (12:17)."⁵⁸⁰ The exodus narrative created a collective memory for the Israelites and the re-membering of the story is crucial to this identity. Fentress-Williams adds "what the scripture makes clear is that remembering is as important as the event itself, if not more important. In an oral culture, repeating is the way that the events stay alive. If this event is central to Israel's identity, then the command to remember and retell is one oriented toward survival. Each time Israel repeats the story she affirms her identity."⁵⁸¹

Furthermore, celebrating the Passover, allowed the people to re-tell the story of their deliverance by the hand of God, but also extended the invitation to strangers to participate in future celebrations.⁵⁸² This re-membering the exodus to include others

⁵⁷⁹ Exodus 20:1-14 (New King James Version). Also God continues to instruct the people with detailed commandments in the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy.

⁵⁸⁰ Fentress-Williams, "Exodus," 80.

⁵⁸¹ Fentress-Williams, "Exodus," 80.

⁵⁸² Exodus 12:48-49 (New King James Version).

outside the boundary of genealogical heritage is important for future believers in re-membering God’s hand of deliverance within their lives. The Passover celebration welcomed participation in re-membering the reality of God’s redemption over time; however, it simultaneously distinguishes “Israel’s” identity as the people delivered out of Egypt.⁵⁸³ Thus, those who were delivered from Egyptian captivity are legitimately the nation of Israel, but the identity of “exodus people” extends to those who re-member and celebrate the Passover events.

Black people in American have historically viewed themselves as part of the exodus people category. The Exodus story is important within the Black religious tradition especially since it is introduced collectively to Black people within the confines of chattel slavery.⁵⁸⁴ Callahan writes, “[t]he Middle Passage and the biblical myth of the enslaved Hebrews became the elements informing a collective African-American identity as newly minted as African Americans themselves. This collective identity, however, was not properly national: it was a consciousness of being a people without being a nation.”⁵⁸⁵ The Black spiritual experience traveled with those enslaved across the seas of the Middle Passage. The songs, syncopated dances, and expressive praises found in the hush harbors during chattel slavery migrated with us, and these elements are found in Black Pentecostal worship. The displacement from Africa included strategic attempts to silence the voice of the people’s language, erase the pride of African heritage and identity, yet it failed to accomplish the ultimate goal—to kill the Spirit within this people. The

⁵⁸³ Linda Stargel, *The Construction of Exodus Identity in Ancient Israel: A Social Identity Approach* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2018), 47.

⁵⁸⁴ Allen Dwight Callahan, *The Talking Book: African Americans and the Bible* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 85.

⁵⁸⁵ Callahan, *The Talking Book*, 109.

enablement to sing our song in a strange land gave way to a stronger witness of the work of the Spirit in the lives and daily experiences despite the struggles resulted in temporary state of “homelessness.”

Although Black chattel slavery correlated to a degree with the Egyptian captivity of the Israelites, some differences remained. The inhumane suffering within the barbaric kidnapping of Africans and the mere fact that Blacks needed to search for their Moses like leader distinguishes their experience from the Exodus.⁵⁸⁶ Moses was presented to the people, chosen by God, as the deliverer of the nation. However, Black people have utilized the Exodus story to bring hope and reaffirm their identity as a people. Callahan writes:

African Americans, as a people of mixed blood and lacking land, have made their collective claim to peoplehood on the basis of neither a common ancestry nor a common territory but a common history. Even in the traditions of ancient Israel, and perhaps in its earliest traditions, the Exodus was an event that gave rise to a collective identity that did not require ties of ancestry and territory. Both the Hebrew slaves in Egypt and the African slaves in America entered history possessing neither ancestry nor territory. The promise of the biblical myth of the Exodus was that God would grant them both.⁵⁸⁷

Home, thus in this context, does not merely represent a physical space but it points largely to a space for wholeness in terms of an integrated identity. In short, “[t]he story of Exodus provided the slaves with a biblical myth that allowed them to acknowledge the enormity of slavery and their own incapacity to do anything about it, while at the same

⁵⁸⁶ Callahan, *The Talking Book*, 130-33.

⁵⁸⁷ Callahan, *The Talking Book*, 116.

time maintaining an expectation that God would make a way out of no way. This admixture of haplessness and hope was the faith of the slave.”⁵⁸⁸

Additionally, the Exodus story provides the context for Black people in America to re-member⁵⁸⁹ their identity and worth despite the oppression and discrimination faced. The pillars of cloud and fire provide a biblical precedent for a political framework of liberation for Black people in the U.S and more specifically for Pentecostal Blackwomen. Herbert Marbury suggests, “[t]he pillar of cloud performances entail this doubling that simultaneously *conceals* and *advertises*.”⁵⁹⁰ Pillar of cloud politics distracts the wider audience through subversive performance. Pentecostal Blackwomen master this political action through conforming to traditions and practices that limit their full fellowship. Yet, their influential contributions as Church Mothers, Missionaries, and Pastor’s Wives exposes and undermines the blatant hypocrisy of patriarchy within the tradition. The pillar of fire politics is demonstrated in unwillingness to conform to social injustice “as both a source of resistance and a show of power.”⁵⁹¹ Examples of this politic are the score of Pentecostal Blackwomen who left denominations unwilling to affirm their ministerial call, and joined other welcoming traditions or created their own organizations built founded upon equality. The pillar of fire politics is also witnessed as Pentecostal

⁵⁸⁸ Callahan, *The Talking Book*, 86.

⁵⁸⁹ Emilie Towne suggests the creation of “countermemories” as a practical way of uplifting the muted voices within one-sided historical accounts. Re-membering, then becomes a way to give resound these narratives but also helps to reconstruct homes accounting for the temporary or prolonged displacement that occurs. Re-membering home becomes symbolic of the tragic gap and allows for representation of home that allows for integrative identity. A re-membering that critically addresses injustice including the pain but hopefully embraces the joy of welcoming a balanced perspective of oneself triumphing the evil. See Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*, 8.

⁵⁹⁰ Herbert R. Marbury, *Pillars of Cloud and Fire: The Politics of Exodus in African American Biblical Interpretation* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 8. Italics are author’s emphasis.

⁵⁹¹ Marbury, *Pillars of Cloud and Fire*, 9.

Blackwomen who affirm their call and pursue formal theological education although it is not the standard practice within most denominations.

In summary, the understanding of home and displacement demonstrates Blackwomen have created home in society and Black Pentecostalism. The Exodus story offers hope for Black people re-membering God's deliverance and protection from the evils of racial discrimination within society. For Pentecostal Blackwomen, also re-membering that they too are an exodus people helps to reposition themselves in this temporary earthly home subverting multiple oppressions. Ultimately, how theological institutions can create "home" for Pentecostal Blackwomen completing degree programs is rooted in theological understanding that home encompasses both integrated identity and a physical space. The tragic gap concept offers beneficial re-membering of displacement and home for Pentecostal Blackwomen.

Displacement Re-membered: At Home in the Tragic Gap

The tragic gap is re-membered to accommodate the experiences of Blackwomen. Inaugurated eschatology, embedded in an already-not-yet context, becomes vital to re-membering displacement within the tragic gap. It accounts for the ways Pentecostal Blackwomen can embody integrated identity in the present world through subversive tactics empowering them rise above a victim status based on oppression. However, inaugurated eschatology also recognizes the full manifestation of integrated identity will only occur in the world to come—a new world free of oppression, violence, disease, and death. The tragic gap within this work demonstrated how perceptions of home for Blackwomen, specifically Pentecostal Blackwomen, must include both, a physical space and embodied context. The physical spaces include spaces for Blackwomen to

authentically be in the world. Embodiment, on the other hand, occurs as a result of complex internal dialogue and influences interaction within the larger world.

Unfortunately, sources working to fragment identity continuously creates challenges for Blackwomen in day-to-day interactions.

Race, gender norms, and religious traditions are socially constructed and serve as social contracts in various ways. Theological institutions must understand that bodies are textualized and products of social discourse since “we only know and experience our bodies through cultural constructs, values and associations.”⁵⁹² Individuals are informed by their experiences and relationships with self and others. Sheppard elaborates:

This social world is, of course, a world where gender, class, and body are inextricably linked internally and in the social negotiations in which we engage daily. Thus, we exist in a relational world, but a relational world where some people are *immediately* related to based on the color of their skin, their gender, and sometimes their, assumed, sexuality. Here we are again directed toward embodied experiences. Skin color, hair, and other bodily matters can permeate black women’s interior and social dialogue...The intrapsychic dimension of embodiment cannot be predetermined as each woman brings her own background to her own experience of embodiment.⁵⁹³

Students enter institutions carrying their positive experiences but also the negative experiences. Failure to address the integrated identities of students results in fragmentation but also displacement.

⁵⁹² Shari J. Stenberg, “Embodied Classrooms, Embodied Knowledges: Re-Thinking the Mind/Body Split,” *Composition Studies* 30, no. 2 (Fall 2002): 45.

⁵⁹³ Phillis Isabella Sheppard, *Self, Culture, and Others in Womanist Practical Theology* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 99. Italics are author’s emphasis.

One way of understanding displacement is in relation to its connection to culture. One researcher suggests the “anti-cultural frame” of displacement is problematic because “it undermines the very benefits culture can give: ways toward identity, belonging, and action.”⁵⁹⁴ Furthermore, “displacement robs a person of the necessary interpretive resources that culture typically provides. Its impact is far more extensive than merely affecting the private and emotional lives of scattered individuals. Displacement, understood as a cultural frame, is disruptive at the level of one’s worldview.”⁵⁹⁵ In many ways Pentecostals pursuing theological education experience displacement.

To fully understand the unique position of displacement for Pentecostal Blackwomen pursuing theological education first requires mention of vocation. The vocational call within Black Pentecostalism is very vital to the tradition. Firstly, the “vertical call” is what many indicated as a call with God at the center.⁵⁹⁶ For many individuals they sense an initial call to ministry by God, but the vertical call is insufficient alone. The “horizontal call,” or second step, is full acceptance to ministry and confirmed by completed requirements for licensure and/or ordination within the tradition. The horizontal call recognizes that callings are sustained by the affirmation of the congregation and leadership of the called. In short, ministerial identity is often shaped by the need to secure both the vertical and horizontal calls.

COGIC ministers have several paths to live out their call based on gender within the denominational structure. Men within tradition, once discerning the call to ministry,

⁵⁹⁴ James R. Nieman and Thomas G. Rogers, *Preaching to Every Pew: Cross-Cultural Strategies* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001), 86.

⁵⁹⁵ Nieman and Rogers, *Preaching to Every Pew*, 86-87.

⁵⁹⁶ Richard N. Pitt, *Divine Callings: Understanding the Call to Ministry in Black Pentecostalism* (New York: NYU Press, 2012), 72-73.

must first meet with the pastor and then once deemed sincere, the pastor prepares him for qualifying requirement.⁵⁹⁷ The call for men to ministry is considered synonymous with preaching and eventually ministerial ordination. Women in the tradition are not afforded the same opportunity; women are only allowed licensure never ministerial ordination. The distinction holds that women teach, or explain the gospel, whereas ordained ministers preach, or proclaim the gospel. Richard Pitt suggests the first COGIC Mother reinforced these limitations using as support the historical accounts of Jesus not calling a woman as a disciple.⁵⁹⁸ To obtain denominational credentials as a licensed minister, men initially serve a year within the church as an aspiring minister. Licensed ministers can preach primarily in the local churches and prisons. Men are elevated to ordained elders by recommendation of two pastoral leaders and successful completion of written and oral examinations. Elders officiate weddings, baptisms, the Lord's Supper, funeral and other life events.

For women, on the hand, initially serve a year term as Aspiring Missionary including observation and training by seasoned Missionaries. Elevation to the Deaconess-Missionary position occurs by the recommendation of the Church Mother and sometimes pastor and grants women local licensure to work within the congregation. The second elevation to Evangelist-Missionary, simplified as Evangelist, requires a written and oral examination in order to receive licensure. In addition to speaking and teaching they can plant churches but must eventually relinquish leadership to the male elders. Women are not allowed to be pastors in title but do contribute to the leadership influence within the congregation.

⁵⁹⁷ Pitt, *Divine Callings*, 30.

⁵⁹⁸ Pitt, *Divine Callings*, 30.

The vocational call within Black Pentecostalism does not mandate formal theological education.⁵⁹⁹ Clergy members within Black Pentecostalism traditionally relied more on legitimacy from the Holy Spirit and adherence to denominational requirements. The trend is shifting as more Pentecostals attend theological institutions. Pentecostal Blackwomen are increasingly pursuing formal theological education and many attend non-Pentecostal institutions. Most Pentecostal Blackwomen enter theological institutions fully aware of denominational restrictions and select vocational occupations outside of pastoring. Yet, these students remain deeply committed to their faith practices, beliefs, and Pentecostal formation.

Pentecostals beliefs and practices govern daily life and reaffirms their identity. Pentecostalism maintains a noncessationist worldview, which means that God never ceases to be at work in the world. A Pentecostal identity, thus, affirms that God is working in the everyday lives of believers through divine healings, miracles, and intimate fellowship with the Holy Spirit. Pentecostal identity is rooted in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as an empowerment and evangelistic witness to others in the world.⁶⁰⁰ The Holy Spirit empowers Saints to face whatever might arise and to trust the guidance of the Holy Spirit, especially throughout difficult times. Land adds, “[t]heology is concerned with the relation between God and creation, and Pentecostal theology conceives that relation to be a living dynamic, requiring discerning reflections or discursive reasoning that is gifted by and attuned to the things of the Spirit. Since Pentecostalism is an

⁵⁹⁹ Historically, a disconnect between Pentecostalism and academia existed, as previously mentioned. Possible correlations may originate with the academic experiences of Parham. Parham established a Bible school although he never completed formal theological training and this trend continues to impact various denominations within Afro-Pentecostalism. His successor, Seymour, also only had limited theological training with his studies at Parham’s school.

⁶⁰⁰ Amos Yong, “Discerning the Spirit,” *The Christian Century* 123, no. 5 (2006): 31.

apocalyptic movement of the Spirit, it will want to have the eschatological context and horizon prominently displayed in a theological approach which is not only a reflection upon but a reflection of and within reality.”⁶⁰¹ Bergunder refers to Pentecostal identity as a “spiritual praxis” because the focus on oral and experiential aspects of the traditions. “Saints”⁶⁰² within Pentecostalism emphasize testimonies, songs, prayers, right moral conduct, and participation within the religious community.

Pentecostal students bring these same formational practices into theological studies. For this reason, early Pentecostal theology was diminished as nonacademic within the academy because of the tendency to rely on the ordinary practices of the tradition to interpret the gospel. ⁶⁰³ Archer rejects the claim and instead reaffirms the pietistic nature of Pentecostal theology reflects it is an “affective-experiential theological tradition.”⁶⁰⁴ Pentecostals honor their spirituality by employing aspects centrally shaping their tradition such as narratives and testimony. In short, “Pentecostals must see the connection between this passion for the kingdom and theology lest they lose both through neglect or dissipation. Theology itself is a kind of passion for God, and passion for God requires ongoing theological work as part of its inner logic and worldly vocation. The merging of the two is the mark of a true theologian—one who truly prays for the

⁶⁰¹ Steve J. Land, “A Passion for the Kingdom: Revisioning Pentecostal Spirituality,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1, no. 1 (1992):28.

⁶⁰² Within the Holiness-Pentecostal movements members addressed one another by the moniker saints. The reasoning is two-fold: Saints is a derivative of Sanctified Church tradition from which many early Pentecostal groups emerged. Saint also is an identifier denoting biblical principles and rigid moral code of conduct members adhered to. Moreover, “Saints” becomes a distinction separating members from others not affiliated with the faith tradition. Cheryl Jeanne Sanders, *Saints in Exile: The Holiness-Pentecostal Experience in African American Religion and Culture*, Religion in America Series (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), PDF e-book, Introduction.

⁶⁰³ Kenneth Archer, “A Pentecostal Way of Doing Theology: Method and Manner,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 9, no. 3 (July 2007): 308. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2400.2006.00244.x.

⁶⁰⁴ Kenneth Archer, “A Pentecostal Way of Doing Theology,” 309.

kingdom.”⁶⁰⁵ A Pentecostal theological identity can inform the academic requirement and honor deep spiritual commitment to resound the testimony of finding the “spirituality of the academic life.”⁶⁰⁶ Pentecostal students first must learn how to overcome the culture shock from displacement within theological institutions.

For Pentecostal Blackwomen, womanist methodology might provide a re-orienting context to counter displacement. Specifically, the didactic intent of womanist methodology emphasizes Black folk wisdom and Blackwomen’s moral wisdom encase truth claims for authentic and communal living.⁶⁰⁷ Cannon suggests moral wisdom is not created as an effort to rescue Blackwomen from the tripartite oppression they face, but it exposes the ethical assumptions countering the survival of Black womanhood.⁶⁰⁸ The concept of womanist mothering is vital for it epitomizes the oral narrative tradition within the Black context. Many womanists attribute their identity formation to the time spent in the houses of their mothers and grandmothers receiving practical wisdom about the experiences of Blackwoman in the American context. Black folk wisdom can often be found in the literature and proverbs of the people. The tradition of testifying and the incorporation of church mothers within Black Pentecostalism correlates with womanist methodology. In short, re-membling displacement via the tragic gap offers a framework helpful for theological institutions to create home for Pentecostal Blackwomen that honors an integrated identity.

⁶⁰⁵ Land, “A Passion for the Kingdom,” 46.

⁶⁰⁶ Dr. Nat Samuel, a former professor, used this phrase to express the harmony which can exist between academic study of religion and maintenance of a healthy spiritual life. Samuels’ comment suggests there can be ways to integrate academic study as a part of spiritual discipline.

⁶⁰⁷ Williams, “Womanist Theology,” 69.

⁶⁰⁸ Cannon, *Katie’s Canon*, 60.

Pastoral Response

Since an integrative identity includes embodied spirituality and accounts for the daily negotiation of intersectionality and tri-partite oppression this work included exploration of integrative identity across various publics. I established Blackwomen negotiated the intersection of race and gender early within their displaced arrival to this country in order to survive rape, intentional family separations, and physical violence. Also, I proved how Pentecostal Blackwomen negotiated the intersections of gender and race within their traditions, often finding celebratory spaces regarding race but still face limitations regarding gender particularly as it relates to embodiment calling, and vocation. Lastly, I stated how Pentecostal Blackwomen enter theological institutions carrying these diverse experiences with them. As a result, two primary insights were gained from the research and shapes my suggested pastoral action.

Firstly, hostility toward Blackwomen's bodies and experiences undergird many disenfranchising practices and provide barriers to creating home, or safe spaces within organizations and institutions. The economic capitalization and disenfranchisement of Blackwomen remains prevalent across society, Pentecostal traditions, and theological institutions. Chattel slavery represented one of the unrestrained economic exploitations of Blackwomen. Yet, the trend continues in many mutations including character assassination for profit within the media and the gender wage gap where on average Blackwomen are paid 61 cents of every dollar paid to White, non-Hispanic men.⁶⁰⁹ Within Pentecostal traditions, particularly Black churches, the failure to ordain women contributes to marginalization and disenfranchisement. Additionally, Blackwomen often

⁶⁰⁹ Raina Nelson, "Black Women and the Pay Gap," *American Association of University Women*, August 1, 2018, <https://www.aauw.org/article/black-women-and-the-pay-gap/>.

represent the majority population within the congregation and many faithfully contribute to upkeep and maintenance of the church including financially and sometimes physically. Within theological institutions Blackwomen students remain amongst the vulnerable populations. As illustrated from the data in chapter four many leave theological education adding to the debt which they entered with, and the job prospects frequently are slimmer due to the ordination practices of their traditions. Blackwomen students rarely find adequate representation of themselves in theological institutions. In short, Blackwomen continue to build, participate, and finance institutions hostile toward her existence. The common expectation is often for these women to be visible but silent. Within institutions across America, Blackwomen have their experiences, wisdom, and stories subsumed into wider culture and normative practices. This robs Blackwomen the privilege for their experiences to matter and for the creation of spaces which honor their integrative identities.

Secondly, the sustainability of homes within institutions and organizations require re-membering, or a renovation that includes the provision of resources. The aforementioned section mentioned the ways in which Blackwomen have been exploited and disenfranchised; however, the project also discusses the ingenuity of Blackwomen to subvert oppressive factors and thrive. Womanists refer to this ability of Blackwomen as “making a way out of no way” in order to survive in the world while pursuing justice, wholeness, and a deep spirituality.⁶¹⁰ Blackwomen within the U.S. affirm and celebrate their Blackness unashamedly particularly within the arts and literature, by providing accurate accounts of their experiences and worldview, created for them and by them.

⁶¹⁰ Monica A. Coleman, *Making a Way Out of No Way: A Womanist Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008), 13.

Blackwomen within Pentecostal traditions have created, sustained, primarily governed their women's ministries and passing on the mantle to future generations.

Likewise, within theological institutions Pentecostal Blackwomen have the resources of Pentecostal theology and womanist theology to provide the language and tools to articulate and ground their identity and experiences. Womanist and Pentecostal theologies provide support for students to honor their identity and heritages, aid theological research, and resound their voices. ATS began the collective work focusing on gender and race within theological institutions. The emphasis for diversity inclusion within curriculum development and measures to increase faculty diversity offers hope and academic resources for students of various backgrounds. Additionally, the commitment to improve faculty composition within member institutions remains critical discussions points for research and initiatives. However, these theologies are not enough alone; the support and resources must extend beyond the inclusion of diverse faculties and academic sources. Theological institutions must address further impacts of intersectionality with attention to other tangible resources.

A Sistah's Network

Bearing both insights in mind supports my assertion that: the creation of "home" within theological institutions is necessary for Pentecostal Blackwomen and Blackwomen students to thrive. Within higher educational institutions, intentional programming is created for first generation student and minority students at the undergraduate level, but graduate programs are missing critical support resources. It may be assumed that once individuals enter graduate programs, students embrace their integrative identity and understand successful academic techniques. It is necessary for institutions to extend

resources beyond academic programs to include holistic support. These “homes” represent a welcoming space for students to gather physically and to affirm their integrative identity. One pathway to establish “homes” that honors the integrative identity of these students includes the creation of a network of support which helps with the transition into formal theological education and provides practical resources of support. A Sistah’s Network offers five suggestions to theological institutions, Black Pentecostal traditions, and Blackwomen for honoring integrative identity.

1.) The establishment of intergenerational mentorship is a pathway to the academic and professional development of an integrative identity for Pentecostal Blackwomen students.

Mentorship is critical to both academic and professional development of students. I restate the concern that theological institutions inefficiently mentor women, particularly women of color. There are distinct challenges Blackwomen face due to intersectionality and it becomes more layered with Pentecostal Blackwomen. Most American theological institutions struggle with an inadequately diverse faculty and staff and it renders some challenges to mentorship. However, institutions should not merely seek to increase the faculty of color within their universities but also work to create intentional practices of inclusion, which improve the overall success of students of color. In a recent lecture Cynthia Marshall⁶¹¹ shared “diversity is being invited to the party, but inclusion is being asked to dance.”⁶¹² What Marshall highlighted, drawn from the experiences of many

⁶¹¹ Cynthia Marshall is the first woman CEO of professional NBA team, the Dallas Mavericks. She is also a Blackwoman.

⁶¹² Cynthia Marshall, “Leading with Vision, Values, and Voice” seminar, International Pastors and Leaders Conference 2019, April 27, 2019.

minorities, is that additional barriers face individuals after acceptance into positions within organization. The same principle can be applied to theological education.

Commonly within Black families extended kinship relationships are formed.⁶¹³ The realities of life make it necessary for Blackwomen to often rely on a network of support and resources from their community in order to rear children, to care for elderly family, and thrive. Many Black children grew up with a host of “aunts,” “uncles,” and “cousins,” who were friends of their parents, and despite no biological relation they functioned as family members. The elders were able to discipline and correct children, likewise they celebrated in the milestone achievements and offered support during hardship. The idea of intergenerational mentorship draws from these principles. In short, the goals of intergenerational mentorship are community support, professional development, and academic success and sustainability.

The intergenerational mentorship within A Sistah’s Network is three-tiered and functions with the career and professional women, current students, and future students. The career and professional women, affectionately known the “Auntie’s Circle,” provide the mentorship for current students. The Auntie’s Circle includes women from the university faculty and staff in addition to other Blackwomen leaders from local community organizations and corporations. Variation amongst career paths and across disciplines allows current students to identify a broad range of vocational options. These mentors offer guidance with vocational discernment, professional development, well-being, and fiscal responsibility. Current students also contribute to mentorship with other students and future students. The Mother’s Board concept within Black Pentecostal

⁶¹³ Joyce A. Ladner, *The Ties That Bind: Timeless Values for African American Families* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1998), 29-35.

traditions provides a framework to implement a mentoring program for first year theological students. The inclusion of peer mentoring helps students transition into academic writing, face challenges of beginning a new program, and foster community. The peer mentoring circle can easily become the foundation to establish writing communities in advanced level degree programs. Finally, intergenerational mentoring focuses on looking forward with future students in mind. The nature of intergenerational mentorship is to establish a community that continues throughout time, and current students contribute to this work by connecting with future students. Blackwomen students navigate through circles and may know others who desire to pursue theological education or are considering it as an option. The community can offer support to those who are discerning including contributing to the exploratory weekend or events theological institutions host for prospective students.

Additionally, mentorship includes academic and development from institutional resources. The continued barrier of ordination for women⁶¹⁴ within most Black Pentecostal denominations presumes that Blackwomen pursuing theological education are seeking vocational careers outside of congregation ministry. Another resource theological institutions can provide for Pentecostal Blackwomen are the establishment of seminars around developing practical theological skills. Many institutions offer writing centers with specific services for editing academic writing. Offering additional programming such as how to construct successful proposals for conference call for papers, craft books reviews, and journal articles can better equip the overall student

⁶¹⁴ The ordination barrier affects women within other denominations as well. The research from chapter four cites a large majority of the women (across most races) who attend seminary anticipated careers outside of congregation ministry.

population. Technical academic writing skills are more utilized in advanced theological degrees program but offering resources in across theological institutions will be effective if they decide to pursue further studies.

2.) Embracing the spirituality of education is key to the pathway to an integrative identity within higher educational institutions.

ATS data offers a wealth of knowledge regarding the hard facts about who is attending theological institutions as well as current trends. From annual surveys and data tables the organization and theological institutions assembled taskforces and initiatives to continue success in areas of strengths and to offer correctives for areas of challenges. However, one area institutions and ATS overlooks is the spirituality of education. Theological institutions are no longer attended solely by those seeking religious leadership, rather people across various disciplines are pursuing theological education. Despite this, as the previous chapter indicates, many seminary students still acknowledge a “call experience” as a part of their journey to formal theological education. This factor has implications for theological education objectives. Theological education is no longer synonymous with congregational ministry and understanding of ministry work must expand to accommodate these realities of those in attendance at theological institutions.

The emphasis of vocational call within Black Pentecostal traditions offers insight for how institutions might begin thinking more theological about spirituality of education. Pentecostal Blackwomen find ways to affirm their spirituality despite the limitations within society and religious traditions. They subvert traditional gender norms with the vocalization of their personal calls and continue doing the work regardless of ordination. As they attend seminaries, they incorporate styles and practices from their traditions into

their work. Additionally, Blackwomen attending theological institutions bring with them the daily experiences of grandmothers, aunts, and other community members outside the ivory tower as a lens for understanding the Bible and embodying their call. The ability to see the everyday as a part of their work is life affirming, honors the connection of community, and is transformative. Madipoane Masenya shares an example of African nurse, Bathepa Maja, who uses her practical work as an extension of her faith.⁶¹⁵ Masenya highlights the accessibility and practicality of the work that we do as theologians, primarily that it does not remain within theological institutions alone. Pentecostal Blackwomen have found ways to harmonize their academic endeavors and spiritual calls.

Theological institutions need innovative ways to blend academic and spiritual commitments that cultivate an integrative identity within students. Thus, institutions must work in collaboration with faculty and administrators to incorporate a spirituality of the academic life into the mission, objectives, and goals. This incorporation means including the varied ways students understand ministry work and theological education. Intentionality to move academic work beyond only satisfying academic standards and to include becoming an extension of one's spiritual commitment is powerful. Practical theology offers resources to theological institutions given its examination of human experience and praxis. Yet, within the field of an area for further scholarship lies at the heart of developing a spirituality of the academic life. A spirituality of the academic life finds ways to incorporate faithfulness to one's spirituality while upholding quality

⁶¹⁵ Madipoane Masenya, "Women, Africana Reality, and the Bible," in *The Africana Bible: Reading Israel's Scriptures from Africa and the African Diaspora*, eds. Hugh R. Page, Jr. and Randall C. Bailey, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010), 36.

academic standards simultaneously. This goal of this work is to contribute another example of how the spirituality of the academic life can be embodied. Crystalizing a spirituality of the academic life will have benefits for theological institutions and higher education in general.

3.) Black Pentecostalism must intentionally deconstruct idolatrous behaviors and practices within the tradition.

The previous chapters illustrate how Blackwomen are the least likely demographic of women to be protected by society. The disenfranchisement of Blackwomen remains a factor across society, theological institutions, and Black Pentecostalism. Addressing the national sin of chattel slavery has garnered support from Black religious traditions and theological institutions. Far too many examples exist containing dehumanizing practices and policies against Blackwomen's bodies. Presently, practices including sexual harassment and abuse, predatory lending, and misrepresentation of Blackness in the media demonstrates little has changed with American capitalization of Blackwomen. But religious traditions are also complicit in the economic exploitation of Blackwomen.

The stereotypical construction of Black female strength is rooted in her ability to survive the denigrating realities of life in America especially chattel slavery, Jim Crow Era, and any discrimination rooted in her intersectionality. The archetype of "strong Black woman" surfaced during the Civil Rights period as a subversive response to debunk the normative claims about Black women's inhumanity and inferiority.⁶¹⁶ Over

⁶¹⁶ Chanequa Walker-Barnes, "The Burden of the Strong Black Woman," *The Journal of Pastoral Theology* 19, no. 1 (2009):1.

time it distorted into an ideology supporting the unhealthy image self-neglect Blackwomen for the sake of meeting the needs of their families and communities.⁶¹⁷ The Black Church tradition benefits from Blackwomen struggling to live into this false ideology, which often serves as a coping mechanism of surviving politics and power dynamics within religious institutions. Chanequa Walker-Barnes suggests, “the church often functions as both the officiating priest and the altar of ungodly fire upon which Black women are sacrificed.”⁶¹⁸ The sacrificial exclusion of women in many Black Pentecostal leadership structure is ironic because Blackwomen comprise majority of the congregation. Yet, Blackwomen contribute physical, emotional, creative, and financial strength to be exploited in the name progress for the church at the expense of themselves.

Black Pentecostal congregations must institute corrective practices that holds themselves accountable to Blackwomen and the work of the Gospel. Black Pentecostalism should not merely seek to adopt female ordination but delve deeper into the day-to-day practices that force women to idolize one part of their identity, whether racial or religious identity, while diminishing gender. Womanist theology offers some practical resources and teaches “the church the different ways God reveals prophetic word and action for Christian living.”⁶¹⁹ Specifically, the liturgical intent of womanism address the overall work of the Black church including aspects such as teachings, worship, thought, and action within society.⁶²⁰ In this regard womanist theology becomes the prophetic voice of proclamation and the voice of reproof and critique. Womanist scholarship often critiques the Black church for the same misogynistic and androcentric

⁶¹⁷ Walker-Barnes, “The Burden of the Strong Black Woman,” 9.

⁶¹⁸ Walker-Barnes, “The Burden of the Strong Black Woman,” 12.

⁶¹⁹ Williams, “Womanist Theology,” 69.

⁶²⁰ Williams, “Womanist Theology,” 69.

charges Blackwomen have brought against White, androcentric patriarchy in the United States. The church in many ways is just as guilty of oppressive practices.

Furthermore, usage of the Bible must also consider justice principles. Gender dynamics exist within congregations despite church teachings that affirm no gender, racial, or class distinctions exist in Jesus Christ. Galatians 3:28 reads, “Faith in Jesus Christ is what makes each of you equal with each other, whether you are a Jew or a Greek, a slave or a free person, a man or a woman.”⁶²¹ This scripture alone can dispel inferior positioning of women and advocate for their greater freedom in church life. Cain Felder additionally suggests the gospel narratives inclusion of Jesus’ ministry to and public interaction with women initiates a paradigm shift in society for women to be “viewed as entitled to greater rights as human beings and to assume larger responsibilities and more significance.”⁶²² Despite theological support and understanding, the systemic patriarchy in many Black churches often hinders full equality supported by antiquated hermeneutics and erroneous exegesis. Black Pentecostal congregations must correct language and practices that rob Blackwomen of an integrated identity and full fellowship. In addition to ordination inclusivity, Black Pentecostal traditions must embrace a commitment to understanding and validity of female imagery and metaphorical language in the construction of theological statements. The use of feminine imagery and language raises a fresh perspective for encountering God.

⁶²¹ Galatians 3:28 (Contemporary English Version)

⁶²² Cain H. Felder, “The Bible, Black Women, and Ministry,” *Journal of Religious Thought* 42, no. 2 (1985):51-52.

4.) The intentional choice for radical self-care that attends to holistic well-being is necessary along the pathway to reclaim an integrative identity for Pentecostal Blackwomen.

Health challenges present challenges for all people but Blackwomen are said to be more predisposed to cardiovascular and other health challenges.⁶²³ Walker-Barnes adds, “Black women have developed an extraordinary capacity for ‘walking with broken feet.’ And typically, they do not recognize that they are in pain.”⁶²⁴ The fear of failing communities she is connected to offers one reason why many Blackwomen struggle to achieve this ideal at the cost of self. Additionally, part of the plight of the strong Blackwoman mask is “African American women must deal with the constant fear that their behavior will be viewed in light of the stereotypical images of the Mammy, the Jezebel, or the Sapphire, thus leading to emotional and behavioral inhibition in order to avoid acting out of these stereotypes.”⁶²⁵ Pressure and stress to consistently wear the mask of “strength” for prolonged amounts of time can result in physical illness or disease.

Adherence to strong Blackwoman ideologies fosters poorer health because women fail to take care of themselves. Radical self-care necessitates the inclusion of health and wellness initiatives into educating the whole person. Promotion of physical health demonstrates the commitment of theological institutions to annual health fairs or periodic wellness days introducing various exercises and spiritual disciplines such as meditation or contemplative prayer. Additionally, the mentoring component of the

⁶²³ Ronald L. Braithwaite and Sandra E. Taylor, *Health Issues in the Black Community*, 2nd ed. The Jossey-Bass Health Series (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2001), 44-45.

⁶²⁴ Walker-Barnes, “The Burden of the Strong Black Woman,” 5.

⁶²⁵ Walker-Barnes, “The Burden of the Strong Black Woman,” 7.

network incorporates conversations of physical well-being and general self-care into mentoring tips and discussions.

Secondly, a radical self-care includes spiritual wholeness as an equal component of physical health. Church doctrine supports the fact that all of human is created in the image and likeness of God and deserving of dignity, but oppressive practices reinforce the narrative to Blackwomen that love is self-sacrificing to the point of neglect or even death. Pentecostal Blackwomen must be reminded that “it is never selfish to name, claim, and nurture true self.”⁶²⁶ Michelle Cliff uses the word fiercely to describe how self-love should be. The word fiercely “denotes power. Power and protection. . . . It is not recommended that a woman be fierce on her own account, or that she make a judgment that her wrath is warranted against an enemy.”⁶²⁷ Typically, this fierceness is usually restricted to a mother protecting her family. However, her use of fierceness is indicative of the boldness employed in radically loving oneself. Agape love must first be extended to self before it can be extended to God and others.⁶²⁸ But the struggle for Pentecostal Blackwomen, often formed in destructive patterns of self-neglect, becomes undoing these harmful practices.

Additionally, therapy also provides one solution for deconstruction of the strong Blackwoman archetype. While therapy does provide the skills for re-framing of the context of strength, it cannot be the only resource offered for radical self-care. The cost of therapy often becomes a luxury that marginalized individuals struggle to afford, so unless theological institutions offer free counseling services, another method for well-

⁶²⁶ Palmer, *A Hidden Wholeness*, 39.

⁶²⁷ Cliff, “I Found God in Myself and I Loved Her/Loved Her Fiercely,” 12-13.

⁶²⁸ Kelly Brown Douglas, *Sexuality and the Black Church* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1999), 115.

being is needed. Palmer introduces the concept of “circles of trust” as a method for helping individuals listen to their authentic self. Circles of trust, different from traditional community and ecclesial discerning committees, are spaces for individuals to wrestle with wounds from living a divided life.⁶²⁹ Circles are facilitated by trained leaders, employs periods of silence, reflection, and uses the metaphor of seasons to establish common ground amongst all participants.⁶³⁰ The point is to awaken participants to hearing the authentic inner voice routinely silenced by communal and individual interaction. Circles of trust should include non-Pentecostal students as well because the learning and dialogue from within these circles aid in building community across diverse groups. Circles of trust provides an alternative to therapy and allows Pentecostal Blackwomen to heal the wound of fragmented identity.

When Blackwomen are provided the space to embrace an integrated identity—being created in the image of God—then as Cliff explains they can re-envision God outside of the normative androcentric confines, to instead view God as truly dwelling within them.⁶³¹ This shapes not just our notion of self, but also our view of God and impacts our interactions with self and others. Part of the wonderful journey in life is in discovering and fulfilling purpose, which is intrinsically connected to our identity. To me, this includes what it means to find one’s voice. Integrative identity emerges in the form of wholeness when Pentecostal Blackwomen intentionally choose to love self fiercely despite any the attempts within society, university, or congregation to suppress expressions of radical self-care. Self-sacrificing love mirrors kenosis—the emptying of

⁶²⁹ Palmer, *A Hidden Wholeness*, 84.

⁶³⁰ Palmer, *A Hidden Wholeness*, 73-84.

⁶³¹ Cliff, “I Found God in Myself and I Loved Her/Loved Her Fiercely,” 12.

oneself—not to the point of neglect but in a manner that loving others as oneself first mandates a healthy love for the individual self.⁶³² And this is holy.

5.) The spiritual discipline of play must be included along the pathway to reclaim an integrative identity for Pentecostal Blackwomen.

Theological education requires the discipline of studying to ensure academic success, but a balanced academic life should include academic, spiritual, and play components. Pentecostal Blackwomen encounter many experiences restricting their bodies. The spiritual discipline of play is beneficial to Pentecostal Blackwomen seeking rest from the weight of intersectionality in the arduous journey pursuing theological education. Pastoral theologian Michael Koppel describes play as “a means of cooperative and collaborative engagement within self and between self and others that seeks to heighten the enjoyment of life experiences by making space for the innovative within structured patterns of behavior. Play allows for making mistakes in attempts to move beyond the conventional in pursuit of the novel.”⁶³³

To be human means to be embodied, for our bodies are always present with us. Koppel emphasizes the play space allows us to bring our entire being—including our feelings of brokenness, wounds, and divisions—creatively contributing to the transforming the world.⁶³⁴ Similarly, Evelyn and James Whitehead claim that play allows us to be co-authors in creation as play allows us to see anew by imagining reality in light of the transitioning world.⁶³⁵ Viewing play from these perspectives indicate that as with

⁶³² Walker-Barnes, “The Burden of the Strong Black Woman,” 14-15.

⁶³³ Michael Koppel, “A Pastoral Theological Reflection on Play in the Ministry,” *The Journal of Pastoral Theology* 13, no. 1 (2003): 1.

⁶³⁴ Koppel, “A Pastoral Theological Reflection on Play in the Ministry,” 6.

⁶³⁵ Whitehead and Whitehead, *Method in Ministry: Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry*, 144.

wholeness, play is not as much about the end result as it is about the journey. Play opens us to the beauty of God found in all of life. Playing “is a catalyst for balanced living. It also awakens and fosters imagination and involves promise, anticipation, expectation, waiting, and pleasure. The creative and adaptive living made possible through playing are foundational to being a responsive and hopeful self, a core trait of the Christian faith.”⁶³⁶ Play becomes crucial to integrative identity as a form of embodied theology and provides a creative outlet for Pentecostal Blackwomen to rediscover self.

Participating in play welcomes new ways of discovering knowledge and meaning making because experiential revelation about God emerges since the play space accommodates God’s Spirit and grace.⁶³⁷ Furthermore, play represents a type of “structural chaos” with unrestrictive and innovative ways of discovering newness and provides creative ways of seeing, learning, and encountering the world.⁶³⁸ Play does not alter the reality of life but offers a temporary respite the messy contradictions found in life. Play helps to exist between liminal states like the notion of standing in the tragic gap, because play helps to hold tension between where we are where we hope to be.⁶³⁹ Koppel insists “deep-hearted play” becomes our asset in the world because it allows us to fully embrace both the tragedies and sorrows of life along with its beauty and possibilities.⁶⁴⁰ Play is essential to the life of the believer and helps to uncover new ways of being within the world.

⁶³⁶ Jaco Hamman, “Playing” in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie Miller-McLemore (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2012), 46.

⁶³⁷ Hamman, “Playing,” 47.

⁶³⁸ Hamman, “Playing,” 46.

⁶³⁹ Hamman, “Playing,” 46.

⁶⁴⁰ Koppel, “A Pastoral Theological Reflection on Play in the Ministry,” 7.

Play builds community. Developing spiritual practices of play occur at the individual and community level to include laughter, dance, humor, contemplative prayer, and memories of play. These forms of play recover suppressed pieces of ourselves, but also provide us with ways for not taking ourselves so seriously. The most practical way to employ play within the network is through extracurricular programming. The network is responsible for hosting play-inducing activities such as African dance classes or drumming circles. The activities are rooted in African heritage but also incorporate elements of play. Black Pentecostal style worship incorporates music, physical movement, and sometimes physical manifestations of the Holy Spirit such as laughter. African dance and drumming circle activities create the space for Pentecostal Blackwomen to engage in play and lose oneself in the creativity within the process. The spiritual discipline of play offers Pentecostal Blackwomen balance and teaches them to witness God's presence in a variety of unconventional methods.

Re-membering Home: An Autoethnographic Closing

Practical theology is grounded in the embodied human experience and becomes a fertile ground for further understanding ourselves and the surrounding world in relationship with God. Each experience including study, worship, leisure, and play provides a sense of personal connection with God and serves as a reminder that this too is doing the work of theology. These moments are a representation of my full embodiment as a faithful theologian. Life rarely presents perfect conditions, but hope prevails when we re-member and choose to embrace integrative identity.

The story at the start of this project opened with my baptism into Blackwomanhood via an intergenerational circle with the wounded female healers in my

family. They bore scars, both physically and figuratively, from navigating the complexities of racism, sexism, and classism in America and Pentecostalism. In that circle I was introduced to honoring the pain and privilege of being a Blackwoman and Pentecostal. This memory etches out the frame for my heritage, spiritual, and academic identity. I too, am a wounded healer although not within the medical profession. I heal through the re-membering of stories because I am a storyteller at heart.

I had the privilege to return home to Africa in the summer of 2018. The Motherland called out to me for so long, but only then, sensing the Holy Spirit's leading, was I courageous enough to answer the call. The trip to Goree Island sealed my experience by walking through the Door of No Return.⁶⁴¹ Goree Island is situated on the Western Coast of Africa and is one of the largest ports kidnapped Africans were processed through prior to being shipped as cargo to the Americas. Quickly, I noticed in the center of the island stood the sole church bearing images of White Jesus, surrounded by more than 20 slave houses. Each slave house cramped countless African peoples into tiny holding cells for weeks to months at a time in preparation for profitable exploitation in their new homelands. The dangerous memories⁶⁴² of their suffering, strength, and sacrifice cried out from the empty rooms where mass tour groups now travel to the island to re-member history. The irony was: what once represented the initial place of stripping away the African identity now transformed into the sacred space for me to honor my integrative identity.

⁶⁴¹ The Door of No Return denotes the fact that most kidnapped Africans left their homeland through the door and would never return in their lifetime. It is one of many slave ports located primarily throughout the Western coast of Africa.

⁶⁴² Dangerous memory is interruptive, as it moves us beyond our "usual way of thinking" and awakens us to the suffering of others—those living and dead—throughout history from which we can learn. See Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 67.

As I stood on the steps of the entry way I wept. I wept re-membering how self-proclaimed Christians could sleep and worship just one level above captives suffering and dying below. I wept re-membering the stories of the families torn away from one another on that island, throughout Africa, and within the United States. I wept re-membering many who traversed that corridor to board ships journeying to new hostile lands. I wept re-membering those unable to return home in their lifetime in juxtaposition to my ability to return home. I wept re-membering. Ultimately, I wept re-membering hope. Hope in the experiences passed down through generations of Blackwomen and men who re-membered home through the survival of African traditions and practices that crossed the transatlantic route with them. Hope re-membered in the sacrifices of my ancestors and their determination to achieve better. Hope re-membered in my intergenerational circle that paved the way before me and on whose work I continue to build. Hope re-membered in the ability to return home and embrace my integrative identity as Blackwoman and Pentecostal.

In closing, Parker Palmer shares, “[b]efore you tell your life what you intend to do with it, listen for what it intends to do with you. Before you tell your life what truths and values you have decided to live up to, let your life tell you what truths you embody, what values you represent.”⁶⁴³ These words guide the dissertation process and helped refine a pathway to integrative identity for Pentecostal Blackwomen pursuing formal theological education. It is often in retrospect that the minute details make sense and seemingly fall into place. While writing I discovered the Holy Spirit at work all along weaving harmony through the dissonant experiences chronicling the journey as a Pentecostal Blackwoman

⁶⁴³ Parker Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 3.

until this point. This, too, represents what it means to re-member stories at home in our bodies.

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