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Introduction

Missiology and the Black experience co-existed during the colonial period and predated the inception of the Black Transatlantic Crossing. Some historians contend the absence of racial tension, so embedded in the culture today, was non-existent in the early years of the New World (Tisby 2019, 26-28). Blacks and Africans received liberties and opportunities to live in colonized communities. They received resources to farm, pursue professional careers, and conduct business with other colonists. However, these liberties eventually ceased as the colonists gradually established slave codes to regulate African subjugation (Tisby 2019, 34-35). The suppression of Africans persisted as the colonists sophisticated the slave trade and increased their financial interest in the Black Transatlantic Crossing.

Scholars often disagree on the historical retelling of the Black Atlantic experience, but some historians confirm the Black Atlantic's authenticity. Saunders mentions the central disagreement between Black and White scholars arises from their interpretation of how the Black Atlantic experience occurred (2020, 42). Historical accounts of the missionary movement exclude Africans, Afro Americans, and Caribbean Blacks during this period; nevertheless, these individuals were dominant figures in disseminating the gospel. Their geographical associations bear witness to this fact (Saunders 2020, 42).

Furthermore, the Black experience, particularly after the twentieth century, is void of significant global missions involvement because their relationship in missions was suppressed and even oppressed. Unfortunately, many Caucasian historians and scholars downplay African and Afro American contributions (Saunders 2020, 42), especially in missions and religious records. This absence created a vacuum, particularly in Western Christian history, that provoked an apparent theological rift among Black and White Christians. To effectively communicate missions related to the black experience, a comprehensive review of the incongruities between Black and White missional theology

is a prerequisite. Moreover, this is a communication dilemma as much as it is a theological one. This article will argue the theological rift between African/Black and Caucasian/White American Christians contributed to seemingly irreconcilable differences that must be acknowledged for the Black and White Evangelical Church to operate in unity in global missions in the twenty-first century and forward.

A Theological Schism

Defining Theology

Theology is the study about the nature and persona of God. Its broadest sense ascertains who God is as He relates to His creation and as His creation interrelates with one another (Bird 2020, 38-40). Since the patristic period, the church fathers endeavored to create a theology that encapsulated the essence of God as revealed in Scripture. Moreover, they accepted Scripture as the final source of authority, "All Scripture is inspired by God and beneficial for teaching, for rebuke, for correction, for training in righteousness;"[1] therefore, the first-century church established a criterion for using Scripture to interpret Scripture. Nevertheless, the extensiveness of theology originates from humanity's experience. So, theological studies are essential in a rational, post-modern era (Bird 2020, 81). Also, Bird highlights the complication of developing an overarching theology derived from an attempt to reduce Scripture to one coherent thought void of controversy or diversity yet with the intentions for a particular purpose or purposes (2020, 89). For instance, Evangelical Theology and Black Theology attempt to present God through their advantaged or disadvantaged positions. Both theologies must examine its weaknesses and its preclusion of other theologies. Evangelical Theology too often conveys the tenet of its theology as comprehensive and conclusive. While on the other hand, Black Theology explores God through the lens of the Afro or African American's suffering as they struggle with racism and racial discrimination to the exclusion of other experiences within the Black Church. In the strictest sense of the term, Black Theology began during the civil rights movement; although, its foundation traces back to colonial America. McCaulley notes that enslaved Afro Americans viewed God as a liberator and identified with the Exodus account. Their plight was the same as Israel's (2020, 25). This rationale has continued for centuries and is arguably the foundation of Black Theology.

[1] 2 Timothy 3:16. Scripture quotations marked NASB are taken from the New American Standard Bible. Copyright © 1960, 1971, 1977, 1995, 2020 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

A Cursory Historical Overview of the Theological Schism[2]

The Founding Fathers arrived in the New World with unappeasable aspirations for individual and religious freedom. These men asserted that the British Monarchy prevented them from practicing their religion of choice by denying them their God-given rights and freedoms. As a result, the Founding Fathers rejected the strict British rule and created a democracy that promised "liberty and justice for all." The framers of the Constitution fled a monarchy that at times operated as an autocracy, with no regard for the enslaved Africans who scarcely survived under their subjection. This new religious freedom allowed the Founding Fathers to deny an individual his or her freedom irrespective of that individual's God-given rights, creating a theology that superimposed its cultural beliefs – and Scriptural interpretation – onto others (Woodson 2012, 15-17).

This burgeoning theology afforded its adherents the luxury of ignoring those they rationalized as soulless in the new world. The Constitution's framers erroneously and subjectively determined enslaved Africans did not possess the intellectual, psychological, or emotional aptitude to be considered fully human (Mason 2018, 79). Their framework of the Bill of Rights, Declaration of Independence, and the United States Constitution intentionally precluded enslaved Africans and the Afro Americans (Tisby 2019, 42-43). It is this type of ideology that allowed the oppressor the ability to ignore responsibility for and acknowledgment of marginalized groups. A theology imposed upon a group of people to bolster them out of deprivation, or a theology deemed so superior that it does not necessitate a prefix like Liberation, Black, Latina, Native American, or Women holds an unyielding influence over those who adhere to its principles.

Additionally, the original intentions of the early settlers to the New World were grounded in a desire to proselytize and make Catholic converts of the indigenous peoples (Woodson 2012, 16-17). Even then, the African slave unknowingly forfeited the privilege of evangelization. "Later, when further concessions to the capitalists were necessary, it was provided in the royal decrees of Spain and France that Africans enslaved in America should merely be early indoctrinated in the principles of the Christian religion" (Woodson 2012, 13). The Founding Fathers' newfound 'freedom of religion' increasingly shaped a theological worldview that benefited Caucasian men and

[2] Author's disclaimer: This section includes a cursory overview but does not include every Black and White theological, denominational development, it merely highlights both theologies overarching ideologies.

granted liberties to a privileged class of people. One might suggest this theological perspective still exists (Tisby 2019, 86) because various indicators of this mindset still linger. A case in point. Evangelicals told McCaulley the social gospel corrupted Black Christianity. Therefore, it would be prudent not to place his hope in that; instead, he must discard it for a theology developed during the colonial era or 'post-war boom of American Protestantism' (McCaulley 2020, 18). He further remarks that these historical periods were enormously horrific, especially for Afro and Black Americans; therefore, he is troubled by the unconscious disconnect one would need to possess to suggest that theology originating from this era is superior (McCaulley 2020, 17-18).

The new "settlers" also sought to proselytize and manipulate Native Americans while simultaneously denying numerous freedoms to Africans forcibly brought to the New World. The suppression these Africans endured included stripping them of fundamental rights, freedom of religion, and "liberty and justice for all." Under the guise of religious freedom, the newly formed British Colonies inflicted the most abhorrent abuse upon its citizens. The Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution were created at the expense of non-white citizens. For example, Thomas Jefferson, who wrote one of the first drafts of the Declaration of Independence, held slaves along with his contemporaries but did not consider it hypocrisy because the colonists and Founding Fathers had reduced the Africans to mere human chattel and unequal to White citizens in every way. By so doing, they devalued their (enslaved individuals) humanity and rendered them undeserving of equality (Tisby 2019, 42).

Furthermore, Anglican missionaries encountered opposition from slaveholders when they attempted to convert enslaved Africans to Christianity. Initially, Anglican missionaries, adhered to Britain’s common law and indiscriminately proselytized in the British Colonies. However, they received relentless opposition from slaveholders who maintained enslaved Africans did not have the fundamental right to accept Christianity because it was exclusively reserved for white colonists (Gates 2021, 30). This opposition eventually forced the Anglican missionaries to compromise their position regarding the institution of slavery. Britain willingly acknowledged that Christians should not participate in slavery and held this belief as common law (Gates 2021, 301). Unfortunately, Anglican missionaries eventually acquiesced to the slave owners’ demands. Gates contends Anglican missionaries theologized the gospel by asserting that white colonists received Christianity through the privilege of their race (Gates 2021, 31). The Founding Fathers held that freedom to practice one's religion is applicable only if one is of a particular ethnic, racial, social, political, or economic status, evinced by their demoralizing acts toward slaves. The enslaved African or the

Afro American did not possess the arbitrary right to freedom of religion because the Colonists barred them from the elite status that afforded them this privilege. The framers of the United States Constitution rationalized freedom not as a right bestowed upon any individual, rather, as a privilege afforded to one born as an American citizen with an asterisk on American. The asterisk represents the American who is not of the African diaspora and automatically conferred with "liberty and justice for all."

Unfortunately, too many Americans sanctioned this faulty belief that those in authority possessed the right to confer freedom on those deemed subordinate. This self-ascribed authority morphed into individualistic theological convictions cloaked in the veneer of freedom of religion. The disparaging treatment of Afro Americans is a manifestation of this faulty ideology. Theology is informed by its environment (Bird p 89); therefore, it possesses an inherent ability to demand obedience to its credence. Thus, Evangelical Theology developed within the structure of a budding nation whose identity fluctuated between freedom and bondage across racial lines. Within this environment, the Evangelical Church created doctrine steeped in racial disparity.

In addition, the flawed facets of Evangelical Theology convey Scripture as supportive of the debasement of African and Black Americans. This attitude intensified in the south with the emergence of the Southern Baptist Church (SBC). For instance, one of the SBC's staunch supporters, Reverend Basil Manly, Sr. (1798-1868), a leading Christian voice in the SBC during the early nineteenth century, vigorously debated northern abolitionists and unapologetically backed the institution of slavery (Jones 2020, 47-49). Jones further asserts, "Manly was a steadfast and sought-after religious voice justifying slavery and white supremacy" (2021, 53). Jones laments, "American Christianity's theological core has been thoroughly structured by an interest in protecting white supremacy. While it may seem obvious to mainstream white Christians today that slavery, segregation, and overt declarations of white supremacy are antithetical to the teachings of Jesus, such a conviction is, in fact, recent and only partially conscious for most white American Christians and churches" (Jones 2020, 13-15). Reconciling Black and Evangelical missional theology requires a shift in centuries-old dogma. Also, Black and White Christians must begin correcting historical narratives regarding the black experience in missiology. For example, George Liele is considered an "informal missionary" by some White historians/missiologists. They argue the Revolutionary War forced him to travel to Jamaica to avoid re-enslavement; therefore, his trip cannot represent intentional missions; therefore, Adoniram Judson is the first "official missionary" from the United States (Finn 2020, 152, 181).

Mission Theology: Two Interpretations

A Polarization

> At a pragmatic level, white churches served as connective tissue that brought together leaders from other social realms to coordinate a campaign of massive resistance to black equality. But at a deeper level, white churches were the institutions of ultimate legitimization, where white supremacy was divinely justified via a carefully cultivated Christian theology. White Christian churches composed the cultural score that made white supremacy sing (Jones 2021, 47).

White Evangelical missionaries, particularly from the West, perpetuated this falsity for centuries. Gates suggests Protestant Christians struggled with the idea of evangelizing slaves because many considered them unworthy of salvation and questioned their right to the pursuit of liberty (2021, 17). Religious rights are established by the majority group's perceptions of them. If a person of color does not perceive religion/theology in the same manner as the majority group, this individual is considered to operate from an unacceptable theology. McCaulley contends, White Evangelicals habitually reject Black Theology as lacking theological soundness because preachers do not speak seminary (McCaulley 2020, 19).

Therefore, Black theology sought to mitigate the psychological, emotional, and social wounding of such doctrinal teachings by developing a theology that emphasized the God-given value of Black individuals. In the Black Atlantic, Afro American missionaries often focused on the inclusivity of the gospel and God's intention that all profit from this inclusive gospel. Black Missional Theology developed largely from this focal point.

Black Missional Theology: A Cursory Overview

Africans, forced to cross the transatlantic through the slave trade, lost their identity, culture, and theology. Saunders mentions that this crossing unwittingly thrust Africans into a new identity and religion that morphed into the Afro American identity (2020, 37). Africans arrived in the Americas with profound religious devotions and practices. However, the dominant role religion had begun to play in the newly established British Colonies became a convenient instrument to psychologically force the enslaved into

submission (Tisby 2019, 35-37). Consequently, Black Theology responded to the failure of Evangelical Theology to reach African/Black Americans, and in the absence of truth, doubt arises.

Black Missional Theology proceeded from the experience of the Black Church combined with the Black Church's desperate need to offer hope to enslaved congregates who often struggled to understand the doctrines of Evangelical Christianity and the value of its guide, the Bible. As a result, enslaved Africans and Islanders relied on their slave master's interpretation of the Bible. Christian principles explained from the perspective of the slave master and the general English-speaking population often eluded the enslaved Africans because they had not fully acquired the English language. For several centuries, Africans and Islanders were barred from obtaining literacy in English. The enslaved Africans could understand Scripture; but they could not read, write, or speak English; moreover, their dependency on their slave masters for biblical interpretation prompted many slave owners to duplicitously misrepresent the Bible. The Negro Bible is an example of this exploitation.

The Negro Bible, commonly referred to as the Slave Bible, perhaps further sanctioned the Christianization of slavery. The accurate claim that slavery dehumanized, delegitimized, and demoralized enslaved Africans and Afro Americans lost its efficacy as one of many consequences of the Negro Bible. Christians who read or taught from it could recklessly accept the hypothesis that the Bible defended slavery and God's plan included the debasement of those of the African diaspora. This erroneous belief soothed the conscience of the Christian slave master, clergy, and the Founding Fathers. Moreover, some enslaved individuals, unfamiliar with the unabridged version of the Bible, unknowingly and sometimes knowingly acquiesced toward the Christianization of slavery. This foisted ignorance created a fierce tension among the enslaved, those who vehemently opposed slavery, and those who seemingly were progressively influenced by the abusive institution. Some scholars, however, argue that tension already existed between enslaved Africans with or without a tainted Christianization of slavery. Unquestionably, though, the creation of the Negro Bible further exacerbated the growing chasm between Afro Americans' and White Americans' theological perspectives because of its (Negro Bible) gross misrepresentation of Scripture. The Negro Bible, published in 1807, represented a mere 10% of the Old Testament and 50% of the New Testament (Lumpkin 2019, v, viii). Slave owners eagerly offered this truncated version of the Bible to their slaves to Christianize them and legitimize this wicked institution.

The Negro Bible, depleted of some of the most sacred passages in Scripture, excluded most of the Psalms, the Torah, and the wisdom books. Interestingly, Lumpkin observes, the editors of the Negro Bible did not eliminate Joseph's account because it detailed unambiguous references to slavery (2019, v); thereby, reinforcing the conjecture that Scripture supported the institution of slavery. Regardless of the alleged intent of the Negro Bible it presented the slave master an opportunity to teach Africans how to read while simultaneously emphasizing the notion that slavery enriched God's plan for those of the African diaspora.

Notably, the misrepresentation of truth, apparent by the Negro Bible's dearth of Scripture, is juxtaposed against the efforts of abolitionists who encouraged southern slave masters to provide Bibles for their slaves. Abolitionists maintained the distribution of Bibles would accomplish two aims. First, the enslaved individual would have an opportunity to learn to read. However, most slave owners opposed the action of teaching slaves to read; thus, this concept barely gained traction. Second, the abolitionists relied on the Bible's principles to expose the contemptibility of slavery (McKivigan 1982, 62). This movement, spearheaded by the newly organized American Bible Society (ABS), encountered stern opposition from southern slave holders as well as Christians who held to the notion that slavery upheld biblical principles. The project failed. The ABS concluded the initiative to distribute Bibles harmed their overall mission and chose to end their participation in the project (McKivigan 1982, 62-63). Subsequently, the tension that arose among the abolitionists and southern slave holders or those who supported slavery proved too much to defeat and eventually the abolitionists abandoned the idea to involve churches or the use of Scripture in abolition endeavors (McKivigan 1982, 63). Too often, those in Christian leadership satisfied their conscience to justify slavery by concealing Scripture or through deceptive interpretations of Scripture. For instance, "Manly asserted forcefully an unapologetic theology of white supremacy, arguing that slavery was not an unfortunate necessity but rather part of the divinely ordained hierarchical order of Christian society" (Jones 2020, 49).

As a result of the stark reality of a flourishing evangelical theology, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Afro American pastors, theologians, and biblical scholars established a central theme comprised of deliverance and freedom. They unapologetically superimposed the Black experience onto Scripture texts. Sadly, these scholars were not viewed as viable and too often White pastors, theologians, and scholars dismissed their scholarship as objectionable. Tisby argues, "The implicit message from many conservative white pastors and professors is that Black Christians

have theological integrity to the degree they adopt the teachings that come from approved European and white American sources. This should not be so" (2019, 202). Therefore, reconciliation among Black and White Christians in a missional context requires not only Black missionaries' participation but also contributions from Black scholarship. Moreover, Black scholarship must be given equal attention as White scholarship. Mission agencies, missionaries, and churches have an obligation to reexamine presuppositions that immediately dismiss scholarship/theology that is not created from a White Evangelical perspective.

Black Christian scholarship increased as opposition continued to force Black Christians to split from churches and missional theologies due to discriminatory practices. Tension between the slave master and his slave, abolitionist and pro-slavery groups, and White and Black pastors intensified, this strain created an enormous need for Black theologians and biblical scholars during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; consequently, the Black Church, fraught with oppression, motivated by a quest for political, social, economic, and religious freedom, emerged. Its culture, ideology, and theology are unique to the purpose for which it was created.

> For a people systematically brutalized and debased by the inhumane system of human slavery, followed by a century of Jim Crow racism, the church provided a refuge: a place of racial and individual self-affirmation, of teaching and learning, of psychological and spiritual sustenance, of prophetic faith; a symbolic space where black people, enslaved and free, could nurture the hope for a better today and a much better tomorrow (Gates 2021, 1-2).

From its inception, the Black Church served as a sanctuary not only for the spiritually lost but also society's marginalized and its teaching reflected this mission. The plethora of Black denominations within the Protestant movement – each having its unique purpose – proves the Black Church is not a monolith; yet most of the Black Church's denominational beliefs include some adaptation of Black Theology dogma. For example, one of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church's mission is to 'spread Christ's liberating gospel.' The term 'liberating' is the operative word in this phrase.

So, the Black Church initiated, preached, and indoctrinated its people with theological ideologies congruent with freedom and liberation. Gates explains the

enslaved Africans' attraction to Scripture arose from biblical narratives that conveyed deliverance and God's eternal love for everyone regardless of race, ethnicity, or creed (2021, 20-21). The enslaved Afro American Christian's responsibility included proselytizing his or her fellow enslaved and freed Afro Americans. This involved assisting one's neighbor in whatever capacity that might entail. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Black Church's missional theology incontrovertibly focused on evangelism with a dual focus on home and global missions. The enslaved Afro American's understanding of the great commission included outreach to the West Indies and Africa. During this period, Afro American's involvement in global missions remained at the forefront of the Black Church's agenda. For example, George Liele was the first Afro American to go abroad as a Baptist missionary. Although, some post-modern mission scholars insist he was the first American to carry the Gospel abroad.

Liele insisted the Black Church accept its responsibility to engage in foreign missions mandated by the Great Commission. "Liele's conversion awakened an urgency within him to reach the lost with the Gospel, especially slaves and those of African heritage" (Saunders 2020, 29). Decades before the Civil War, Afro American Christians embraced evangelization, including foreign missions. The black church in the antebellum south encouraged foreign missions as much as 'home' missions because it valued the life of its black brother and sisters in Colonial America. Liele held this conviction, and his handwritten letters provide great insight into his life as a missionary (Saunders 2020, 168). Some missiologists suggest Liele's idea to engage in missions occurred when he received the good fortune to sail to Jamaica with British soldiers; although, they do not recognize this voyage as a call to missionary service.

During the Revolutionary War, the British offered freedom to enslaved Blacks who enlisted and served (Catron 2016, 197). By the end of the war, freed slaves seized the opportunity to leave the newly formed United States to travel to countries that broke with the British monarchy (Catron 2016, 198). Liele, who experienced the brutality of slavery, racist attitudes, and misrepresentation of his people, nonetheless embraced the mandate of the Great Commission, and acknowledged it as his responsibility to "…go and preach to all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt 28:19).

At the conclusion of the Revolutionary War, Liele seized the occasion to travel to Jamaica because it offered him the possibility to evangelize enslaved and freed blacks on the island (Catron 2016, 197-198). The willingness Liele exhibited to travel to the islands demonstrated his commitment to evangelization and his missionary calling.

Historical accounts portray Liele as a man of high regard, immeasurable faith, eager to reconcile with White Christians. He readily accepted ministry opportunities with White pastors, evident by his service to the Yamacraw Church in a Savannah suburb which included white and black congregates (Davis 1918, 120). Liele left a legacy as a missionary and reconciler.

Another notable Afro American missionary, who adhered to the principles of the 'Great Commission', is Rebekka Protten. Protten, a Moravian Missionary, is considered by Saunders as the mother of the Protestant missionary movement, as well as the impetus for the Protestant missionary movement as we know it today (2021, "The Future of the Evangelical Missionary Movement," 42-43, 46-48). She is also the forerunner for using education as an evangelistic tool. What is especially notable, "Rebekka conceptualized and implemented a contextualized delivery of the gospel decades before William Carey or Adoniram Judson modeled this concept" (Saunders 2020, 45). Other noteworthy pre-twentieth-century Afro/Black American missionaries include Richard Allen (1760-1831), Reverend Joseph C. Price (1854-1893), James Theodore Holly (1829-1911), Amanda Smith (1837-1915), and Dave George (1742-1810) to name a few. These men and women pioneered the missions' movement. However, the Black Church experienced vicious racism combined with opposition from most White Churches and White missionary agencies in the years following the Civil War and Reconstruction periods, resulting in an utter transformation of its missional theology. The Black Church increasingly became insular in focus, and Black missionaries began to lose ground in the foreign mission effort. The Black Church's mission and consequently its missional theological stance slowly changed. The concept of 'backyard' missions evolved and continued to take root during the Reconstruction and Jim Crow eras relegating black missional theology to an almost irrefutable 'backyard' mission's philosophy by the late-19th century.

Unfortunately, the demands for racial justice justifiably constrained the Black Church to look inward for its primary mission focus. Black Theology clarifies the church's mission is to remain within the confines of one's region and cultivate the needs of the 'neighbors' in proximity to the church. This belief is justified through Lukan letters. For instance, Luke's parable of the Good Samaritan is at the crux of Black Missional Theology. According to Black Missional Theology, the neighbors are as close as the community 'down the road.' This viewpoint aligns with 1 John 4:20, "If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen." Thus, Black Missional Theology responds to Jesus' parable with a clarion call to go into one's

immediate vicinity to advocate for the disenfranchised and marginalized. This missional theology often deviates from the doctrines reflected in Evangelical Missional Theology, which focuses on evangelizing people in foreign countries. Nevertheless, both missional theologies recognize the need to act upon the Great Commission, but the Black Church is at odds with how to accomplish foreign missions without neglecting 'backyard' missions. Perhaps the means for achieving racial unity in missions is to create a model that encapsulates both theologies, a reconciliatory model. The creation of this model would necessitate having a thorough understanding of the essentials of both theologies.

Evangelical Missional Theology

Bird claims the primary rationale for Evangelical Theology focuses on 'living' the gospel while conveying its message worldwide (2020, 39-41, 81). Quite feasibly, Evangelical Missional Theology emerged from Evangelical Theology. Evangelical Theology examines God from a missional viewpoint found in the Great Commission (Bird 2020, 2). There are specifically identifiable attitudes toward missional theology exhibited by many evangelical church leaders, which are generally absent in black church leadership. According to Saunders, Black pastors are committed to the Great Commission but grapple with how to balance 'backyard' and global missions simultaneously (2020, 187-189). First, evangelical attitude toward mission is defined by how they prioritize missions. For example, countless evangelical denominations include missions as a focal point of their vision. Additionally, these churches create budgets that exclusively account for mission expenses. Lastly, numerous evangelical churches create mission boards or work directly with mission agencies to support the churches' mission activity. Unquestionably, the Evangelical Church's emphasis is global mission. Blue insists, Psalms are God's mission book because of its emphasis on the world's nations (2001, 56).

The evangelical church’s missional theology is the focal point of who they are evidenced by mission activity in the overall systematic review of evangelical theology. The constant focus on missions has endured even as the theology has progressed in the United States and the Western world. Missions conducted by White Christians during the colonial period reveals its impact on Evangelical churches and even the misrepresentation of the Black Atlantic and the mission movement among Afro Americans. Adoniram Judson, considered the first Protestant American missionary, spent one year in India. Judson is noted for his rejection of infant baptism and eventually resigned his position with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) over the controversial matter (Finn 2012, 151-153). After one year in

India, the Indian government demanded the Judsons leave the country, and they relocated to Burma (Finn 2012, 154). Judson experienced a life filled with enormous hardships which caused immense loss and grief during his almost forty years as a missionary; however, he remained undeterred (Finn 2012, 162-173), and his legacy endures. He translated the Bible into Burmese and is attributed with editing several dictionaries.

While evangelicals consider Judson the first "official" missionary from The United States, numerous prominent evangelical missionaries forged remarkable legacies during America's colonial years and continued into the twenty-first century. They evangelized in India, China, African nations, and various other countries. However, these mission accomplishments do not excuse the unfair prejudicial treatment inflicted upon Afro and Black Americans. White missionary agencies often prohibited Afro and Black Americans from contributing to mission endeavors because White Evangelicals' preclusion of Afro and Black Americans from global mission involvement seemed appropriate and justifiable. White Evangelicals (which includes missionaries) influenced by cultural bias tend to accept discriminatory and racist practices as norm.

This mindset typified the practices inside mission agencies and persisted as discriminatory and racist practices persisted. For example, in the 1600s, enslaved Africans were persuaded to convert to Christianity not only for the sake of salvation but also to improve their earthly conditions (Gates 2021, 21). This attitude, which permeated mission agencies across the United States, also influenced their policies.

Finally, evangelical missionaries tend toward a mindset for organizational structure. There is a plethora of mission agencies who represent Evangelical Missional Theology. Unfortunately, too often many of these agencies work from a framework that make allowances for racially prejudiced practices. Some of these practices include adhering to culturally inappropriate ways. Sadly, this attitude persists today among White Evangelicals as demonstrated by Robert P. Jones's study. Jones conducted a study to answer the question, *What Role Do Racial Attitudes Play in Structuring White Christian Identity?* Jones concluded, "The models reveal that, in the United States today, the more racist attitudes a person holds, the more likely he or she is to identify as a white Christian" (2021, 207-220).

Furthermore, some mission groups aimed to share the gospel and colonialize anyone deemed "uncivilized" (Mason 2018, 80-82); unfortunately, these beliefs guided the practices of mission agencies. Consequently, a narrative that religious freedom

afforded its recipients a privileged status became the prevailing attitude throughout the colonies, and the Evangelical Missional Theology was reinforced under these conditions. Evangelical Missional Theology began exercising its dominance globally as superior to other religions and even other Christian theological ideologies. However, refuting theological inaccuracies regarding race and skin color is complicated because they have persisted for centuries, and various evangelical pastors and leaders too often echo them. For example, racial superiority is rationalized by utilizing theological arguments which purports those of African ancestry originated from Cain; therefore, they naturally have criminal proclivity (Jones 2012, 27). These theological inaccuracies hinder reconciliation and widen the gap between Black and White evangelicals and missionaries.

Other factors gave rise to the decline of Afro and Black American missionaries; although, the inequalities existing within White mission agencies also constrained Black missionaries to reconsider serving abroad. Evangelical pastors and most biblical scholars insist that global missions (the Great Commission) is among the most important commands for every believer. Several White evangelical denominations place priority on global missions evident by the numerous diverse mission agencies and organizations. A final attitude to consider is Evangelicals' focus on expenditures and funding. Funding is an essential element in countless evangelical churches and missions organizations. Many White Evangelicals consistently support missions financially. This article does not analyze the differences between budgets for White Evangelical churches and Black churches, but Black pastors often lament the lack of resources for foreign mission endeavors. Finance and/or budget, establishing mission oversight organizations, and prioritizing missions in the local church is the bedrock philosophy of many evangelical churches and their missional theology.

It is also necessary to reiterate the cultural influence placed on Evangelical Theology. The culture impacts the theology as much as the theology impacts the culture - this is a two-edged sword. It is imperative for missionaries to recognize the culture she or he takes to the mission field influences how Evangelicals engage in missionary activities (Bird 2020, 113). Global missions is fundamentally essential to the belief system and/or theology of evangelicals. Within this belief system, the Evangelical culture often attempts to superimpose its cultural dogmas upon those who hear and accept the gospel.

During slavery, Christian and non-Christian slave owners, pastors, etc. inflicted upon people of color a theology assumed to be divine, virtuous, intelligent, and, therefore, correct. This theology implicitly superseded any theology the enslaved African practiced prior to being forced to into involuntary enslavement. The slaves' theology was inferior because African slaves in the United States were thought to be, by most standards, barbaric and lacking the ability to reason or learn (Tisby 2019, 37). American slaveowners forced upon their slaves a theology born out of their superiority complex and privilege (Tisby 2019, 36-38). Evangelical Theology in American culture is preoccupied with "gospelizing" (Bird 2020, 9) the world rather than the advocacy for the plight of African/Black Americans and the marginalized. This theology - Evangelical Theology - seeks to advance the Kingdom of Christ through the teachings of Scripture focused on Christ's work on Calvary with a small measure of regard to His radicalization for justice (Mason 2018, 55-57). "As incarnational missionaries, our mission flows from the mission of the gospel of practicing peace" (Mason 2018, 57).

Evangelicals place the weight of responsibility on Believers to share the gospel as opposed to being the gospel. Too often, missionaries go abroad with the erroneous goal to make disciples or converts to Evangelicalism rather than Christ. There is hope. A modicum of evidence exists that suggests the Evangelical missiology has progressed in its thinking during the past two or three hundred years.

Conclusion

Incontrovertibly, a theological chasm exists between White Evangelicals and Black Christians concerning foreign missions' endeavors. There are numerous reasons why this gap exists; however, finding viable solutions is problematic and demanding. Various issues point toward reasons for theological differences which include, historical factors pertaining to slavery in the United States, racism and racial tension, origination of the Black Church's theological origin, White Evangelical dogmas, differences and even a small measure of similarities within the White Evangelical and Black Church as it relates to missions, the inaccuracies in the narratives of Black and White missionary pioneers, and reasons for the ever-widening gap between White and Black Evangelical missionaries.

Therefore, in a missional context, reconciliation with White and Black evangelicals requires an understanding of their respective theological stance within this context. In a broad sense, White Evangelicals approach missions from the perspective of the great

commission (Matt 28:19), and Black Christians approach missions from the perspective of the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10). In this instance, 'neighbor' is interpreted as the person in proximity to one's church/home. White Evangelicals view their responsibility as taking the gospel abroad, while Black Christians perceive their responsibility as focusing on missions in proximity to one's home, school, or church.

Fostering racial unity and healing between the Black and White Church regarding its missional endeavors demands time and resolute effort. For most reading this article, at this moment in time - early twenty-first century - time will most likely expire before the one reading this work can realize the fruition of the work of reconciliation. This statement is not prophetic gloom but rather demonstrates the immense time and work needed to accomplish the goal of reconciliation between Black and White American missionaries. There is not enough time for those living now to see major milestones; this work is too vast.

To accomplish racial unity in global missions in the twenty-first century and forward, three things must occur. First, Afro and Black American missionary pioneers, who achieved incredible feats during the eras of the Black Atlantic, Colonial years, Antebellum South, and Post Civil war, must be acknowledged. Moreover, the historical missionary narratives must be told with accuracy because historical accuracy will benefit both Black and White American missionaries. Second, it is imperative to scrutinize erroneous theologies which continue to perpetuate the ideology that slavery and White supremacy are analogous with Christianity. However, the challenge to correct faulty theology is enormous because of its subjective nature. At its core, theology is humanity's perspective of – and experience with – God. Finally, acknowledging differences between the two theologies does not mitigate the integrity of a specific theological view. If a theological perspective is grounded in biblical truth, it is reasonable to admit there may be several applications relevant to one passage of Scripture.

"At our core, without being conscious in Christ, our souls are still in bondage and can only see things from the natural..." (Mason 2018, 27). The missionary must awaken theologically if they are to reach a twenty-first-century world. North American and particularly the United States of America mission groups will realize tremendous success when they open their hearts to genuine reconciliation. Reconciliation involves accepting that both Black and Evangelical theologies have deep roots in biblical theology, and both are committed to serving their neighbors and carrying out the Great

Commission. Bird suggests the way to remain theologically sound is to discern – as one hears other theological views – but not blindly reject other theologies (2020, 125). The need for global mission is tremendous. To fulfill the Great Commission, African/Black Americans and Caucasian/White Americans must begin to view mission through the lens that both theologies are viable and acceptable for home and global mission.

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