Liberty University School of Divinity

Doctor of Ministry Thesis Project

Racism In Southeast Texas Churches: A Plan For Reconciliation And Healing Among Its Church Community

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BY

William James Carter, The 1st

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Thesis Project Approval Sheet

________________________
Dr. Micheal S. Pardue
Instructional Mentor

________________________
Dr. Justin A. Smith
Reader

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ABSTRACT

A cursory look at many churches in the United States will show many local Churches are segregated by ethnicity and people groups. When this is done, it gives the appearance that the Church is broken because certain groups choose not to celebrate with others of different ethnicities. The problem is that there is a considerable reality to the appearance. With that, it is the intent of this project to examine the reasons for the divide. In order to determine the reasons, a survey will be provided, and classes taught examining the reasons for the divides. Additionally, this project will seek to understand some history of racism as it pertains to the church. This understanding will come from academic research to include the founding of denominations with obvious racial divides.

Some might suggest that local bodies should be representative of the communities in which they sit. Unfortunately, most are not. The ultimate goal of this project is to allow church leaders and lay-members the opportunity for honest introspection as to the reasoning for separation because of ethnicity. Once some causes of racial separation have been determined the goal of this project will be to have church leaders become more accepting of all people in the communities in which they sit.

Abstract length: 210 words
Acknowledgments

There comes a point in time when one must acknowledge the fact that he has not come to his present point by reason of his own power and that he must give honor to whom honor is due. Therefore, I take this time to give honor to God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, without whom I would not be here and certainly not at this point in life. I am thankful to God for bringing me to this point in time.

I also give honor to my Bishop, Johnny C. Carrington, Jr. If there was any man that has supported me, he is the man. I thank God for this man and honor him as he is indeed a man worthy of honor. Without him, I would not be able to participate in this work of building and uniting the Church. It is also prudent that I acknowledge the many professors, instructors and staff members that have worked with me throughout the years. Your support of me has been invaluable.

Finally, I acknowledge the Church. It is a pleasure and an honor working with a people that love God. It is also an honor to be able to grow and learn as we all work toward the ultimate goal of seeing Jesus face-to-face. It is my prayer that we all lay aside idiosyncratic ideologies that seek to divide as we walk toward the Kingdom.
Special Acknowledgement

On May 26, 2019, my Bishop, Johnny C. Carrington Sr. succumbed to his battle of sickness. He would prove to be victorious in many ways. It is to my regret that my Bishop, my Pastor, will never see this finished project and will never see me complete academic success with the ultimate degree of Doctor of Ministry. Ministry is the reason my Bishop lived and the reason I work tirelessly to point men to the foot of the cross.

Considering the events of the days following his death I am left with no choice but to acknowledge the Carrington family. This is especially true for Evangelist Betty Carrington (the beloved wife of my Pastor). She has always treated me like family and has been in my corner as much as my Bishop. The Carrington family should know that I love them all dearly and am honored to be part of a people who serve without apology.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

A cursory look at many churches in the United States will show many local churches are segregated by ethnicity and people groups. A clearer picture of the divide becomes evident when Southeast Texas is examined. This is because many of the churches in Southeast Texas have congregations of one dominant ethnicity. For instance, there are two large Baptist Churches in the Golden Triangle that are just a few miles apart. Both are in communities hosting multiple people groups. Baptist Church One has a congregation of more than 95% White while Baptist Church Two has a congregation of at least 99% Black.

It is the intent of this project to research reasons for the divide. In order to determine the reasons, there will be a class which will employ the use of a survey. The survey will serve to learn how congregants see the cause of divides in the Church. There will also be a series of classes with the desired end result in finding ways to bridge the divides in the Church. Additionally, this project will seek to understand some history of racism as it pertains to the Church at large and Southeast Texas in particular. This understanding will come from academic research to include the founding of denominations with obvious racial divides.

This work will argue that a healthy church is a church that includes people from all walks of life and people from every tribe and every nation. Practically speaking, local bodies would do well to have the congregants be a representation of the communities in which they sit. The ultimate goal of this project is to allow church leaders and lay-members the opportunity for honest introspection as to the reasoning for separation because of ethnicity. Once some causes of racial separation have been determined the goal of this project will be made tangible by these
leaders working for healthy churches. It is expected that the limited research will representative of the Church at large. Therefore, the findings will likely be a prototype of all churches.

Throughout this project, numerous scriptural texts are cited. All biblical references herein are from the King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise indicated. Finally, throughout this work, the term “Church” is used. Normally, this is a term used with respect to the entirety of Christian believers throughout the United States as well as the world. However, because of the limited scope of this study, the term “Church, hereafter refers generally to the local bodies in Southeast Texas.

Ministry Context

In his letter to the Corinthian church, Paul expounds on the unity of the body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:12-14 encapsulates the fullness of the body by showing that it is comprised not only of Jews but also Gentiles. The servants are included with the free. There is no separation of people by nationality. There is no discussion of groups worshiping with people who look like them or any other divisive matter. Instead, the text shows a unified body joined by one Spirit.

As a pastor in a local body in Southeast Texas, this pastor has had the opportunity to visit a number of local bodies. Of the ones he has visited only one is truly multi-ethnic. This is problematic because the local churches are all situated in communities wherein there are several people groups. Some of the church leaders say they would welcome people of differing ethnicities not prominent in that local body all while, in some cases, making derogatory statements about those same groups. For instance, one pastor with a congregation of Blacks regularly refers to White people as racists and that they are an enemy of Blacks.

The biblical record shows God never intended a divided Church. Yet, the Church at large and the local bodies in Southeast Texas are gravely divided. This is a matter that must be addressed
not only from an academic point-of-view but also from a practical point-of-view. The Church must be a united front to the problems of the world. A united Church would be one saturated in the love that God showed as He sent Jesus into the world to be a sacrifice for the sin of mankind. The idea of mankind excludes no people group while being all-inclusive.

Moreover, there is a lack of genuine love in many churches. This lack of love often has nothing to do with racial matters. Tullian Tchividjian, in unfashi nable indicates that there would be no church division in the presence of love.¹ Tchividjian goes on to say, “Lacking love from the body (and for any individuals in the body) shows a lack of love for the Head of the body. If we love Christ, we will love one another.”²

This does not pull from the significance of what might be apathy, lack of concern, or more nefarious intentions or motivations. No matter the reasoning, the lack of love in the Church might be counted as a primary reason for a racially divided church in Southeast Texas. With that, it might be prudent for those in these various churches to employ the ministry of love in order to be more effective in sharing the Gospel.

In this project the idea of love becomes paramount. It is because the biblical record shows that God is a God of love and is love. Because God is love, all that comes from Him is predicated upon the very nature of love. Moreover, 2 Corinthians clearly shows that those who follow Christ are given the ministry of reconciliation. That reconciliation is the very reason Christ became incarnate. This example of Christ was more than active platitudes. It was an action geared to fix the broken relationship between God and man by reason of man’s sin. The love Christ exemplified was also an example of how Christians should treat each other. The greatest

¹ Tullian Tchividjian, unfashi nable: making a difference in the world by being different (Colorado Springs: Multnomah Books, 2009), 104.

² Ibid.

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ministry, that of reconciliation, should be employed from all people to all people without consideration of ethnicity.

The history of Southeast Texas does not lend to the idea of love between the differing ethnicities. The converse is more to the point. Glen Chambers observes the following:

The historical links between the Creole community and the Catholic Church in Louisiana suffered as a result of racial segregation. The Catholic hierarchy in many communities throughout the South accommodated themselves to the Southern racial ideology of Jim Crow (Ochs 1993,2) The Catholic Church in Texas was no exception.3

Chambers goes on to show. “Segregation was common in Texas Catholic churches.4 And, while Chambers has a focus on the Catholic Church, this writer has observed that some in local churches have elected to self-segregate. This is problematic because it pulls from the ministry of reconciliation in which the children of God should be engaged.

Statement of the Problem

Southeast Texas is an area of the United States that boasts a multiplicity of ethnic groups. The diversity of groups is documented with the U. S. Census Bureau which shows such groups as Blacks, Whites, Hispanics, and Asians.5 The 2017 data is specific to the Beaumont-Port Arthur, TX Metro area of Texas. Southeast Texas is east of Houston and west of Louisiana. It includes the Golden Triangle which consists of Port Arthur, Beaumont, and Orange, Texas. It is a type of the country at large in that it can be seen as a “melting pot” or “mosaic” of people groups.

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4Ibid.

This is ideal in a nation such as the United States. Unfortunately, there is a problem with the association between the many groups. This is especially true in the Church. This is contrasted with the idea that a Barna Group study shows “Three-quarters of Americans agree that “Christian churches play an important role in racial reconciliation.” And, while this may be true John Piper sees segregation as being on the rise. Piper argues the following:

For most African Americans, these realities shape their consciousness profoundly. The majority culture (which for a little while longer is still white) has the luxury of being oblivious to race (which would change in an instant, if we moved to Nigeria). But for minority peoples, race-related issues are a persistent part of consciousness.

There is certainly racism that remains in the United States at large and the churches of Southeast Texas in particular. This is the sort of discussion that pulls at the emotional aspects of racism in order to subjugate particular groups using historical context. It is the view of this writer that such negative presentation does little to heal the masses, no matter the pigmentation or ethnicity. Mark Hearn, for instance, writes, “The hope is for White Evangelicals to nurture (and to be nurtured by) mutual relations with persons of color in order to understand their experiences of God and life in the United States.” Hence, the problem with much of the Church in Southeast is similar to the Church at large in the United States. There is the continual looking at the sins of the past that have had no direct impact on the contemporary Church of Southeast Texas.

This problem is furthered when one considers the function of leadership in the Church. Some leaders are apathetic about the idea of a multi-ethnic or cross-ethnic church. That is, some

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8 Ibid., 72

leaders may lack the courage to speak against racially divided churches. While Henry and Richard Blackaby do not discuss racism in their work it could be argued that their discussion on courage plays well into the idea of bold leadership. Part of the discussion of courage is noted in this fashion:

Courage is not an absence of fear. Courage is being frightened and yet doing the right thing anyway. The ancient Greeks understood courage was a foundational virtue. Without it, people might know what they should do but not resolve to do it. …When leaders reach a point where fear prevents them from acting, they and their organization stagnate. Some pastors know they should confront sinful behavior in their congregation, but they dread the repercussions.\textsuperscript{10}

It is this insight from the Blackabys which may be showing why many leaders do not address the matter of racism in the Church. Intentional segregation of the Body of Christ shows a lack of love. It shows there is no desire to fellowship with many of God’s people merely because of ethnicity. If there is no love, then sin is ever-present. This shows leaders are leery of addressing the sinfulness of racism in the church.

**Purpose Statement**

The racial divide in the local church is not in keeping with the Word of God. In that respect, Rick McClatchy’s examination of the church in Texas notes the following:

Jesus intended for his followers to break down the barriers that separated people and to bring them together as his followers who see themselves as brothers and sisters with God as their Father. Distinctions based upon race, ethnicity, or culture that separate people or lead to discrimination are counter to the Kingdom of God vision.\textsuperscript{11}

Further discussion in this work will point to the idea that God not only prefers but also desires a church that is unified. That unification is not a mere theoretical union, it is a union that would be

\textsuperscript{10} Henry Blackaby and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People on to God’s Agenda* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), 178.

enjoined by God. The promotion of a unified Body is not only the desire of God, is it the very reason for the sacrifices made by the Godhead.

The Godhead has provided a framework for the work of love which is the entire premise for the original advent for the Son of Man. This idea may seem to be minutia to some while love is the very center of the Godhead as shown in 1 John 4:8. It is also the very thing that has been missing in local churches for a long time. The problem of a segregated Church has been shown to be directly related to the lack of love from one people group to another. It may also be a reason for the growth of denominationalism which, at least to some extent, furthers racism in the Church. In this regard, Stephen A. Hong notes the following:

Some will correctly point out that the church must sometimes be divided for practical reasons. Obviously, all of the Christians in the world cannot meet together in one place. Even within a single city it may be impractical for all of God’s people to meet together in one location. Of course they must meet separately. The problem is not that they congregate in separate locations, the problem is that they emphasize their separateness—doctrinally, theologically, racially, etc.—from other groups of Christians.12

While Hong does not use the term “love” in the above quote the lack of love is evident when he notes divides in the church were, at least in part, due to race. To have divides based on one’s race is having divides because of a lack of love.

God never desired a divided Church. He certainly never desired a Church broken by reason of racism. Scripture points to the fact that the people of God are ministers of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18). It is, therefore, the purpose of this project to address the idea of a necessarily divided Church, particularly in Southeast Texas. For instance, as Glen Chambers examines historical practices of the segregated Catholic church in Southeast Texas he noted:

As more and more migrants arrived from Louisiana, the Catholic church saw fit to address the needs of the black population and in many instances assisted in creating separate churches, schools, and hospitals to combat Jim Crow.13

Blacks thought it reasonable to create their own institutions, to include churches, to prevent “black flight from the faith.”14

The intent of the divided Catholic church was to lessen the impact of Jim Crow laws. However, separate churches did little to unite the Catholic church, Jim Crow laws would have to be dealt with to at least lessen the impact of separatism. These are the matters that will be addressed and once the matter of divides is addressed a plan for healing will be presented and that plan of healing will begin in the church where this writer serves as pastor.

Basic Assumptions

This writer has better than three decades of ministry experience. He first began to work in ministry at a church in Hawaii as a Christian counselor. He would go on to serve in a number of capacities such as church administrator for two churches. He has two of those decades working as a clergy member. The work as a clergy member allowed him to serve as associate pastor and now is the pastor of a new church plant. Because of his work in local bodies, he has seen a number of churches divided by ethnicity. This is seen as a problem because when one reads the Scripture there can be found no room for division in the Church. Yet, there are many that seem to want to continue the divisions created by Jim Crow laws and others that seek to self-segregate by reason of superficial ideologies or false premises. This purposeful segregation is cause for grave concern and with that concern there comes the need for healing and reconciliation in the body of Christ.

13 Chambers, Goodbye God, 128
14 Ibid., 129
One reason for the divide in the church is that some are under the assumption that culture dictates a need for the divide. Many do not see the divide as racist. Still, people such as Benjamin Watson hold the ropes of racism closely while he seeks to project his views on the general populace. Watson states, “I confess to you that the problem of racism is inside me. And I suggest the problem is inside you as well.”15 This is the encapsulation of the problem of racism. It assumes that because at least one person has a certain way of thinking then all, by extension, must have that same view. For instance, Watson recounts a time he was driving through Boston with his pregnant wife and was concerned about speeding because of his Black ethnicity. Watson would eventually be stopped by the police and recalls the following sentiment after being pulled over by the police:

White people have no idea of the fear that black people feel toward the police. I cannot say that strongly enough, loudly enough, or forcefully enough. I believe it is a huge point of division between black people and white people. Black people have little expectation of being treated fairly by police in any situation. We have a high expectation of being demeaned, abused, and possibly treated violently in any encounter with law enforcement.16

This sentiment, as suggested by Watson, is the sentiment of all Blacks. It suggests perpetual victimization of Blacks even while he does not say why he was pulled over. Neither does he indicate the ethnicity of the officer that pulled him over. This is a sentiment that has spilled into the church of Southeast Texas.

There are some churchgoers who ignore racism in the Church. This does not negate the problem. It bolsters the problem. That is, many in self-segregated churches seem to enjoy the segregation. This, however, does little to build the Kingdom of God as it goes against the very


16 Ibid., 91
principle of love as described in Scripture. While many of the congregants of the self-segregated local bodies may not see the division as being racist, it could be argued that if people of different ethnicities are not welcomed or invited to the services the very idea of racism becomes paramount.

The assumption of this writer is that many have the view of Benjamin Watson. Some may not frame their views as being racists while the actions hold to the very premise of racism. For example, in his work, there is a point Watson reflects on an incident that took place while he was in the fourth grade. In the predominantly White school, Watson had a crush on a schoolmate. His friend made a statement suggesting that if he were White the girl would like him. From that experience Watson deduced that “Race, economics, and religion contribute hugely to shape our worldview; they also bind us into group identity.”

This racial group identity is this very thing this writer is determined to fight against. He has had the opportunity to work with people of many ethnicities and nationalities and finds no reason to exclude any from the Word of God. Further, he writes about racism and has posted some of his writings on his blog, The Christian Perspective. One such writing is entitled “Not About Black and White” wherein he rails against the idea of judging people by ethnicity and encourages loving people as people. That essay follows.

**Not About Black and White**

I have learned that there are times wherein unless things are made personal then true passion becomes elusive. With that said the matter of Black and White has become rather personal to me.

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17 Watson, *Under Our Skin*, 31

18 Ibid., 33
Everything has turned to racism even when there is no racism involved. One cannot look at another anymore without there being some sort of racial connotation. Well, I have had enough. I am more than weary of the divide brought about by those that seek a divided nation by reason of pitting this group against that group. I must say it, and I must say it aloud – it’s not about Black and White.

Just the other day a police officer in McKinney, Texas responded to a disturbance call at a private pool in an apartment complex. There was fighting and other disturbances taking place involving a number of people in the community. There were Blacks, Whites and who knows what other people groups involved. And when this one officer arguably acted beyond his training all of a sudden, the entire matter became one of racism and injustice. All this was determined even before all the facts have come out. This is not to mention the fact that paid agitators and race-baiters have been called to the scene in order to perpetuate the false narrative that police departments are inherently racist.

Baltimore was no different. A young man died while in police custody. The circumstances surrounding his death are still being cloaked behind the investigative umbrella. Even so, the ever so eloquent Attorney General of Baltimore, Marilyn Mosby, decided that she would seek justice for the young Blacks of Baltimore as justice for them has been elusive for decades. Well, Mrs. Mosby, if there is no justice and, by the way, no opportunities how is it that you came to be in such a powerful position? How is it you are a Black female mayor who replaced another Black female mayor? Tell, me Mrs. Attorney General, how is it that the largely Black City of Baltimore is racist when it is often Blacks committing crimes in my beloved town? Yes, Whites commit also crimes which only lends to the fact that crime is not about Black and White.
We certainly cannot leave out the incidents that occurred in Ferguson, MO. Here another young Black male met an untimely demise. Yes, this young man should be alive and well, however, he made decisions which brought about his demise. And, once again, the powers that be employed the false mantra of racism only because the officer involved was White. Even Eric Holder’s justice department sought to find racial issues wherein none could be found. The fact is that it is not about Black and White and I am sick and tired of my country being torn apart by the injection of lies that have no basis.

Well, I have had my fill. Why don’t these haters of people look at communities wherein Blacks kill each other for matters as simple as disrespect? Perhaps these rabble-rousers should go and lend healing to the Whites that kill each other over matters with such minutia that the issues would not make the nightly news. Yes, there are injustices and things perceived as injustice. Still, just because there are injustices does not mean that wrong actions (perceived or real) are the means of a racial end. Bad things happen to all people no matter their pigmentation. My heart is saddened because of the perpetuation of falsities that seek to divide the masses.

I am so glad that I am able to deal with people no matter their skin tone. One of my favourite families is a Chinese family in the Baltimore area. I have put my feet under the tables of Blacks and Whites in their homes and some in mine. You see, love does not succumb to negative views of racism. Instead, love could not care less about one’s pigmentation. It sees the heart of the individual and seeks to build upon the strengths of all concerned. This is much like what Jesus taught. He taught to first love God with all our hearts, minds and souls. He went further to advise that one loves his neighbors as he loves himself.

If one loves as prescribed by Jesus, then this hate-mongering would come to an end. If there is love, there is no time to delve in hate. If there is love, then the idea of all things being Black
and White would quickly come to an end. So, let us love. Let us love not because of skin colour. Instead, let us love of our fellow man because love will do much to repel the hatred spewed by a few.\textsuperscript{19}

The above essay points to the fact that much of the media and those with political authority should be held responsible for racial vitriol in the country. That vitriol has seeped into the Church at large and the church of Southeast Texas in particular. Hence, tis writer believes that if one is to love his brother, in accordance with Scripture, he will not have time to hate predicated upon superficial ideologies. That love would allow for healing of self and that healing can be projected upon others no matter who those others are.

\textbf{Statement of Limitations}

The matter of racism has a history that goes back a number of years. It has many facets and includes every people group. Moreover, racism has been found to be institutionally based and individually based. It has impacted businesses, schools, and people across the globe. It is, for this reason, that this research of racism in the Church will be very limited in scope.

This project will be an examination of the impact of racism in the local church bodies of Southeast Texas. It will not, however, seek to research each local body. It will seek to examine local bodies catering to specific demographics and local bodies that have invited a multiplicity of people groups. Specifically, this project will seek to examine churches that cater to Blacks, Whites, and those that are multi-ethnic. It is expected that the limited research will be a type of the Church at large.

Statement of Methodology

Chapter one of this project will seek to paint the raw picture of the Church in Southeast Texas and the Church at large. Many of the local assemblies are predominately one ethnicity or the other. The reasons stem from such ideas as the desire for certain worship styles to others desiring to worship with their “own” people. While this may not seem to be a problem on the surface, the separation falls far short of God’s desire. Hence, there will be research into the truth of the divides. Additionally, there are reasons to seek reconciliation and healing. It is the purpose of the theses to seek reasons for the divide with the ultimate intent of healing.

In order to further understand racism in the local church, the primary method of research will be through a one-question survey which will precede a five-part lesson on church reconciliation. First, willing participants will be provided the one question survey. That survey will seek to understand the reasons for division in the church from the perspectives of those in the church. The ultimate desire is to gain an understanding of why there are racial divides in the church.

Information will be pulled from the survey will help in the efforts to determine what it would take to cause the participants to attend desegregated churches if they are part of intentionally segregated local bodies. Often, surface issues such as music are said to be the reason for the segregation. However, this research will seek to determine the actual reasoning. The academic search will also be used to understand why some denominations, such as the Church of God in Christ, are a primarily Black denomination. The results of these findings will be pivotal in the discovery of solutions to racial divides.

The divided Church has little to do with God’s plan for the Church. It also encourages racism outside the Church. Once the reason for the divided Church has been determined healing can begin. That healing, however, cannot from this research. It must come from the hearts of those
mired in the vitriol that is often the result of misunderstandings and ideas of old. Once the blinders of hate are removed the church will be able to see and understand that the love of God seeks healing and reconciliation for all concerned.

**Thesis Statement**

In his work, *Theology for Today*, Elmer Towns provides an extensive discussion of the Church. In his discussion Towns presents a very simple definition of church. He explains, “Further, in the development of the word it came to be used in a technical sense to mean a Christian assembly – both physical and spiritual unity.” Throughout his discussion Towns makes no mention of ethnicity, nationality or culture. He shows the church as being “The Body of Christ” and uses a number of Scriptures to support that idea.

Towns’ explanation of the Church is important because he provides no room for divides predicated upon any superficial matter. Despite that, there are many churches in Southeast Texas this writer has observed where there are congregants primarily of one ethnicity. Sadly, many of those congregations prefer it that way. The intentional segregation is not verbalized except to certain groups in specific settings. This is particularly true of some Black pastors this writer has heard denigrating Whites from the pulpit. This is the matter this project seeks to explore; the intentional ethnic divide in the Church.

It is expected that this project will present challenges in the research. This is because many that practice racism do not see it as racism. Intentional segregation is often cloaked in culture and culture, by extension, leads to separation. This project will, then, seek to examine what the

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21 Ibid., 636.
culture of the Church should be in Southeast Texas as it puts forth a plan to bring about healing and reconciliation to local bodies with the intended desire of impacting Southeast Texas at large.
Chapter Two

Conceptual Framework

The unfortunate truth is that the Church is divided by reason of ethnicity. Most in the Church see no problem with this. In fact, it can be safely argued that many prefer segregated churches. To the point, there is a large church body in the Golden Triangle of Texas. The history of the denomination of that particular body stretches back to the Azusa Street revival. This writer is familiar with both the pastor and other ministers of the body. These leaders tend to speak very negatively about ethnicities that are not reflected in their churches. Moreover, the leaders of the body do not desire to integrate the church.

This is not an isolated problem. There seem to be some that not only want a divided Church but also a racially divided nation. In his article of September 2017, Jason Wilson points to the manifest destiny ideology which sought to create a White Christians United States. Early in his essay Wilson reflects on some historical aspects of the conquering of the continent. He notes:

> This faith informed the 19\textsuperscript{th}-century doctrine of manifest destiny, which held that the spread of white settlement over the entire continent was not only inevitable, but just. The dispossession of native peoples, and the nations eventual dominance of the hemisphere, was carried out under an imprimatur with Christian roots.\textsuperscript{22}

It is this sort of idea that is not only problematic for Christianity and the Church at large but also for the local churches. God never intended for there to be a “White” or “Black” church. His idea was never predicated upon the idea of a divided people. The converse is more to the point of what God intended for His bride. Even so, Wilson furthers his lament by pointing out the fact that, “The big picture is the steady erosion of America’s white majority. Due mostly to Asian and

Hispanic immigration…”  

Moreover, Wilson sees White Christians as being the base of the GOP and that President Trump is party to racism.  

Benjamin Watson and Ken Peterson point to a Pew research where the study gives credence to the fact that there are many that choose to be segregated. This is particularly true in church settings. The following is a quote from the research:  

Some say that blacks themselves choose some forms of segregation, preferring to live and worship among themselves in their own communities and their own churches. Some of that may be true, though research indicates that black people are much more inclined toward diversity than white people are.  

It appears the suggestion in the quote immediately above misrepresents the actual findings of the Pew research. The paragraphed referred to in the quote is as follows:  

There are smaller group differences by age, race and church attendance. Some 59% of blacks, compared with 50% of whites and 46% of Hispanics give the pro-diversity response to at least four of the five questions. Some 55% of those who seldom or never attend religious services, compared with 44% of those who attend weekly or more, give the pro-diversity responses to at least four of the five questions. And 53% of those ages 18 to 64, compared with 41% of those ages 65 and older, give the pro-diversity response to at least four of the five questions.  

It is unfortunate that Watson and Peterson do not go into any detail about the questions posed in the Pew Research. For instance, in respect to the question about those who are for “religious diversity” there is a considerable breakdown between Protestants, Catholics as well as White  

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23 Wilson, Christian America, 4.  
24 Ibid., 6.  
25 Watson, Under Our Skin,10-11.  
Evangelicals and Hispanic Catholics. This portion of the poll does not discuss Blacks, therefore, making it difficult to draw absolute conclusions as suggested by Watson and Peterson.

**Review of Literature**

Researchers have written an untold number of books and articles on racism and race relations. Some have also noted racism in the Church. The Barna Group noted ethnic divides in the research presented in *Racial Divides in Spiritual Practice.* This work explores the statistical impacts of segregated churches while it does little to examine the reason for such divides. This study also has a broad focus on the divide between Black and White congregations while nearly ignoring the plight of bodies with largely Mexican congregations.

Conversely, *Where Should We Go Next?* by Joao Paulo Bezerra Cheves is a work that shows the absolute divide in many churches. The work examines racial divides not only between Blacks and Whites but has a large focus on Mexican-American Baptist during the Pioneer Period. The central part of this work is the ignoring or ostracizing of Mexican-Americans in the Baptist church. This historical look provides little to no recourse for healing and mending the divides which seem to have put Mexican-Americans in a position that is less than any respectable Baptist should have been placed.

There are some who take on the idea of racially divided churches without apology or acquiescing to the notion of divided churches. Curtis Paul DeYoung and Michael O. Emerson

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27 Pew, *Americans Say They Like Diverse,* 5.

28 Barna, *Racial Divides.*

29 Joao Paulo Bezerra Cheves, “Where Should We Go Next?: A Call for the Critical Investigation of Possible Racial Encounters Between Anglo-American and Mexican-American Baptist During the Pioneer Period,” *Baptist History and Heritage* (Fall 2014).
with other authors in *All Churches Should Be Multiracial* is such a work. The argument is that Scripture provides no room for an ethnically divided church. In order to bolster the point of the authors lean on scriptural text such as Acts 11:19-20 showing the diversity of people that received the Word of God. This work also challenges the contemporary Church to embrace the house of prayer being for all people. This is a work in line with *Asian American Evangelicals in Multiracial Church Ministry* by Kathleen Garces-Foley and Russell Jeung. While Asians are the impetus for this study, it shows that Asian-Americans are very likely to be part of multi-racial churches. One might be able to deduce the willingness of Asians to assimilate with other ethnicities while this may be less the case with other people groups.

Attempts at dividing the Church has had some success. *With Their Own People*, by David J. Cameron, provides insight into the intended separation of people in churches. The Baptist church of Texas is examined and points to intentional divides in the church. One such divide is the formation of the Mexican Baptist Convention of Texas. This has resulted in the greater division because of the unwillingness of several conventions to hear and understand the views of others. The unwillingness of acceptance was the cause of state migration from Louisiana to Texas was pointed out by Glen Chambers in “*Goodbye God, I’m Going to Texas.*”

Creole people felt largely unwelcomed in the Catholic Church in Louisiana. This resulted in migration from Louisiana to Texas. Unfortunately, the move did little to bolster the position of

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33 Chambers, *Goodbye God*. 

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Creoles migrating in the mid-twentieth century to the Golden Triangle of Texas. The converse became more of a truism than did the intent of the migrating Creoles. The healings that were sought served only to further the divide of some in the local bodies. Even so, Jarvis J. Williams and Kevin M. Jones in *Removing the Stain of Racism From the Southern Baptist Convention* saw little reason to continue with the status quo of a divided church.\(^{34}\) In this work, there is an overall challenge for the members of the Southern Baptist Church to look within themselves in order to determine the reasoning for encouraging a divided church. The work also points to the theological and pastoral reasoning for a church united.

Doug Serven presents a similar argument in *Heal Us, Emmanuel*.\(^{35}\) *Heal Us, Emmanuel* looks at some historical aspects of racism and juxtaposes them with some current actions that are similar to historical facts. The work is not a mere retrospective of racism. It seeks to use historical data to point to the fallacy of racism so as to debunk the fallacious ideas of racism while bolstering healing in keeping with Scripture.

Chicanos and Hispanics also endured the problems of segregation in the Catholic Church. They were treated in the same fashion as Blacks. This is a matter that caught the attention of Jennifer Najera. Her work “Practices of Faith and Racial Integration in South Texas: A Case Study of Mexican Segregation,” examines the history of racism in the Catholic church as it relates to Mexicans. Najera not only highlights segregation at large but also points to different ways in which Hispanics celebrated mass as opposed to the Whites. Because of the difference in

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celebration Najera shows how unwelcoming the Catholic church was to desegregation. Even so, there have been certain strides made to heal the brokenness caused by racism.

*Bloodlines: Race, Cross, and the Christian,* like *Heal Us Emmanuel,* examines statistical data, but the focus of the work is quite different. The author, John Piper, discusses racism in the church through personal experience. Piper appears to be torn as he moves from his childhood to pastorate. Racism seemed to be a norm in his past. However, as he began to pastor a church, he desired to have a multi-ethnic congregation but has fallen short.

There are others that recognize the racial divide in the Church. One point of focus is the Baptist Church. Adelle M. Banks in “Baptist Church Efforts to Bridge Racial Divides,” points to Jimmy Carter as having been working and continues to work to bridge the divide in the Baptist Church. This article seeks to show the work of some to resolve racial issues in the Church by working on specific projects. However, while the projects and goals are honorable it would appear the efforts seek only to bring about superficial healing to matters that go beyond the surface.

**Scriptural References**

In order to bring about healing and reconciliation to the church of Southeast Texas it becomes important to employ scriptural teachings. The Bible is more than a set of suggestions rather it is the roadmap to the necessary healing and reconciliation. Hence, these texts are paramount in dealing with racism in the church.

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36 Piper, *Bloodlines.*

John 3:16 – For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

The Johannine text paints a picture of a love that knows no limits. The Father sent His Son to live among men in order to reconcile man to himself. There is no discussion of specific people groups or ethnicities. Instead, the text clearly shows the love of God toward mankind. The key word “whosoever” is indicative of the all-inclusive nature of God’s love. Hence, racial divides are not a matter of God’s heart. Additionally, the term “world” presents a very clear view that the love of God is broad. The term “world” is an all-inclusive term which points to the totality of mankind.

John 10:16 – And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

The Jews and the Gentiles were two groups who struggled to get along. Jesus had a desire to bridge the brokenness in order to be the Shepherd of both flocks. He realized there would be racial divides and knew healing had to be preeminent. Jesus did not seek a divided Church. He sought to build a Church which included all people. The idea of a unified Church is indicative of the use of the word “one” in this text. It is not so much a numeral matter as it is a matter of unity. Christ was making it clear that He was not only the Shephard of the Jewish and Gentile flocks but that the two folds, or flocks, would be united in agreement. With this mindset, contemporary churches would do well to follow suit.

John 17:21 – That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

In this prayer Jesus discusses the complete unity He shared with the Father. The unity between the Father and Son are indivisible. The prayer of Jesus is that the Church be one and
unified in like manner. Moreover, the prayer is that unnecessary divides be eradicated so that the world would believe in and trust Him. With that trust, healing must come. The unity of the Father and the Son, as shown with the word “one” provides an example of the way the Church at large should operate. The commonality and agreement mean that there is nothing that has the ability to divide the Father and the Son. The same commonality is expected of the Church at large.

*II Corinthians 5:18 - And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.*

From the fall of Adam, God began to prepare the way of reconciliation. Reconciliation, however, was never intended to be from man to God alone. The ministry of reconciliation has been given to man so that healing could be accessible to all. The example of God returning man to righteousness is an example of how men should forgive each other for wrongdoings. To hold on to the wrongs of the past is to encourage continual brokenness. Yet, reconciliation is the method that promotes healing in divided people. That is, reconciliation has much to do with restoring to a former state or condition. The return to a former state includes a change in attitude. When one’s attitude is changed it becomes possible to change one’s actions because the attitude change leads to a change in the way one sees a thing. In the case of this text, digression would be prudent in order to understand the fullness of reconciliation. That is, from the fall of man in the Garden of Eden man’s relationship was severed by reason of sin. It was from that point that God sought to restore man to his rightful place. This would ultimately be done through the sacrifice of Jesus with His spill blood. So, too, must man sacrifice his personal views by shifting his attitude. When this is accomplished in respect to different ethnicities reconciliation across ethnic lines becomes possible as the change lends to promotion right godly relationships.
Matthew 5:24 - Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

There are some who seek to give homage to God but who lack deference for their brethren. This practice must be stemmed in order to truly worship God. Racism is a matter whereby many have sought to cling to hurts and falsities of the past while trying to appease an all-loving God. The best way to honor God is to lay aside unforgiveness in return for the gift of reconciliation. This text shows God is more concerned with repairing brokenness than receiving gifts. The practice of reconciliation shows that God would rather have godly relationships over gifts. That is, God prefers that His people restore broken relationships. He would prefer that his children change their negative attitudes toward each other with the end result of changing actions so as to build each other. In this way, God is honored above all.

Matthew 6:14 - For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

One reason for racism is the unwillingness of some to forgive others for their wrong deeds. True forgiveness means that whatever wrongs was done is no longer held against the wrongdoer. This is particularly true when it comes to slavery. The fact is that no one alive today in Southeast Texas has been personally impacted by slavery. To hold people accountable for actions they did not commit does little to promote healing and forgiveness. Moreover, forgiveness promotes forgiveness. That is to say that once one truly forgives and considers wrongs done to him to be done away with, he opens opportunities for God to forgive him of his wrongs. By this, it becomes evident that forgiveness, once employed, is a reciprocal matter. It is also a bridge to reconciliation.
Galatians 6:1 - Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

It is common for men to find themselves in situations wherein they lack spiritual benefit. Racism is one such situation. With this, it is the responsibility of the brethren to aid in pulling the fallen brother from the fault of racism. It is then required that the broken brother be restored. Restoration can only be had with the spirit of humility exemplified in meekness. Once the arm of racism is broken restoration is made easier. This restoration means that there has been repentance, a change of action and attitude, with respect to the matter that caused the fall. Once lifted, the fallen one seeks to walk in healing for himself as he continues the practice of reconciliation. There is also a warning to the spiritual ones. They must not be so proud in their walks that they condemn the fallen one. Instead, it is prudent for them to walk circumspectly lest they fall into the same fault as the fallen brother.

Colossians 3:13 - Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

Forgiveness is at the heart of the work of Christianity. To forgive is to employ Christ-likeness. This practice is not to be employed only in Christian settings; that is the norm. This is a practice that must be employed among those that choose not Christ. The text uses the term “any man” which is all-inclusive. This all-inclusive act of forgiveness crosses all ethnic barriers. Just as Christ forgave so must man forgive. The idea of forgiveness, though, must work with forbearance. To forbear means there must be patience in dealing with others. The suggestion is that there will be difficult times, such as quarreling, but that those difficulties provide more reason for patience and longsuffering.
Ephesians 2:19 - Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God.

The fact that salvation brought about “fellowcitizens” is indicative of the fact that in Christ there should be no divisions. All who call o the Name of Jesus are of the household of God. If God makes no racial divisions, it is indicative of the fact that God does not seek such divisions. Therefore, those in the household of God would do well to follow the sentiment of God by joining all as citizens of the one household.

Ephesians 5:2 - And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

The love of Christ is unconditional love. His love was the catalysis for leaving His heavenly home to live in the flesh of man. Immanuel endured many atrocities that were not his to bear. Still, the love of Christ unselfishly went to the cross so that man would not have to die in sin. This example is the love man is required to walk in. This walk has little to do with the physical, forward movement of individuals. It has everything to do with one’s lifestyle. That is to say, the way of life of the Christian should be a life of compassion, concern and good works to his fellow man. It is the Christ type of love which remains more concerned about the individual than the physical appearance of the individual. It is a love that does not consider pigmentation. Instead, the Christ type of love sees broken men and seeks to restore them to right standing with the Father and wholesome lives on earth. Moreover, the one who loves is willing to put his life on the line for the object of his love. This is not to say that he will intentionally put himself in harm’s way. It means that the loving one realizes that true love is sacrificial and does not seek self-adoration.
John 13:34-35 - A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another

Christians are distinguished by the love they have for each other. This is what separates Christians from everyone else. If there is no love, then Christianity is vain. Yet, love cannot be a fickle love. It must be love predicated upon the example of Christ. The love of Christ was not given to the superficial idea of ethnicity. Instead, Christ loved simply because the recipients of His love were in need of His love. Such should be the case of those who follow Christ.

1 John 3:2a – Beloved, now are we the sons of God.

Being a son of God has little to do with ethnicity. It has everything to do with the love the Father has bestowed on the people. The love of the Father reached to those who did not love Him. This resulted in a manifest change in the heart of man. The change in the heart of man meant that he was now dependent on God. That dependency is the same as the dependency children have toward their natural fathers. Additionally, the love of God grafted the Gentiles into the family of God. It is a love that looks beyond the race and into the heart of the redeemed ones.

Galatians 5:13 - For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

The idea of freedom means that there are choices. Christians can choose to love or to hate. The flesh would opt for hate. This is because the flesh, in this case, is a contrast to the spirit. The flesh seeks self-gratification and lends to carnality. The spirit seeks to please God by laying aside carnal desires. Still, God has not called the Christian to hate. The evidence of this is in the above text showing that Christians are to serve each other. That service is not predicated upon ethnicity
or selfishness. Instead, service is predicated upon love. That love is put forth in action and that action is the humbling of oneself to pick up another.

*Hebrews 10:24 - And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:*

Provocation is often looked to as a bad thing. Yet, the author of Hebrews sees provocation as a good thing. Christians are encouraged to provoke others to love and good works. This provocation is not mere encouragement. This provocation is nearly a demand that Christians cause each other to love. This love and good works are not specific to any people group. Instead, the suggestion is such action is unlimited in scope as it applies to those of the household of faith. As such, because racism falls from love, the unsaid idea is that if there is any work that pulls from the love that work needs to be abandoned in favor of good provocation.

*Acts 10:34-35 - Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.*

When the Scripture is read with a casual eye it is impossible to see racist suggestions. This becomes paramount with the above text. In Peter’s discourse, he presents the fact that God is not inclined to favor one people group over another. God accepts those who will honor Him and be righteous in their living. God is not concerned with ethnicity nor is He concerned with pigmentation. God’s concern is for the heart of man. Hence, it would become the Church to seek after what God has put forth. There needs to be an acceptance of all in the Church without the benefit of hatred cloaked in racism.
Theological Foundations

One must consider the Scriptural stance of race when considering racism. Even more, the question must be asked, what is racism? What does the Scripture teach about race and should the races (or ethnicities) be separated for theological purposes? These are questions that must be addressed when dealing with racism in the church of Southeast Texas. As such, the matter of what race is must first be addressed. According to Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary, race is “a group of humans possessing characteristics passed down genetically that are sufficiently recognizable for distinguishing between groups.”

In the discourse about race provided in Nelson’s Dictionary, the matters of race and ethnicity are made synonymous. In doing this the following charge was made to Christians, “Christians of every racial stock and ethnic group must learn – and soon – to worship together, to study together, to pray together, to have fellowship together, to live together in peace and harmony.”

The admonishment provided in Nelson’s dictionary coupled with the definition of race mandates that the question of what racism is be addressed. The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology provides a detailed looked at racism. It defines racism as:

A learned belief in racial superiority, which includes the belief that race determines intellectual, cultural, and moral capacities. The practice of racism includes racial prejudice and discrimination against others based on their race or ethnicity. Two primary forms of racism, individual and institutional, are generally viewed as products of either psychological or social forces. Racism in any form is a sin that embodies both moral and spiritual dimensions.

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39 Youngblood, Bible Dictionary, 1064

40 Walter A. Elwell, Evangelical Dictionary of Theology (Grand Rapids; Baker Academic, 2001).
The above discussions show racism in the Church is not a matter supported by Scripture. Theologically speaking, there is no room for such a matter. The fact of John 3:16 makes clear the idea that Christ was not sacrificed for one people group in particular. The converse is more to the point. The sacrifices of Christ were for the world at large. This is, by extension, to say that God is not concerned with people groups. He is concerned with the spiritual wellbeing of His human creation. God’s concern for ethnicities never shows as being paramount in the scriptural text. Yet, many see a reason to create divides predicated upon false ideologies of race and culture.

It is uncertain that any true biblical scholar would partake of the idea of a divided church. Moreover, in *Christian Theology* the idea of a divided church is taken on with sound reasoning. The observation is, “The first point to be noted is that all races are included in God’s human family and thus are objects of his love. Yet the phenomenon of racial prejudice is still common.”\[^{41}\] It is further noted, “Of greater significance for us is the positive biblical evidence of the way in which God regards all races and nationalities.”\[^{42}\]

The latter quote provides significant insight into how God prefers to deal with man. He is concerned with the individual. He loves the individual and does not put ethnicity above the individual. One might also continue reliance on John 3:16 to show that God’s love is universal and excludes no people groups. God’s love does not show concern for upholding cultural norms as may be presented by certain ethnicities. Instead, God has chosen to love all no matter their ethnicities.

Elmer Towns’ discussion of John 3:16 also pulls away from the idea that God is not interested in ethnicism nor a divided church. Instead, Towns shows, “The world is the object of God’s love, 

\[^{41}\] Erickson J. Millard, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids; Baker Academic, 2007), 559.

\[^{42}\] Ibid., 561.
and Jesus was sent into the world.” Townes makes no distinctions in ethnicities. He points to no people groups or nationalities. He simply holds to the idea that the world is the object of God’s love. And, if the world is the object of God’s love, by extension all in included and not excluded. Thus, the mere fact that John does not highlight people groups is evidence that the theological basis of salvation has nothing to do with ethnicity or nationality. God’s love for the world is universal and without prejudice.

D. A. Carson’s examination of John 3:16 looks specifically at race. He notes the love of God for the world is not predicated upon the race of the object of God’s love. Carson specifically states the following:

From this survey it is clear that it is atypical for John to speak of God’s love for the world, but this truth is therefore made to stand out as all the more wonderful. Jews were familiar with the truth that God loved the children of Israel; here God’s love is not restricted by race. Even so, God’s love is to be admired not because the world is so big and includes so many people, but because the world is so bad: that is the customary connotation of cosmos (“world”, cf. notes on 1:9).

In his discussion Carson employs the phrase, “the world is bad.” The world is bad. The world at large has certain racists propensities. These propensities have found a way to the Church. This means, despite the love of God, the Church has allowed the world to influence it. The Church has become more like the world. That is, the bad projected in the carnal worldview has become an issue in the Church.

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46 Ibid.
Much of that bad has to do with racism and a segregated Church. In order to segregate by ethnicity, there must be a categorizing of people. Hearn argues, “The categorization of people according to their race along a social continuum (racialization) does harm to persons of color as it marginalizes them from the majority group (“majority” defined as those with the largest part of power, not necessarily the most in number).47

Theoretical Foundations

One would be hard-pressed to find a reason for racial divides in the biblical text. Yet, the majority of local churches are divided by ethnicity.48 More specifically, only about 7.5% of the churches in the United States are racially mixed.49 This is to say the vast majority of churches are primarily comprised of one ethnicity. This is the unfortunate truth even in denominations that enjoy the same or similar worship practices. The racial divides are very similar to those seen in the non-Christian world.50 Scripture, however, seeks to provide guidelines for a united Church. This is the reason for the research to be presented in this project as it is the belief of this writer the local church should be a type of the community in which it sits.

The Azusa Street Revival in the early 1900s was the result of a people that, in part, left the love of God. They were people who came to the realization that God was needed to heal the hurts of the day. Many of those hurts were imposed and other hurts might have been self-imposed. Paramount among the hurt was the racial divide to which William J. Seymour sought to

47 Hearn, Color-Blind Racism, 275.
48 DeYoung, Be Multiracial, 33-34.
49 Ibid.
50 Pew, Americans Say They Like Diverse, 4-5.
mend.\textsuperscript{51} No matter the source of turmoil, the intent was about healing. An unfortunate side effect is that from the revival came at least one denomination wherein the congregants are primarily Black and that others might feel unwelcome in the denomination. That denomination is the Church of God in Christ (COGIC).\textsuperscript{52}

COGIC had its problems. From it came other denominations resulting from schisms within the denomination. One such splinter was the Assemblies of God, a predominately White congregation. This brief overview is a picture of the problems experienced by local churches. The divides stretch across many decades and are still an issue today. The racial divides in the Church are such that only about 7.5\% of churches are truly multi-ethnic.\textsuperscript{53}

John 3:16 clearly shows the love of God. His love is such that all come to repentance and salvation. With the term “all” as shown in 2 Peter 3:9 leaves out no one. All people from every land, every tongue, and every tribe are invited to enjoy the love of God. There is no discussion of one group over another. Nor is there the idea that some should not enjoy God’s love merely because of their ethnicity. If God is not concerned with such things, neither should the church be concerned. Still, the problem of racism in the Church may be a result of racism in society at large.

Identifying racism and at least some of its causes will play a vital role in seeking restoration and healing the divides caused by racism. One definition of racism is the “attitude, action, or institutional structure or any social policy that subordinates persons or groups because of their


\textsuperscript{53} DeYoung, \textit{Be Multiracial}, 33.
color.” The suggestion is that racism is not specific to any one group. Instead, the sting of racism has infected every people group. Further, racism in the Church, specifically the Church of Southeast Texas might be a type of the ongoing racial problems of the United States.

The historical sting of racism in the United States is well documented. This becomes obvious when one considers the “Little Rock Nine.” Nine Black high school students were chosen to attend Central High School in 1957. They were unwelcomed only because of their ethnicity. And, there were a number of other occasions wherein Blacks received less than honorable treatment. The Jim Crow Laws at large were part of the problem. Still, the vitriol was not had by all. There were many Whites who fought for the rights of Blacks. The problem is that the truth of such fights remains largely undiscussed.

There were other instances of racism and racial injustice in the United States. One such instance was the case of an African American man, Homer Plessy, who was forced out of a train car designated for Whites only and forced to pay unfair fines. The arrest was part of a plan showing the unconstitutionality of train ridership laws in particular and Jim Crow laws in general. The law specific to railways was very specific as to segregation and shows clearly in the Louisiana law passed in 1890: Part of the law was as follows:

That all railway companies carrying passengers in the coaches in this State, shall provide equal but separate accommodations for the white, and colored races, by providing two or more passenger coaches for each passenger train, or by dividing the passenger coaches for each passenger train.

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56 Ibid.

The Supreme Court of the United States would rule against Plessy, as presented in the majority opinion written by Justice Henry Billings Brown, arguing, “Since a white was forbidden from sitting in a black car as a black was from sitting in a white car and facilities in both were supposed to be equal, whites and blacks were, he reasoned, treated equally under the law.”58 And, while the Jim Crow laws would eventually be overturned the Civil Rights changes did little to positively impact the heart of man and most certainly impacted the Church at large.

It is absolutely true that there were and remain problems with racism in the United States and Southeast Texas. This is presented in the fact that “racism is an ideology of supremacy.”59 Pulling from this ideology, racism is not and cannot be particular to any single people group. It is an idea that goes straight to the heart of those choosing to live within the confounds of racist ideologies. And, while the Southern Baptist Church (SBC) is not wholly responsible for racism in the Church, a look into its history provides some understanding of racism in the Church at large and Southeast Texas in particular.

Matthew J. Hall reports that prior to the founding of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845 southern white Baptists sought a society of racial hierarchy.60 By extension, this idea meant that certain people groups would be placed lower than others. It also adds to at least one definition of racism. As understood by one scholar, “Racism is the attitude, behavior or ideology that is based on the belief that one race is superior to all others.”61 This is an ideology which is not specific to

58 Ibid, 43.
60 Hall, Historical Causes of the Stain, 8.
61 Koranteng-Pipim, Racism and the Church, 9.
the SBC but also other religious groups such as the Seventh-day Adventist.\textsuperscript{62} Still, the historical attitude of racial segregation was paramount in the SBC.

The segregationist idea of the SBC caused Blacks to act in a similar fashion. The realization that they were not welcome in the SBC caused Blacks to form an organization just as separatist and racist. For instance, “in Kentucky messengers from a network of twelve black churches gathered in August 1865 to establish the State Convention of Colored Baptists.”\textsuperscript{63} Unfortunately, instances of ethnic division continued well beyond the Southern Baptist Convention, State Convention of Colored Baptists, and the Seventh-day Adventist.

The Catholic Church of Southwest Louisiana was also a source of segregation during the first fifty years or so of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{64} Segregation, though, was only part of the problem of Catholic Creoles in Southwest Louisiana. It is for reasons such as lack of opportunity “The migration of Creoles of Colour from southwestern Louisiana to Houston and the “Golden Triangle area (Beaumont, Port Arthur, and Orange, Texas) epitomizes the complexities of race, ethnicity, and culture within the broader African Diaspora.”\textsuperscript{65} The move, however, did little to remove the migrating citizens from the sting of racism and separatism. Blacks moving to Texas sought to maintain cultural norms such as music which was at odds with the White Catholic Church.\textsuperscript{66} Furthering the divide was the fact of Creoles (and Blacks at large) being forced to

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 3.
\textsuperscript{63} Hall, \textit{Historical Racism}, 11.
\textsuperscript{64} Chambers, \textit{Goodbye God}, 124-143.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 124.
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., 127.
practice Catholicism in White Catholic churches where “They were subjected to Jim Crow segregation.”

Separatism between Blacks and Whites was only part of the problems of racism in the Church. Those of Mexican descent also had trouble with fitting in with either Blacks or Whites. Moreover, “The fact that many third- and fourth-generation Mexican-American Protestants retain their membership in distinctively Mexican-American churches, however, shows that full assimilation has not happened…” This lack of assimilation, while its roots date back to the early 1800s, the Mexican Baptist Convention served only to divide at least three ethnicities in that it presented the idea that Mexican-Americans, Anglos, and Latinos intentional separation added to the myth of the United States being a melting pot of all people. Additionally, consideration of Mexicans being “forced” citizens of the United States might be a reason Mexicans are resistant to assimilation.

The complexities of ethnicity were made more complex when a “Texas Federal jury decided that Mexicans are White for immigration purposes.” The fact that Mexicans were counted as White for legal purposes and Mexican for other purposes would naturally draw a divide in that Mexicans were used as political pawns. This classification of Mexicans being presented as White for the purposes of immigration played well with the idea of Manifest Destiny in that the idea was that Whites were said to be destined to conquer the North American territory. This divide

67 Ibid., 128.
68 Cheves, Where Should We Go, 28.
69 Cheves, Where Should We Go, 28
70 Ibid., 27.
71 Ibid., 33.
72 Ibid., 32
was initiated outside the church in Texas and necessarily became a systemic part of the church of Texas.

The problem of racism in the local church clearly is a microcosm, at best, of racism in society at large. For instance, Black Entertainment Television (BET) is a television station geared specifically for Blacks in its programming and commercials. If there were a White Entertainment Television (WET) station it is certain there would be racist uproar amongst some. This racial divide is also pervasive in the political spectrum in that almost every issue is dealt with in demographic terms. The cultural “norms” are no better and those norms and divisive matters have become part of the norms of local churches.

Another part of the racial problems of the past is that schools were segregated by reason of Jim Crow laws. This created schools of upper education where Blacks were not allowed to attend. These schools could be called “Historically White Colleges and Universities.” However, desegregation disallowed schools that discriminated based on ethnicity. This created a double standard because there are several schools of higher education that counted as “Historically Black Colleges and Universities” or “HBCU.” These schools are looked upon as models despite the apparent segregationist ideology of the institutions.

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73 Chambers, Goodbye God, 128
Social media is no better. For instance, there is hardly a day that goes by where some on social media continuously address certain matters with ethnicity being the center of the conversation. At the time of this writing, this picture of unknown origin was being shared widely on Facebook. It shows two ladies who appear to have committed similar crimes with totally different sentences. What the meme does not show is the complete details in either case. Part of what the meme does not discuss is that the Black lady, Tanya McDowell, was incarcerated largely for selling drugs to an undercover police officer. The result of what appears to be a sentencing dichotomy predicated upon ethnicity serves only to create greater divides.

With this, it becomes evident that wedges are being drawn, not so much between cultural practices or ideologies, rather between peoples of differing pigmentation and ethnicities. Perhaps this is why the Church at large and the church of Southeast Texas have been negatively influenced by racism. Even more, it seems that some local bodies have embraced racism. One such body is a COGIC assembly in Southeast Texas wherein there are only Black congregants in a multi-ethnic community. Another church, a large Baptist church in the Golden Triangle, hosts a primarily White congregation in a multi-ethnic community.

Historically Mexicans had a problem assimilating in the Catholic church. This is evident considering, “Though Anglo and Mexican parishioners worshipped in the same sanctuary,

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Mexicans were relegated to a separate side of the church.”75 This marginalization was a direct result of the Plessy decision because “In the Plessy ruling. The Supreme Court granted the states rights to determine who was considered White and non-White for the purposes of segregation.”76 This ruling had a direct impact on the Catholic church.77

Najera shows Mexicans were maligned not only because of their ethnicity but also because of their cultural practices. She reports that in the 1940s Mexican Catholics were not allowed customary and cultural practices. She notes, “Rather than let the Mexican members of the congregation worship as was their custom, however, Anglo parishioners would literally lift up Mexican people from their knees, establishing – and, actually, policing – the boundaries of what was acceptable behavior in the church.”78

These were intentional actions to halt the practices of Mexican Catholics within Catholicism. Jennifer Najera further notes, “Though Anglo and Mexican parishioners worshiped in the same sanctuary, Mexicans were relegated to a separate side of the church.”79 She also reports, “Anglo Catholics made efforts to both stymie Mexican popular religious practices and to segregate Mexican origin people. This segregation occurred sometimes as separate churches, but also, at times, within the space of one local church.”80 The practices of segregation discouragement of cultural practices served only to further divide the Catholic church.

75 Najera, Practices of Faith, 6.
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid.
78 Ibid., 12
79 Ibid., Practices of Faith, 6
80 Ibid., 8.
John Piper looks at racism with a slightly different angle. For him, it is problematic because he sees pride as being an integral part of racism. He notes:

Racial tensions as being rife with pride – the pride of white supremacy, the provider of black power, the pride of intellectual analysis, the pride of anti-intellectual scorn, the pride of loud verbal attack, and the pride of despising silence, the pride that feels secure, and the pride that masks fear.\(^{81}\)

Piper makes a good point as he highlights the very sinful nature of racism. The very nature of racism is born with certain arrogance and entitlement merely by reason of pigmentation. Racism is emboldened by the idea that a particular ethnicity is superior to or better than other ethnicities and that idea is certainly born in self-defeating pride.

Part of the problem of racism is that ethnicity and cultural norms have been made synonymous. This is evident in a study of Asian evangelicals as it appears in an article in *Religions*.\(^{82}\) The study examined barriers to multiethnic churches and how those barriers can be overcome. One pastor thought those barriers could be overcome by targeting young adults. Therefore, the pastor reached out to young people in a local college. It would appear that his thinking was that young people generally have the same or similar mindsets thereby creating certain cultural norms.\(^{83}\) Additionally, the report shows, “Targeting young adults has been key to growing diversely, according to a Texan minister we spoke with, whose church membership is on an average of 22 years old.”\(^{84}\)

The reasoning of the pastor was recorded as, “Targeting young adults has been key to growing diversely, according to a Texan we spoke with, whose church membership is on average

\(^{81}\) Piper, *Bloodlines*, 90.


\(^{83}\) Garces-Foley, *Asian American Evangelicals*, 198

\(^{84}\) Ibid., 198.
22 years old. To reach this generation, his church targeted young adults at nearby college by emphasizing their common life experiences.\textsuperscript{85} The reason for targeting young adults is furthered when it is noted, “For these younger Americans, segregated churches are a relic from the ugly history of race relations in the United States.”\textsuperscript{86} Thus, the use of young people to build churches makes building cross-ethnic churches easier.

The unnamed pastor in this study did target a specific demographic and that demographic was young adults. However, his concern had nothing to do with ethnicity or culture. In fact, it could be safely argued that those targeted enjoyed the same culture in that they attend the same school, shop at the same stores, and attend the same church. It is also true that those targeted were of differing ethnicities.

Targeting young people of differing ethnicities is significant because it clearly shows that one’s ethnicity does not dictate his culture. It also provides evidence that different people groups, when allowed and encouraged, do well to worship together. This would seemingly lay aside the idea that ethnicity (race) and culture are synonymous as may be construed in popular culture.\textsuperscript{87} The problem is that most churches use ethnicity as though ethnicity is the primary factor in culture. This is a divide not easily overcome.

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., 191.

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., 198.

\textsuperscript{87} Hearn, \textit{Color Blind Racism}, 281
Chapter Three

Confronting The Problem

The matter of racism in the church is one that is ignored by some and welcomed by others. Some might see this as being perpetuated by one group or the other. Either way, the problem of a divided Church has not been largely seen as a problem and therefore not confronted on a large scale. This is not to say that no one has been paying attention to the racially divided church. For instance, the Southern Baptist Convention has noticed the divided church and research was done to that end. The impacts of a racially divided convention are well known yet there seems to be no true desire to change the behavior and attitudes of those that perpetuate the divide. The converse is true among some in the convention.

Daniel L. Akin, in an epilogue of *Historical Causes of the Stain* has drawn the following conclusion with regard to racism in the convention:

> In sum, racism is not a surface issue in the SBC, though it often manifests itself in surface and public ways. No, it is an issue of the soul. Its root and source is the sinful, evil, and wicked human heart that fails to recognize we are all created in the image of God and that beneath the surface, deep down where it really counts, we are all the same. Ideologies of hate are more than skin deep.\(^88\)

The unfortunate part is that the conclusion drawn does little to address the problem of racism. Noticing there is a problem and confronting the problem are far from the same. It is well that the problem is noticed and placed on the center stage. However, there needs to be a bit more done than for a mechanic to say that the car engine is out of oil. Corrective steps need to be made in order to prevent certain damage. Such is the case with the Church. The only difference is that the Church has been damaged long ago and the need for repair is well past.

\(^{88}\) Hall, *Historical Causes of the Stain*, 141.
A reason for racism in the Church is that it spills into the Church from societal reasoning. This is evident in Jonathan A. Price’s recalling of an incident which occurred during his college years. He states, “White Americans don’t have the same anxieties that minorities, particularly Black people have. As a White male, I’ve never worried about being treated suspiciously by a police officer.” This is problematic because it suggests that Blacks are a target of law enforcement without providing the true reason some Blacks may be stopped by the police. This is not to say that this has not and does not happen. Still, such broad statements give a reason for concern.

Part of the reason racism has remained in the Church is because of the apathy of the congregants of local bodies. Many have rested in the comfort of what seems to be the acceptable norm without concern of the deleterious impact racism and intentional segregation has had on the church. However, racism in the Church has been a concern for this writer for some time. It is a matter he is working diligently to impact both in writing and in actions. One such writing can be found in this writer’s blog.

Among his writings confronting racism is “The Jaundiced Eye of Racism.” In the essay, this writer discusses some of his experiences as they relate to racism. He also briefly points to some historical factors as he juxtaposes them with contemporary issues. The essay is immediately below.

The Jaundiced Eye of Racism

It needs to be said even before the heart of this essay is addressed that some will find some of the discussion offensive. However, there will be neither vulgar words used nor any profanities. With that said a much-used term will be properly employed in this discussion to make the point

89 Serven, Heal US, Emmanuel, 116.
necessary to not only bring about good discussion but to drive at the heart of what seeks to tear apart this great nation. Political correctness will not be the driver of this message rather the love of God will be employed to draw men from that which seeks to harm us all.

I count myself to have been very fortunate on the most part. As a young man of eighteen years, I became an active duty member of the USMC. While in boot camp I learned to live with all kinds of people. None of us had the liberty of any type of segregation by way of skin colour. In fact, there was a certain mantra in the Marine Corps presenting the idea that in the Marine Corps there were only two colours; dark green and light green. In other words, racism had no room in the Corps. This was a wonderful thing because as I was eventually stationed in Hawaii where I learned to work with many other people groups.

In 1984 I was stationed aboard the USS Belleau Wood whereon I visited a number of nations in the Western Pacific. Among those nations were the Philippines, Thailand, Japan, Okinawa, and Australia. There is one thing that stands out in my mind with respect to the many people I have been blessed to meet and that is that people, no matter where they are, people are people. Even more those people, despite their physical appearances, were still people. They all eat, breath and bleed. Many were even Christians and had no problems celebrating Christianity in the open with whoever chose to celebrate with them.

Yet in my beloved country, the United States of America, many have jaundiced eyes and see people through the fallacy of superficial conditions which have no bearing on the status of the heart of the people concerned. For instance, Black males are often referred to as “niggers” while White males are referred to as “crackers.” While some Blacks may well be niggers, and some whites as well, no Whites are crackers. Now, I know some explanation is needed so let us understand what a “nigger” is and what a “cracker” is.
While the term “nigger” has often be attributed to Black people at large it really has nothing, at least historically, to do with the pigmentation of a person. Rather the term, when properly applied, has much to do with the deleterious attitude of ignorance which seeks to demean others that may appear different from themselves. That is to say that a nigger is to be determined by the condition of one’s heart rather than by his physical appearance. On the other hand, a “cracker” is not a person at all rather it is flat, crispy piece of bread that is very good with peanut butter and jelly or some cheese.

The problem is that way too many today have followed the false narrative of the George Zimmerman case following the killing Travon Martin. Much of the news media wanted the killing to be racially motivated so that Mr. Zimmerman was referred to as a “white Hispanic” which was a term never before employed in describing people. Even worse, race hustlers such as Jessie Jackson and Al Sharpton further bolstered the false narrative of racism if only to line their own pockets with filthy lucre. This case had nothing to do with racism and to suggest otherwise is purely to stoke the flames of racism that seeks only to cause a greater divide in this nation.

The jaundiced eye of racism really does not see clearly. It is infected with the disease of hatred and ignorance. This diseased malignancy needs to not only be eradicated but also permanently destroyed so that it can no longer impair this nation. Racism is a danger to the individual racists as well as those around them. It operates on old wives’ tales as well as fables even while it seeks more and more reasons to harm those that appear different to them. So, let’s just set the record straight for once and for all.

Most Blacks are not niggers, no Whites are crackers, Jews at large are not money grabbers; Asians are not thieves and so on. We are all the children of God which is evident in John 3:16 which shows that God loved the entire world so that He sent His Son into the world so that none
would have to perish. Yet the jaundiced eye of racism shows Jesus in whatever ethnicity race hustlers choose to present Him. God created us as human beings thereby welcoming all into His gracious arms.

The ministry of reconciliation is a ministry for all Christians. Let’s stand strong on the Word of God and stand one with another. The idea of the Black church and the White church are ludicrous to the extent that the Church has been divided by reason of ethnicity. It is ridiculous and uncalled for. Let us reconcile one with another, pray for the healing of those inflicted with the jaundiced eye of racism as we work to restore man to the love that was always intended by God our Father.90

This latter essay seeks to challenge Christians to remove the blinders causing racist divides in favor of glasses that see what is good and pure in all people groups. Moreover, there is a call for reconciliation among the different church groups and that reconciliation can only be made effective with love.

This writer has also had the opportunity to work as a chaplain intern and earn a certificate of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) in 2014. During this internship, this writer had the opportunity to work with and minister to people of varying ethnicities, worldviews, and nationalities. None of these things were relevant for ministry purposes nor for training. The only things that were important were that the needs of the people were being met. The experiences and observations to that end are presented in another of this writer’s essays entitled, “Week Nine of the CPE Journey: Sidestepping” and is found below. It is also a matter this writer takes to heart in that the more racial divisiveness he sees in the Church the more he is determined to arrest the disease of racism in Southeast Texas.

Week Nine of the CPE Journey: Sidestepping

Over the past several weeks I have purposely and intentionally not addressed contemporary issues greatly because of the magnitude of work as a chaplain intern. That work has put me in touch with people across the human spectrum. I have enjoyed working with Blacks, Whites, British, Columbian, Chinese and all types of people groups. I have found this to be greatly rewarding as I have learned many years ago that people are people are people and to suggest anything different is simply asinine.

I bring this up because of the present turmoil in Ferguson, MO. Here is a town riddled with cries of racism born out of false emotive responses to a police-involved shooting wherein few facts have been made public. Thugs (many from other towns) continue to break into stores and steal from those who had nothing to do with the shooting. Vulgarity has run amuck to the extent that some “protestors” have used their fingers to indicate a false disdain for injustice. Obvious facts are ignored in the face of some flaming the fires of racism only to meet personal or political points that have done nothing other than bolstering feigned outrage. This bolstering continues to be by political leaders, the media at least in some part and so-called civil rights leaders.

There are certain matters I have considered I as have watched this unrest unfold. For instance, I have wondered why President Obama has once again injected himself in the middle of a local matter while he seems to pay no attention to the burning world around him? Why have Jessie Jackson and Al Sharpton gone running to a situation in order to promote justice when the investigative process had not the chance to begin? Moreover, why have they not gone to Chicago, Baltimore, Los Angeles, Dallas and other cities where Blacks routinely kill other Blacks? Are not those Blacks important too? Do they not deserve the same treatment? Also, why are these so-called protestors rioting in the streets? Can they not find a better way to vent their
points of view? More importantly, it seems to me that injustice has yet to occur. What about waiting for the completion of the several investigations before making crass judgments?

Now, there is no intent here to make little of the death of Michael Brown. The death is absolutely tragic no matter the circumstances leading up to it. However, that does not mean that tragedy needs to be met with tragedy. There is no good reason for citizens to turn to crime in order to make points. Bad can only make bad worse so that my sidestepping from CPE discussions is truly highlighting and celebrating the diversity of those with whom I serve and to those I serve. If the rabble-rousers in Ferguson would but lay down their weapons of destruction perhaps there would be room in their hands for the tools of reconciliation.

To further this point a bit more it needs to be noted that some have suggested that the actions of the criminals here are the result of a so-called “Black plight.” It should also be noted that, well, I am counted as a Black person. I was raised in a neighborhood in Baltimore wherein the best chose not to go. In the neighborhood were Blacks, Whites and other people groups nearby. The thing is we got along just fine. Yes, my parents were divorced when I was very young and there were definite family problems. Moreover, there were social problems going on as well. Still, the problems of the day did not lend to the idea of “Black plight” at least not in my mind.

And still, I did not let my situation hold me back from who I am and my progress in life. Without presenting a biography of myself suffice it to say that I have had a successful life. I served in the military, have owned businesses, worked in law enforcement and have accomplished academic success that most will never. Pointing these things out is not to toot my own horn (all though I have also played a number of woodwind instruments) rather show that one’s ethnicity has nothing to do with success or failure. It has more to do with the decisions and
choices made. It is certain that there will be positive outcomes as well as negative ones. Yet one’s choices tend to lead to individual “plight” rather than that of an entire people group.

With that, I would encourage all to lay aside senseless idiosyncrasies and pick up the tools of reconciliation. Perhaps when preconceived notions of wrong predicated upon no facts can be thrown out then the notions of wrong can be replaced with true justice which leads to peace.91

While the above essay does not speak specifically to the Church it is undeniable that the attitude of racism has drifted into the Church. Moreover, racism is presented solely as “white supremacy.”92 Nilson points to some negative statistics about Blacks and makes the following observation as it concerns the Catholic church, “These statistics are not coincidences. Rather, they show us the face of sin. They tell us that racism/white supremacy is still destructive and systemic in this nation and even, as we shall see, in the Church.”93

This is indicative of the attitude that Blacks are a perpetually victimized by reason of their ethnicities while Whites are perpetually privileged by reason of their ethnicity. It could be argued that neither circumstance is the case. This very idea perpetuates racism in that it, by extension, lifts one people group while lowering another. Mark Hearn highlights racism by highlighting a definition of racism as being, “Racism is the ‘attitude, action, or intuitional structure or any social policy that subordinates persons or groups because of their color…”94

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93 Ibid.

94 Hearn, Color-Blind Racism, 275.
Digressing to Price, it should be noted that Price is a pastor in the Presbyterian Church. He admits that in 2002 the Presbyterian Church recognized racism as a problem in the church and made a call for repentance for individual churches as well as denominations.95 The call went largely unheeded. Rice did note, however, in 2015, “We need to individually and corporately seek relationships across cultural and ethnic boundaries…”96 Price is correct to point out the idea of relationship building in order to confront racism. However, how does one compel others to move from their comfort zones when they see no need to move?

The Lessons

With the latter question in mind classes to that end have been taught at the church this writer pastors, Day-Spring Christian Church. Day-Spring is a new church plant in Beaumont, Texas had its inaugural service October 14, 2018, and has the vision to be a multi-ethnic congregation. The membership is somewhat to be desired so many others were verbally invited to attend the classes named *Reconciling the Church*. The reason for the classes is two-part. The first is to gain an understanding as to the reasoning for hindrances in the Church. The second part of the reason expresses ways to remove hindrances in order to reconcile the Church.

None of the pastors invited to the classes responded positively. For instance, one pastor and his church located in the Golden Triangle of Southeast Texas was invited to participate in the survey and lessons. The congregation is made up of Black people in a community that is largely Black. The pastor originally did not respond to the invite. Upon following up with the pastor the pastor said that he talked the invite over with the congregation and that they were not interested in the classes. Additionally, others of White congregations were invited, and none accepted the

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95 Serven, *Heal Us*, 119.

96 Hearn, *Color-Blind Racism*, 120.
invitation. Still, others said they would come to at least some of the classes and never showed. Instead, many who said they would be there found a reason not to attend the classes.

This is of concern because these same groups were invited to the inaugural service of Day-Spring Christian Church just a few months before. Many of the invitees who came to inaugural service include those who declined the classes as outlined in this work. Still, responses to not attend the classes might be suggestive that some may not want a desegregated Church. If this is not the case, there is a considerable amount of apathy regarding the building of cross-ethnic churches.

Church segregation, and the related apathy, is tantamount to the segregation of schools which was outlawed in the 1950s. It also goes to show the law can change actions while having little impact on the heart of man. Samuel Kortanteng-Pipem noted the apathy with this observation:

Racism may be outlawed in the books and laws of the lands, but it remains written in the hearts of people. Unfortunately, the Christian church, the body of people constituted and appointed by Christ to be a counter-voice in our world, is not totally immune to the virus of racism. Forgetting their status as “resident aliens” in this world, and perhaps, out of comfort, for fear of blindness, Christians, by and large, have capitulated to the racism of the world.97

The noted apathy is the impetus for the continuing work and struggles against racism in the church. It also provides some insight as to why a study of this nature is not only important but should serve as a light focusing on the enigma of a divided Church.

Nonetheless, some individuals did choose to attend the classes. Of those, two individuals agreed to give feedback via a survey. In order to receive feedback, the participants in the survey were asked one question, “In your opinion, what are the five greatest hindrances in the church?” Two people were willing to answer the question in writing. The first, “Linda Loveless” saw the

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97Koranteng-Pipim, *Racism and the Church*, 10.
first reason as a lack of understanding of life. The second respondent, “Suzi Backstreet”
determined the first reason as being color. Miss Backstreet’s observation is supported by views
such as this one by Joseph Barndt.

Still today, Christianity in the United States is racialized. Our churches are divided by
color into red, brown, yellow, black and white denominations and congregations. There are
a few multiracial congregations, but these are the exceptions, and, usually, they are
part of a denomination that is mostly of one color. Most multiracial congregations have to
struggle to keep from becoming just another church in racial transition. Race is not a
specter from the past; race haunts the church today.98

Moreover, the fact that 50% of the responding individuals see “color” as being a primary reason
for division in the Church provides a minute amount of insight into the attitudes and hearts of
some as the struggle to remove the vile stain of segregated churches is furthered.

This brings into play the five-part lesson presented. The first part of lesson one examines
some of the histories of racism in the United States and some of the ideas that played into its
birth. The rationale was that in order for growth and healing to begin in the Church must be an
understanding of some historical information. Part of the historical discussion focused on Jim
Crow and its impact on the Creoles in Louisiana and their migration to the Golden Triangle of
Texas. The significance of this discussion becomes paramount as one begins to realize the
Church was intentionally segregated and that was greatly because of Jim Crow laws. Creoles
were seeking some relief and found themselves in the same or similar situation in the Church of
Southeast Texas. It is for this reason that “Black” churches began to take shape which served
only to further divide the Church.

The point of lesson one was to provide some background information into why the Church
might be divided as well as highlight the love of God in that love is the very substance of God.

98Joseph Barndt, Becoming an Anti-Racist Church: Journeying Toward Wholeness (Minneapolis: Fortress
Scriptural text (particularly John 3:16) presents God as having a love for all mankind. The love of God is universal and is projected toward all. And, if the love of God is universal that is an indication that His love is projected upon the totality of mankind. It is a love that is unadulterated and is what moved Him to send His Son to die. This means that God’s love is not merely a feeling. Instead, God’s love is shown in action. Such should be the case with Christians.

The love of God is also unconditional. This is to say that God has not and does not place preconditions on His love. The object of God’s love is the totality of mankind. It is a love that is not concerned with ethnicity, gender, nationality, or any like condition. Moreover, the unconditional love of God is not concerned with worldviews or any other idiosyncratic ideology that men tend to impose. The unconditional love of God goes even further in that His love meant sacrificing Christ for the sake of mankind.

The love of God and the love of Christ is proven to be an unadulterated love. That is to say that there were no impurities in the Godhead. There was no sin and there was no guile found in Christ. Because of this, Christ was the perfect propitiation for the redemption of mankind. The sacrifices of old were temporary because while the ultimate sacrifice of Christ was once for all. In Him, there was and remains no propensity to sin. His love remains unconditional and unadulterated.

The fact of God’s love in action was furthered in lesson two. The action of God sending His Son into the world was to be just the beginning of the action of a loving God. The actions of Christ served to bolster the love of the Father. Among the sacrifices of Christ was the laying aside of some of His attributes. One such attribute was His omnipresence. Christ would no longer be every-where present. He would be confined to space and time as man is. He would be
limited to a corporal body. Still, it remains difficult for the human to fully encapsulate the loving sacrifice of Godhead for the sake of mankind.

During His stay on Earth Christ endured atrocities that were underserved. He was falsely accused of crimes. He was belittled. Christ was beaten and mocked. All the ills inflicted on Him as outlined in Isaiah 53 were unjust. Still, the love of Christ for the totality of mankind would not allow Him to give up and destroy the enemy. He would stand and face accusers in an illegal and mock hearing and eventually be beaten and led down the Via Dolorosa. Christ would ultimately sacrifice His physical life so that the object of His love would not have to face that death.

The atrocities Christ suffered were not for one people group. The sacrificial love of Christ was for all that choose to accept Him. His love extends to every people of every tongue with no excluded. In fact, Luke 23:43 showed the love of Christ personified in that He took the time to heal and forgive one who was thought not deserving of it. The thief reached out to the Messiah who in return poured healing and foreignness into him. There was no concern for the past of the one reaching out. There was no concern for his ethnicity. The sacrificial love of Christ was and remains unconditional and universal.

As a result of his change of heart, the thief became one of the people of God. This was the focus of lesson three – the people of God. The main characteristic of the people of God is that the people of God exude love. 1 John 4:7 clearly shows whoever loves is born of God. If one does not love, then he is not of God. And, that love is a reflection of the love of God. It is not a mere feeling. Love is demonstrative. It is expressed in such matters as discussed in James chapter one. Even so, the love demonstrated by the Christian is not designed to gain salvation by works. It is a result of salvation and fear of God. That fear shows absolute respect and reverence for God.
Lesson three also continued to pull from the idea that God is not concerned with ethnicities and nationalities. Acts 2:41 provides a picture of all who gladly received the Word of God. Those who received God’s Word were from a number of lands speaking different languages. The geographic and ethnic difference did not matter to God. His love was extended to them without prejudice. So, too, should be the love of the Christian. While the Christian should exude love by the very nature of Christianity, it can be said that love is a choice. This becomes evident as the command of God toward His people is highlighted in lesson four of the series.

1 John 4:7 is an exhortation for the people of God to love one another. This love, like the love of God, is unconditional love. It does not consider the ethnicity of its object. This is a love that only considers the human condition. Moreover, that love required of God’s people is discussed in Romans 12. The love becomes demonstrative in that the love shown by the people of God is love that works for the betterment and protection of the object of the love. This is a love that seeks no harm but rather seeks to build. It is a family or brotherly love that is not concerned with local. It is more concerned with acts of benevolence.

Lesson four provided certain detail into the matter of love. It highlights the fact the Christian should demonstrate absolute love for those of the household of faith. Galatians 6:10 was used to bring this point forth. Lesson four also make the point of showing that love is courteous and respectful no matter who the objects of affection are. That is, true love has no concern for ethnicity, nationality or culture. It simply exists. Moreover, lesson four of the series goes further than encouraging Christians to love. The lesson shows that love is a command of God to His people. The love discussed is not a mere feeling but rather is brought about in actions that are first demonstrated to those of the household of faith.
Certain clarity of the command of God provides no room for determining who should and who should not be loved. That is to say, the love of the Christian goes beyond such things as nationality and ethnicity. Moreover, culture plays no role in who should be loved. The only matter that should be considered when expressing love is that the recipient has a need to be served and served well.

Lesson five sought to build upon the love of the Christian. When properly applied love becomes the antithesis of divisiveness. True love is predicated upon the idea of unity. Unity is the result of love and the reason for the perpetuation of love. A unified church is a church that walks in love no matter who the recipients are. The unity of the church sees on the fact that all people are the center of the love of God and that love is not concerned with divisive ideologies and actions.
Chapter Four

The Results

Chapter three of the project began by showing several individuals and local churches were invited to attend the classes dealing with reconciling the church. The responses, as pointed out, were largely negative. While this has limited the research aspect of the project it has bolstered certain presumptions made prior to the beginning of this project. Among those presumptions was that those who intentionally self-segregate seem to want nothing more than to be part of segregated churches.

One church that chose not to participate is a small body of the “holiness” persuasion. The body is located in Southeast Texas in a community that has some diversity. However, the body is comprised solely of Blacks. This is a congregation wherein the pastor continually speaks against Whites and such verbiage is often laden in his messages. It is unfortunate that this pastor chose not to hear views that are different from what he deems to be true when it comes to racism. As a result, his congregation will likely follow suit and not make any efforts at healing and reconciliation.

There were also members from two other bodies situated in Southeast Texas invited. Both bodies are Apostolic. The first is “Apostolic One” and the other “Apostolic Two.” Apostolic One has a congregation of less than fifty and is primarily White. Less than five percent of the Congregation is Black with no other ethnicities recognized. The pastor is White and is very welcoming. He and members of his congregation were invited to the lessons. The pastor indicated that he would have to “pray” about having people come but that he never got back with this writer. He does not make racist remarks and is more inclined to a multi-ethnic body than the pastor of the aforementioned “holiness” congregation. This group does not appear to be racists.
In fact, the converse is true. It is supposed that the pastor does not favor preachers and teachers who are not of the Apostolic persuasion to present to his congregation. Additionally, this writer has had the opportunity to speak with the pastor and other congregants in settings outside the formal church. Their openness, or lack thereof, has more to do with doctrine than ethnicity. As such, it would be easy to work with this group in matters of ethnic diversity in the church.

The pastor of Apostolic Two has a much larger congregation. In comparison to Apostolic One, Apostolic Two has a much more aristocratic following. They are less inclined to fellowship with anyone outside that local body. However, the congregation has a very good blend of people groups. The obvious and most dominant groups are Whites and Blacks. There are also Asians as well as other people groups represented. However, when invited to the lessons the pastor provided no response.

It cannot be determined as a certainty why neither pastor was willing to participate in this series of lessons. The classes were intentionally scheduled so as not to interfere with other worship services. Yet, despite the differences in the groups all churches discussed had the same response; none chose to participate in the classes. Even so, the lessons were taught to some and there were two people who were willing to participate in the classes as well as answer the survey question. That question was, “In your opinion, what are the five greatest hindrances in the church?” The respondents were “Linda Loveless” and “Suzi Backstreet.”

The responses are as follows:

“Linda Loveless”

1. Lack of understanding of what life truly is
2. Selfishness
3. The thirst of being better than the next person
4. Materialistic values

5. The want for Power in a specific area of the church

“Suzi Backstreet”

1. Color

2. Wealthiness

3. Knowledge

4. People may overlook those who are really suffering

5. Lack of care and emotion

Both participants are Black females under forty years of age with specific academic and professional goals. The respondents are also unwed mothers and have been around the church much of their lives. Their responses to the question are telling in that “Linda Loveless” sees the number one hindrance in the church is the lack of understanding of what life truly is while “Suzi Backstreet” sees the possibility of color as being the main hindrance. It has been said that “The impregnable walls of communism have come down; and yet, the church refuses to allow its walls of racism to tumble down” and appears to be the sentiment of “Miss Backstreet.”

“Miss Backstreet” also seems to be making the same point as was made by Jennifer Najera. In her work Jennifer Najera focused on racial segregation in the Catholic church in South Texas as it relates to Mexicans and Whites. “Miss Backstreet’s” observation is also solidified with the question, “Do we still need race-based churches and Conferences in North America?” This observation and question seem to work well with the answer provided by “Linda Loveless.”

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“Miss Loveless” provided her first answer as not understanding what life is and goes on in her second answer to indicate a reason for divide the church is selfishness. It is also a matter pointed out by Rick McClatchy.\textsuperscript{102}

It might be argued that racism is a form of selfishness. For instance, it has been suggested that “racism is an ideology of supremacy.”\textsuperscript{103} The idea of supremacy, no matter the people group, has much to do with selfishness. Selfishness tends more toward the individual concerned than others. Even more, the idea of selfishness leads to the idea that the only important person is the selfish person. This is the problem with racism; it promotes self over others no matter the state of the others. “Miss Loveless” clearly points to a main reason for hinderances in the church and that reason does not conflict with the view of “Miss Backstreet.”

“Miss Backstreet” also sees a lack of knowledge as a reason for hinderances in the church. Ofttimes ignorance is a breeding ground for racism. “Miss Backstreet” has a point in that another way of saying ignorant is “stereotypes.” A study in \textit{Psychology Today} points to a study wherein stereotypes and racism were central to the study. Dr. Richard Petty conducted a study using two fictitious students and that the subjects of the study were asked to write an essay about a day in the life of one of the students.\textsuperscript{104} The findings of the study as shown in \textit{Psychology Today} were reported as follows:

The results, published recently in the \textit{Journal of Experimental and Social Psychology}, showed that those students who identified Tyrone as an African-American and used stereotypes to describe him in their essay scored lower on the math test compared with students who did not use stereotypes.\textsuperscript{105}

\textsuperscript{102}McClatchy, Building a Multi-Cultural, 90.

\textsuperscript{103}Koranteng-Pipim, \textit{Racism and the Church}, 19.


\textsuperscript{105}Ibid.
The conclusion of the study in the *Journal of Experimental and Social Psychology* is in part:

Although stereotypes can simplify the process of social perception, the current experiments have identified a significant cost to the holders of unfavorable stereotypes about African Americans. Specifically, activation of the African America stereotype led non-African-American participants to engage in maladaptive, stereotype-consistent behavior.\footnote{Wheeler, Jarvis, and Petty, “Think Unto Others: The Self-Destructive Impact of Negative Racial Stereotypes,” *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, vol 37 (2001): 179}

The article in *Psychology Today* goes on to show, “Considering his findings, Petty notes that his study is not the first to show that activating stereotypes affects those who hold them.”\footnote{Seeber, *Racism Breeds Ignorance*, 28.}

Said differently, some people tend to deflect on others what is true of themselves. Such is the case with racists in churches.

A similar finding was reported by Sabrina Dent in her work examining race interfaith relations in which she conducted a racial bias test. She found, “After taking the racial bias test, it was determined that both participants had a stronger preference toward European Americans over African Americans.”\footnote{Sabrina Elizabeth Dent, “Bridging the Gap of Race and Interfaith Relations: Connecting Humanity with Our Stories” (DMin Thesis Project, Virginia Union University School of Theology, 2018), 100.} This finding becomes more interesting as Miss Dent disclosed that two of the participants of the racial bias test were two White women married to “men of color.”\footnote{Ibid.}

“Miss Loveless” makes another interesting point in her original answer to the survey question. She noted that there was a “thirst of being better than the next person” as a reason for hinderances in the church. “Miss Backstreet” says the same thing slightly different by indicating that some overlook the suffering. It would seem that both respondents are correct particularly in
light of the definition of racism Mark Hearn points to which is, “the attitude, action, or institutional structure or any social policy that subordinates persons or groups because of their color.”

In their original answers both respondents generally show that church hindrances or divides are brought about because of the choices of the individuals in the churches. Intentional separation and selfishness seem to be pivotal factors in hindrances in church growth. It could also be argued that power in the local body is part of the problem and is a point made by “Miss Loveless.” Again, she makes a good point in keeping with the definitions noted about racism. Racism seeks to control, and control is power. No matter the reason, it could be argued that the hindrances could be summed in a few words – lack of love.

Upon asking the survey question the second time an incredible difference in viewpoints arose from the respondents and the most incredible is the change of view from “Linda Loveless.” The second responses are as follows:

“Linda Loveless”

1. There is no genuine love in the church
2. We as people look at race as a difference in churches
3. The lack of knowledge of who God really is
4. Judgmental toward other races
5. Not looking at the word of God as a whole that has told us that no race is excluded from his love.

“Suzi Backstreet”

1. Money

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2. Popularity
3. Race/ethnicity
4. Lack of communication skills
5. Evilness

Her first point was that there was no genuine love in the church. This is significant because the lessons presented focused on the love of Christ and how that love should be demonstrated by the people of God. It appears that Miss Loveless took to heart the very point presented by the series and that point was love.

“Suzi Backstreet” saw money as the main reason for hindrances in the Church. This is interesting because at no point in the lessons was the matter of money discussed. Financial matters had nothing to do with any part of the discussion and yet “Miss Backstreet” seems to have a focus on money. This is somewhat disturbing because it would appear that “Miss Backstreet” missed the entire point of the lessons. However, that initial response may be more subjective than objective in that “Miss Backstreet” clearly presented what she sees as a hindrance and her view may not be without validity.

There remains sufficient reason for encouragement particularly in light of the second reason provided by “Miss Loveless.” She observes, “We as people look at race as a difference in churches.” The indication is that the matter of race is viewed wrongly in churches. This would suggest that the superficial matter of skin tone has taken precedence, at least in “Miss Loveless’” point of view, in churches and that has created a hindrance in the church of Southeast Texas. This is a sentiment voiced by Martin Luther King as pointed out by Barna with King’s words, “It
is appalling that the most segregated hour of Christian America is eleven o’clock on Sunday morning.”

It is evident that the lessons have had a profound impact on “Miss Loveless.” Her responses are indicative of a willingness to learn and apply the truths to her life. This is not to say that “Miss Backstreet” has had no learning or growth. “Miss Backstreet,” when originally asked referenced a problem causing hindrance as “color.” That has shifted in her mind to the matter of race or ethnicity becoming the third reason for hindrances. And, she may well be correct in her assessment. This writer continually hears complaints from churchgoers about the offerings taken in some local bodies. Hence, the assessment of “Miss Backstreet” may be more objective than one might initially think. It might do well to have a study on the collection of church donations, however, that is not the focus of this project.

Another interesting observation was made by “Miss Backstreet.” She sees an absence of communication skills as a reason for hinderances in the Church. This observation seems to go to the heart of why the church of Southeast Texas is divided that that is love. When communicating, as suggested by “Miss Backstreet,” some fall outside the parameters of the Pauline admonishment found in Ephesians 4:15 which is, “But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” The lack of love, even in communication, has become a major issue in local bodies.

One point of the lessons presented at Day-Spring Christian Church was to point to the very nature and character of God and that is love. “Miss Loveless” did well to show that another reason for hindrances in the church was the lack of realization of who God is. This was a matter heavily stressed in the lessons as tremendous strides were made to show the very character of

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111 Barna, Racial Divides, 1.
God is love. And, if God is love and if Christians are to be a reflection of God, they must present love in their lives. If no love is presented it may well be true that the people have no true knowledge of who God is.

“Miss Loveless” takes the matter a bit further when she indicates there is judgment between races of people. This is a point in which the African Methodist Episcopal Church seems to suggest in its response to the Plessy decision. Watson framed the idea of judgment as it relates to racism in this fashion, “It emphasizes how we are different, rather than how we are similar. It reduces people to just one thing, based on a stereotype.” This idea of judgment might be construed as evil and is a determination of “Miss Backstreet.”

“Miss Backstreet” sees evilness as a reason for church hindrances. One would be hard-pressed to find racism as anything but evil. For instance, some might question the existence of racism and evil. Watson addresses both with two succinct sentences. He observes, “Yes, evil exists. And if often wears the cloak of racism.” It could be said the matter of evil is furthered by “Miss Loveless” pointing to the idea that church hinderance stem from the lack of looking at God’s Word as a whole and that God does not hold his people to a racial standard (paraphrased).

“Miss Loveless,” in her fifth point, encapsulates the entirety of the lessons. The main point was that the love of God is unconditional extends to all that will receive it. And, while “Miss Backstreet” sees church hindrances a bit differently there is little doubt that she sees racism as a problem in the Church. It was a point made in her original answer and a point that is made even more clear in her second response to the survey question.

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112 Thomas, *Plessy V. Ferguson*, 134.

113 Watson, *Under our Skin*, 151.

114 Ibid., 152.
Components of this study are both compelling and discouraging. The discouraging factor will be addressed first in that pastors were invited to come to the lessons with members from their congregations. Neither pastor accepted the invitation. There was one Black pastor with two White pastors in the Golden Triangle invited. Together they represent a good cross-section of Southeast Texas. Yet, neither chose to participate in the lessons and survey. Neither did either send representatives to participate in the lessons and survey.

In the case of the “Holiness” pastor, this writer has spent some time with him and has some understanding as to why he did not participate. One reason is that he is very busy and often out of town on church matters. His congregation is small and entirely made up of Blacks. While he does not see himself as racist, he is not inclined to fellowship or worship with those who are not of his ethnicity. The pastor is a middle-aged Black pastor with influence over several churches. The congregations he oversees have exclusively Black memberships. It is not certain if this is intentional or even if there is a desire to change such a paradigm. What is obvious is that there is no outreach to anyone that does not meet the ethnic profile the church largely embraces. The chances of accepting other ethnicities are not encouraging.

Apostolic churches One and Two are different. They are both pastored by White males and neither has been heard disparaging other ethnicities. Both are open to others in their congregations. In fact, both have different ethnicities in their congregations. Apostolic Two has the greatest mixture of people groups not only attending services but also instrumental in the leadership as well as services at large. Even so, it remains unclear as to why neither pastor agreed with attending or having representatives participate in the lessons or the survey question.

There is an interesting distinction between those who chose to hear the lessons (most of whom chose not to participate in the survey) and those who elected not to participate. The
pastors have been collectively in ministry for more than eighty years. Those who participated were largely not in ministry. The respondents to the survey question were two young Black ladies, unmarried with young children. Both have been in and around church but neither had committed their lives to Christ prior to the founding of Day-Spring Christian Church. These two were the most receptive of the lessons.

It would take considerable speculation to answer why the pastors chose not to participate and that is discouraging because there is little doubt that congregants would have been able to glean from the lessons. The compelling factors are the two respondents. Not only were they willing to sit through and be active in the lessons but that they also participated in the survey question, their answers are compelling in light of their lack of active Christendom. Moreover, the responses provided both before and after the lessons are compelling.

The compelling factor comes foremost from “Miss Loveless.” It appears that she took the lessons to heart especially when her responses are juxtaposed. Also, as an observation, during most of the lessons “Miss Loveless” appeared to be fighting back tears as certain points were made clear. The result of the lessons has shown definitive growth in her. There was also growth “Miss Backstreet.” While her view differs from that of “Miss Loveless” her candor and growth have become paramount. Both of the respondents have grown and continue to grow and have become more welcoming to a multi-ethnic congregation.

No matter the manner in which the respondents have prioritized their answers, both have determined that racism is a problem in the Church and is also a finding to this project. This is particularly with many churches in Southeast Texas. It has been argued that racism is sinful in that it pulls from the love of Christ in order to lift certain groups above others. Jon Nilson observes the nature of racism by stating, “Thus, racism is not only sinful and heretical in its
denial of the equal dignity of all God’s children. Racism is idolatry.”\textsuperscript{115} Hence, the perpetuation of church racism is an affront to all concerned but also to an affront to God, the Creator of all mankind.

\textsuperscript{115} Nilson, \textit{Beloved Community}, 88.
Chapter Five

Conclusion

It is certain that racist attitudes are born out of ignorance. For instance, many Blacks reference the primary reason for racism in the United States is slavery. However, it seems to be an unknown fact that slaves brought to the Americas were the result of slaves being sold to Europeans by African slave owners. Moreover, slavery had little to do with racism, as evident by the fact that Black Africans sold slaves, and more to do with financial matters. The point is made more clear when the following is considered:

From the eighteenth century Britain emerged as the world’s leading financial centre. The development of banking, the stock exchange, and insurance services flourished in Britain during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This was primarily because of the significance of the trans-Atlantic slave economy to Britain, not only in terms of the profits generated from the slave economy which were available for investment, as Eric Williams emphasized, but also because of the specific and peculiar financial needs of the transatlantic slave economy.

This does not negate the fact that a reciprocal effect of slavery was racism in the United States and particularly in Southeast Texas. The racism found its way into the church as evident with the historical fact that “Segregation was common in Texas Catholic churches.” Segregation was a way to further racist ideologies by some while ignoring the views of others. This is the larger problem with racism, particularly in the church of Southeast Texas; it presumes that all of a particular ethnicity have the same views and opinions.

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116 Up From Slavery, Narrated by Kevin Richard Hersberger. Mill Creek, 2011 DVD.


118 Chambers, Goodbye God, 128.
The stain of racism has darkened the halls of the history of the United States of America. It has also darkened the hallowed halls of the Church at large and the church of Southeast Church in particular. It has been shown in this project that some migrated from Louisiana to Southeast Texas to flee racist activities and laws put forth and allowed by Jim Crow laws. The running seemed to be in vain as the same issues that were in Louisiana were found in Texas. The fleeing from one state to another was really an attempt at attaining two basic principles; freedom and love.

The lessons taught by the pastor of Day-Spring Christian Church centered around the love of God. That love God has for His children allowed the Messiah to make such sacrifices as such He took on the flesh of mankind. The love caused Jesus to endure underserved atrocities that were underserved. That love caused the Christ to die and death deserving of the object of His love, the world. John 3:16 paints a rather poignant picture of that love. The text, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” It is that love that, when applied, can erase the stain of racism in the church of Southeast Texas.

The lack of love in local bodies seem to be the compelling factor for division in churches. While this writer found it difficult to find sources encouraging congregants to employ the principles of love across ethnic aisles, he has encountered some discussion pointing to the problem of racism. He has also found that much of the source for church division stem back to the Jim Crow era. That was an era certainly laden with wrong, but it ignores many fights for freedom.

To bring clarity to the latter point additional looks at history must be examined. For instance, the Republican Party of Springfield, Massachusetts responded to the Plessy decision by injecting
an introspective question. That question was, “Did the southerners ever pause to indict the Almighty for allowing negros to be born on the same earth with white men?"\textsuperscript{119} It is a question that can be paraphrased to fit the church of Southeast Texas. Did the congregants of the church of Southeast Texas pause to indict the Almighty for not dividing the church by reason of ethnicity? And, if these questions do little to indict the almighty other concerns must be raised. One such concern is why, if God sent Jesus to die for the world, why do we not allow all to worship in the same house? The latter question must also be furthered in order to determine the reasoning it seems bad form for different ethnicities to fellowship with each other.

Plessy V. Ferguson was a fight for equality not only on public transportation but also the Fourteenth Amendment at large. Brown v. Board of Education presented a similar argument dealing with inequality and segregation in public schools and was linked to the Plessy case by reason of the matters of equality and segregation.\textsuperscript{120} The Supreme Court decision for equality was made and framed it as “Equality is truly constitutionalized. The constitutional ground is level – no gradations, classifications, distinctions, hierarchy, superior or inferior, subordination or elevation categories of citizens and human beings under the American Constitution.”\textsuperscript{121} It is interesting the law eventually recognized the wrongs of Jim Crow laws and sought to correct those wrongs but that the same corrections have not been made by the church of Southeast Texas.

\textsuperscript{119} Thomas, \textit{Plessy v. Ferguson}, 131.


\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 25.
The law of God is far more significant than the law of man. The law of God requires that men love as Christ loved. 1 John 4:7-8 clearly spells out the practice of love. The text is, “Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.” Hence, those who choose to segregate predicated upon racist ideology are doing so in the absence of love. This is because the love of God is not concerned with the ethnicity of individuals. Additionally, 2 John 4:11 expounds on the practice of love by showing, “Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” When love is enjoined there leaves no room for hate. When hate is dismissed racism necessarily is also dismissed.

Luke 24:47, “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” clearly shows that the Church is an all-inclusive body. Despite the scriptural mandates of love, there are churches that continue the practice of segregation because of racism outside the teaching of Scripture.

The practice of racism is indicative of the fact that some choose to treat others in ways they do not want to be treated. The racist judge on pigmentation as well as put forth actions against others for no other reason that the victim of racism is not of the preferred ethnicity or pigmentation. This goes against the scriptural standard to treat others in such a way that you want to be treated. The text in Luke 6:31, “And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.” This verse is linked directly to love and shows that if you love your fellow man then you will treat him with love. Acts of racism far from good treatment and love.

Much of racism has been blamed on Whites and that law enforcement is part of the racism against Blacks. For instance, Ben Shapiro notes several instances of race-baiting in an article in Breitbart. His reflection on the Ferguson case wherein Michael Brown a Black male was killed
by White Police Officer Darren Wilson is one such point of reflection. Shapiro uses then Attorney General Eric Holder’s words showing racial bias against Whites. Shapiro reports:

But Holder then issued a second DOJ report stating that the Ferguson police department was wildly and institutionally racist. The evidence: radically elevated rates of traffic stops without concomitant evidence of elevated traffic crime, admittedly because the city had jacked up its traffic enforcement to raise revenue.

This report was made by Holder despite the fact that Wilson (who was accused of being racist) was justified in shooting Brown. This problem was furthered, as reported by Shapiro when the former White House green czar Van Jones suggested that Blacks saw the police as having a similitude of Nazism or Hamas.

Representative Sheila Jackson Lee is a politician that has engaged in racist rhetoric. One such instance was December 18, 2018, with respect to an airplane seat dispute. The center of the actual complaint was that United Airlines passenger was forced to give up her first-class seat and that Ms. Lee was given that seat. The passenger, Jean-Marie Simon complained about the matter. Ms. Lee would go on to invoke racism via her Twitter page with the statement, “Since this is not any fault of mine,

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123 Ibid., 3

124 Ibid.

125 Ibid.


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the way the individual continued to act appeared to be, upon reflection, because I was an African American woman, seemingly an easy target along with the African America flight attendant who was very, very nice, the lawmaker told her 50,000 Twitter followers.”127 The report shows, however, no racial bias toward Ms. Lee. What it does show is that Ms. Lee was treated with certain privilege and that might have been because of her political status.

While some Whites were instrumental in policies such as Jim Crow laws it is also true that Whites have been instrumental in clearing the way for equality as an affront to racism. Yet, it is difficult to find supporting documents to validate that White people stood along with Blacks for the purposes of freedom. Still, historical facts such as the Civil War and the Brown decisions provide absolute evidence that not all White people participated in racist ideology. With this, some observations are in order.

One key observation is that the White population at large is held responsible for slavery and racism in particular. This is a sentiment that ignores the historical fact of the roots of slavery in the Americas which includes Black African slave owners selling slaves to White slave traders.128 It, then, is reasonable to point out there were many Whites that aided in the abolition of slavery which, by extension, was a fight against racism. This is a fact which draws little attention. What is not said is the racism that is grave amongst some Blacks. And, while it may not be called racism it could be argued that whenever a certain segment of people are opposed to other people groups merely because of ethnicity or skin tone racism is at play.

Another observation brings to light the fact of Whites being instrumental in fighting for the freedom of all people. One way this was done was by helping slaves escape slavery, as they

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127 Ernst, Sheila Jackson Lee, 1

worked alongside Harriet Tubman by way of the “Underground Railroad.”\textsuperscript{129} This observation does not seek to cover the wrongs of the Whites who fought for slavery. It does highlight the fact that not all Whites condoned the practice. It is a fact that is ignored by those desiring to continually stoke the flames of racism. This is unfortunate because the vitriol has found its way in the church of Southeast Texas and some refuse to allow the sins of the past remain in the past.

While working on this project this writer has often reflected on an experience of his while living in Chesapeake, Virginia. At one point, he had to catch a bus to take care of business. It happened to be a rainy day and there were puddles of water on the road. As the bus pulled from one stop water was splashed on some pedestrians. Now, on the bus were several people of differing ethnicities and a couple of Black ladies noticed the water that was splashed on the pedestrians. They initially bemoaned the incident. Unfortunately, that quickly changed when they noticed the pedestrians were White. One of the ladies then said, “Oh, they are White. They like water anyway.”

This is the type of attitude that has seeped into the church. It shows there is a lack of love from certain people to others merely because of ethnicity. The observation is that while some decry perceived wrongs done to them, they applaud the same perceived wrongs done to others of different ethnicities. It is the same idea and principles practiced during the Jim Crow era in which Blacks and Mexicans were not allowed in White churches and if they were allowed, they had to sit in specific areas of the buildings. This was a lack of love for Blacks and Mexicans. That very same sentiment remains expressed in some churches in Southeast Texas today.

Another observation is that there are some who prefer segregated churches in Southeast Texas. This becomes obvious when the COGIC and “holiness” churches mentioned above are

considered. When church leaders intentionally exclude other ethnicities, it means that there is a lack of love emitting from those leaders. Love is not concerned with ethnicity or pigmentation. Yet, some choose this course of action not, as it seems, understanding the fact that God created all of mankind in His image and likeness. When exclusion is had predicated upon pigmentation and ethnicity racism abounds. When racism abounds, it becomes evident the love of God is absent. This is the very division this writer has railed against over time as is evident in the following essay “Enough Divisiveness.”

**Enough Divisiveness**

I admit, in my lifetime I have not seen this country so divided. I lived through a portion of segregation and saw the end of Jim Crow. I recall when Martin Luther King was assassinated and can remember motorcycle gangs roaring down the streets of Baltimore following the assassination. Yet, somehow this country largely pulled together to stand for right. Petty differences were laid aside in hope of a uniting nation. King, in part, sought to draw people together by reason of a common thread. That thread was that we were, and remain, of the same substance. That substance remains in that we are all human beings made in the image of God. Because of that, there is more to bind us than to divide us.

I clearly recall the time this nation was attacked. Our towers in New York were destroyed. The Pentagon was a target and another plane went down in Pennsylvania. All of a sudden there were United States flags everywhere. The people of this land began to stand shoulder-to-shoulder. A return to God began to be the mantra of the hour. We were all United States citizens and there would be no force to break that bond. Unfortunately, this bond of unity would not last. The ugliness of divisiveness would soon rear its ugly head. All of a sudden everyone was to blame except those perpetrating the most horrendous acts.
Now, not long after those tragic events, we had an election. The election was legally won and our new President will soon take office. Yet, there are some that see reason to be divisive and call the soon to be Head of State illegitimate. Others have chosen not to attend the presidential inauguration by reason of the false rhetoric of an illegitimate election. These words and actions have only served to divide a nation that is already in the worst state of harmony that I can recall in my lifetime. Well, enough of this divisiveness already!

Frankly, the Church has not acted much better. Perhaps this is why the country is acting so untoward. It is high time the Church began to remove the ridiculous rhetoric of divisiveness and rancor and began to pull together according to the Word of God. There is no room in the House of God for division. There is much room for love. After all, men will know that we are brothers by our love. That love is not merely a purported love for God. No, it is action taken which shows that we love each other. This could mean helping a family in need of help. It may mean lending a shoulder to cry on. That love might also be demonstrated in helping to heal the hurts of the past. No matter how that love is demonstrated it serves not to divide. Instead, true love serves to unite. This is the ministry of those that love; reconciliation.

The example of love demonstrated by the Church is a love that is apt to spill into the world. Even so, the love the Church demonstrates is really a type of love provided by the Godhead. The fact is that God so loved the world that He gave His Son. The Son so loved that He gave His life. The Holy Spirit so loves that He dwells in man. Love is a reciprocal matter that has no time to entertain divisiveness. Love is not familiar with rancor. Instead, love seeks to reconcile broken people to those who have been hurt and damaged by the abomination of hate.

King was right. One’s pigmentation is not a matter that should be considered in any instance. Instead, we should look to the heart of man as God does. We live in a strong nation and ought
not to be divided by the vitriolic and visceral verbiage of those that choose not love. The divisive nature of some in this country is only causing a divide that could bring about the downfall of this great nation. This is unacceptable and far from Christ-like. Enough of this divisiveness! It is time we broke the bands of this that binds us and remember the part of King’s dream that can and must be more than a dream. He looked forward to the day when we all can join together and not just sing the old Negro spiritual but actually walk in the words – Free at last, free at last. Thank God, almighty, we're free at last!\footnote{William James Carter, “Enough Divisiveness.” \textit{The Christian Perspective}. January 2017. https://preachercarter.com/2017/01/16/enough-divisiveness/}

The conclusions drawn as a result of this project are distressing and encouraging at the same time. A distressing conclusion is that many of the churches in Southeast Texas remain segregated by ethnicity and that separation is often intentional. This means racism remains very strong and is often his under cloaks such as culture. This type of racism appears to be more prominent in churches wherein there are Black pastors. This is not to suggest there are no other ethnicities who practice intentional segregation. It does highlight the fact of racism is a problem in local churches.

The examination of legal fights for desegregation seemed paramount in order to show the histories and problems associated with legal racism. The laws were eventually ruled unconstitutional resulting in the dismantling of legalized racism. The dismantling of such laws did well to change the actions of those that preferred racist activities. However, it can be concluded that while the law can do much to change the actions of man it can do little to change the heart of man. This is the case when it comes to segregated churches. Those who choose to segregate continue with the notion that it is better for the church to be segregated than united.
It is also concluded that many of the churches in Southeast Texas intentionally segregating lack a key principle of God’s Word. That principle is love. God calls for us to love others as we love ourselves. Even so, many choose not to employ the love of Christ except to those sharing their ethnicity. This is true, for instance, in the COGIC and “holiness” churches discussed earlier. Not only is there a lack of love there is a show of disdain for those who do not fit the preferred mold of ethnicity.

A further conclusion is that the lack of love in the churches of Southeast Texas has greatly hindered reconciliation. There is a great need for reconciliation not only in the Body of Christ but also in the communities in which the churches sit. Christians have been called to the ministry of reconciliation. Yet, that reconciliation cannot be had absent the application of love. All too often the lack of expressed love in the acts of reconciliation often is the result of the actions, or inactions, of the local church leaders.

This project has presented the idea that at least one local body that has embraced self-segregation. The segregation, however, has not been encouraged by the congregants. It appears to be the intent of the pastor. When dealing with individuals the matter is quite different. Examples of the differences are noted in the respondents to the project survey question. The respondents are not in leadership and are novices to Christendom. Yet, they are willing to accept people in the local church, specifically, the church this writer pastors, without regard to ethnicity. Therefore, it is concluded that some older leaders are resistant to integrated churches for reasons that can only be supposed. This is in contrast to younger novices willing to embrace people no matter who those people are.
The Plan for Reconciliation and Healing

In order for there to be healing and reconciliation in the church of Southeast Texas some things must take place. The following plan for the local churches must start with the individuals. This is because the church of Southeast Texas is not a conglomerate of buildings. It is the individuals that have the common belief and trust in the Word of God. With that commonality, the six-point plan of healing and reconciliation is the implementation of the Word of God That plan follows.

The first part of the plan is introspection. This is important because unless one is willing to look within, he will not be able to make changes necessary to better himself. Moreover, Christians are encouraged to regularly examine themselves. This is also the case prior to taking the Lord’s Supper (1 Corinthians 11:28). And, while this text is very specific to the taking of the Lord’s Supper it points to what should be the lifestyle Christians. It is a point made clearer in 2 Corinthians 13:5. The self-examination is to ensure the faith continues to be central in the lives of those professing allegiance to Christ. And, if the individual applies the Scripture and finds himself lacking, he should be apt to make changes in keeping with the Word of God.

Introspection is extremely important. However, it must be coupled with the second part of the plan. The second part is letting go of the past. This writer has heard many complaints from Blacks about slavery. None of those Blacks have been directly impacted by slavery. That does not keep them from certain vitriol. This holding on to past actions of our fathers does nothing more than stoke the flames of hatred and division for the individuals and the church of Southeast Texas. It is important to understand history. It is of no importance to remain in that history.

Philippians 3:8-14 shows Paul encouraging Christlikeness to the church at Philippi. Part of that encouragement was to forget the things of the past. This forgetting does not mean that the
past leaves the mind or that it is never thought of again. It means that the past is no longer important and has no impact on the present. Once past wrongs such as slavery and Jim Crow are understood and left as historical, it becomes easier to move in the work the church of Southeast Texas should be. That work, according to Paul, has to do with the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Letting go of the past means rethinking some ideas and actions of the past. When this rethinking is done, in conjunction with introspection, certain change must take place. Part of that change is the way people look at others. Hence, the third part of the plan is to look at people as individuals rather than as groups. For instance, when police are generalized as being corrupt and evil the entirety of law enforcement is counted as corrupt. This obviously is not the case. Whereas there may be some corrupt law enforcement officers it becomes disingenuous to say that all are reflected in the few. Such is the case of the populous at large.

All too often some people use ethnicity to generalize all of that people group. This is racism at its core and is the impetus for division. When there is division there is a lack of love and duty to the body of Christ. Galatians 5:14 points to the duty of the Christian which is love. Absent that love it becomes the norm to treat individuals as groups. Yet, when love becomes preeminent it is easier for individuals to build individuals. This positive treatment of individuals plays directly into the fourth part of the plan of healing and reconciliation.

Matthew 7:12 is an encouragement for the people of God to treat others in such a way as they want to be treated. It is not likely that anyone wants to be treated in hateful manners. The converse is most likely true. The simplicity of this text refers to the actions of the people of God. Those actions, as has been repeated several times in this project, are based on love. That love is embodied in the good and righteous treatment of people no matter their ethnicity. If the people of
God were to hold to this text not only would there be healing and reconciliation in the church of Southeast Texas but also that love would spill into the streets positively impacting the community at large.

Forgiveness is another and important factor allowing for healing and forgiveness, Forgiveness is a desire of all people who have wronged or who have been wronged. This is the fifth step in the plan for healing and reconciliation. It also might be the most difficult part of the plan. Despite the difficulty, there are a number of calls to forgiveness found in Scripture. One such call for forgiveness is found in Colossians chapter three. This chapter of Colossians might be considered an admonishment by Paul to the church of Colosse to walk in Christlikeness. Christ wrapped himself in human flesh with the purpose of reconciling broken man with a healing God. The actions of Christ were selfless and sought only to fulfill the will the Father.

This should also be the motivation of the Christian. He, the Christian, is commanded to be forgiving of one another. That forgiveness means that a repentant offender should not be held responsible for offenses of the past. Forgiveness means the cloak of a past offender has been changed to the cloak of one who has never offended. Thereby, the matter which caused the offense is never brought back to the surface. The matter is discarded as though it never happened.

The actions Christ depicted in the text shows this very action. The Christian is to forgive as Christ forgave. Colossians 3:13 provides the framework as Christ provided the example that needs to be upheld by those that follow Him. When forgiveness is employed, even to those of different ethnicities, healing and reconciliation become the by-products of forgiveness.

Moreover, the act of forgiveness is an act of love. Love, then, is not a mere feeling. It is the action of one committed to another with deeds that uplift the object of love.
John 13 shows Christ giving that command to love. Love is the sixth part of the plan of healing and reconciliation of the church of Southeast Texas. The love commanded by Jesus does not consider ethnicity. It does not consider any matter except that its object has need for any actions born out of that love. True love continues as the type of love God showed. John 3:16 shows God’s love for the world, the whole of mankind, was so great He sent His Son into the world so that those that believe in God would not have to die. Said differently, God’s affection for mankind prompted action.

As John 3:16 presented the extent of God’s love, much of the New Testament shows the love of Christ. That love was presented in forgiveness, healing, and teaching. Christ never made ethnicity a priority of His love. The converse is more the case as with the woman at the well (John 4:7-26). Christ took the time to speak with her and provide spiritual healing. This example of Christ showed the Messiah opening His arms in order to welcome a woman that was not welcomed by many. Such should be the love of the Christian not only to other Christians but also to those who are not Christian. Additionally, the love of Christ had nothing to do with the ethnicity of the woman. It had everything to do with her need for healing.

The love Christ commanded was not a mere suggestion. It was what He did and what is expected of those that count themselves as followers of Christ. The actions of the love of Christ remains and there are ways in which the church of Southeast Texas can present that love in the local churches. Some of those ways are:

- Welcome all people into the local houses
- Let those people know that they are welcome with greetings and like actions
- Allow all people groups available to be active in the ministry
➢ Do not denigrate any ethnicity instead encourage fellowship outside standard services and programs

➢ Be genuine in interactions with all people

This itemization of acts the church in Southeast Texas should employ is not intended to be exhaustive. It is intended to be a benchmark and starting point to the reconciliation and healing that is very much needed in the church. Moreover, the six-point strategy outlined herein can be encapsulated in one word, love. If the church of Southeast Texas would employ the simple practice of love, hate would not have a choice but to succumb to its welcoming arms. If we indeed, loved others as we love ourselves there would be no need to harm. There would only be the need and desire to build. If the church truly loved as Christ loved that love would pour into the streets and brings others into the fold.

Martin Luther King had a dream envisioning men walk together without regard to ethnicity. Laws have been changed to that end. Laws and judicial decisions also brought about the demise of slavery and the Jim Crow era laws. No one can be kept out of any school because of ethnicity. Hospitals cannot deny service predicated upon skin tone. Restaurants are no longer allowed to deny service because of pigmentation. The laws having been changed is good in that the law has made all men equal. The problem is, as noted previously, the law has not and cannot change the heart of man.

The plan for healing and reconciliation in the church of Southeast Texas is a simple one. Still, it is a plan that requires the individuals to lay aside idiosyncratic presumptions and prejudices in favor of lifting others. The plan for reconciliation and healing should start with the local church leaders. If not, novices such as those noted in the above research can prove very effective. As
such, this is a plan the pastor of Day-Spring Christian Church has already begun working on with the ultimate goal of bringing reconciliation and healing to the church in Texas.

Finally, it would appear the desegregation of the church in Southeast Texas is a lost cause. And, while some might not desire the desegregation and others do see the idea as a lost cause, it is a cause worth fighting for. It is well past time the people put away the hurts and wrongs of the past and begin to galvanize as one church for all people. This may be a lost cause. Still, it is a cause worth the fight.
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Appendix A

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

December 20, 2018

William James Carter
IRB Exemption 3584.122018: Racism in Southeast Texas Churches: A Plan for Reconciliation and Healing among its Church Community

Dear William James Carter,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
(i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
The Graduate School

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971
APPENDIX B

INVESTIGATOR AGREEMENT & SIGNATURE PAGE

BY SIGNING THIS DOCUMENT, THE INVESTIGATOR AGREES:

1. That no participants will be recruited or entered under the protocol until the Investigator has received the final approval or exemption email from the Chair of the Institutional Review Board.
2. That no participants will be recruited or entered under the protocol until all key personnel for the project have been properly educated on the protocol for the study.
3. That any modifications of the protocol or consent form will not be initiated without prior written approval, by email, from the IRB and the faculty advisor, except when necessary to eliminate immediate hazards to the participants.
4. The PI agrees to carry out the protocol as stated in the approved application; all participants will be recruited and consented as stated in the protocol approved or exempted by the IRB. If written consent is required, all participants will be consented by signing a copy of the approved consent form.
5. That any unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or others participating in the approved protocol, which may be in accordance with the Libby Way (and/or the Honor Code) and the Confidentiality Statement, will be promptly reported in writing to the IRB.
6. That the IRB office will be notified within 30 days of a change in the PI for the study.
7. That the IRB office will be notified within 30 days of the completion of this study.
8. That the PI will inform the IRB and complete all necessary reports should he/she terminate University Association.
9. To maintain records and keep informed consent documents for three years after completion of the project, even if the PI terminates association with the University.
10. That he/she has access to copies of 45 CFR 46 and the Belmont Report.

Principal Investigator (Printed) Principal Investigator (Signature) 29 May 2018

FOR STUDENT PROPOSALS ONLY

BY SIGNING THIS DOCUMENT, THE FACULTY ADVISOR AGREES:

1. To assume responsibility for the oversight of the student’s current investigation, as outlined in the approved IRB application.
2. To work with the investigator, and the Institutional Review Board, as needed, in maintaining compliance with this agreement.
3. To monitor email contact between the Institutional Review Board and principle investigator.

Faculty advisor is cc'd on all IRB emails to PIs.
4. That the principal investigator is qualified to perform this study.
5. That by signing this document you verify you have carefully read this application and approve of the procedures described herein, and also verify that the application complies with all instructions listed above. If you have any questions, please contact our office.

Faculty Advisor (Printed) Faculty Advisor (Original Signature) 10/29/2018

*The Institutional Review Board reserves the right to terminate this study at any time if, in its opinion, (1) the risks of further experimentation are prohibitive, or (2) the above agreement is breached.
APPENDIX C

Church Racism Survey Question

In your opinion, what are the five greatest hindrances in the church?
APPENDIX D

Lessons Taught at Day-Spring Christian Church

Racism In Southeast Texas Churches: A Plan For Reconciliation And Healing Among Its Church Community

Reconciling the Church

The Church has an unfortunate history of racial division. Much of the division has been by choice while it seems that some of the division has been circumstantial. Despite the reasoning, the Church has been plagued with this divide almost from its founding. This is evident in Acts chapters 10 and 11. Peter, in chapter 11, recalls a vision wherein a sheet of all manner of animals is present and Peter refused to eat calling the animals unclean. This is how Peter is reported to have seen the Gentiles prior to the vision. However, God’s idea of the Church remains a united one of all peoples.

There is also more recent historical data which shows a divided church. That data is the migration of Creoles from Louisiana to the Golden Triangle of Texas during the Jim Crow era. Many of the Creoles were Catholic and moved to Southeast Texas to escape the difficulties of Jim Crow only to find similar things in the churches in Texas. To this day many churches in the Golden Triangle remain segregated. It is difficult to find any church in Beaumont that is truly cross-ethnic. This is problematic because nowhere in Biblical text can we find any instance of God desiring a segregated Church. The converse is more to the case.

The idea of a separated Church was evident in the Catholic Church. In the Catholic Church segregation was not only practiced but also encouraged in that separated churches, schools and
even hospitals were created in order to fight against Jim Crow practices.\textsuperscript{131} However, the impact was not as it would seem. The divide in the Catholic Church became even greater. Unfortunately, the divide was not specific to Blacks, and Whites. It also involved Creoles and Mexicans.\textsuperscript{132}

Despite the efforts of many in times past to bridge the gap of a racial divide, there remains a great need to unify the Church. Simple programs have proven insufficient to bring this to pass. Building churches and schools do little to bridge gaps and serve only to broaden the gap. Hence, it becomes past time the Church lay aside superficial ideologies and begin to look at the Church the way God sees it. It is with this we begin our lessons in which we seek to put for the work of reconciling the Church.

\textsuperscript{131} Chambers, Goodbye God, 128-129

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid.
Lesson 1 – God’s Love

I. What is the fullness of the love of God? – In order to gain an understanding of the love of God, there must be an understanding of God’s love. Love is the very substance of God. He does not seek to obtain this love because He is the embodiment of love (1 John 4:8, 16). Moreover, love is an absolute attribute of God. In other words, love is the main of the character of God. That is God is unselfish, seeking to heal His people and provides grace and mercy relentlessly. The love of God is unconditional. The love of God for His people is so sure John brings light to the love of God in the Book of John.

   a. John 3:16 (focus on the term world) – This verse shows the love of God in action. God had so much compassion and was so moved by the demise of man He saw fit to take action. That is, God’s love is not a mere feeling. It is action toward the object of His love, the world.

      i. The love of God is not predicated upon the action or inaction of the object of His love. That is, God’s love cannot be earned. One can do nothing to cause it to be nor can one do anything to dispel it. Because God is love His love is sure.

      ii. The love of God resulted in action. That action was that God sent His Son into the world (or among the people) so that the world might be saved. The action of God shows the love of God is not a mere feeling but is an active part of His character. God loved so He committed an act to benefit the object of His love.
iii. The object of God’s love in the world at large. It excludes no one and includes all. God’s love is not specific to any people group, nationality or ethnicity. The Greek word for world is “Kosmos.” While there are several definitions for the word “world” the one concern in this context is the world is the totality of mankind. It includes all people from all people groups. The idea of the world excludes no one. Hence, the object of God’s love is for all people.

b. Romans 10:12 (focus on lack of difference in people groups)

i. The distinction between the Jews and the Greeks becomes paramount as it is noted salvation is for all that confess and believe in the truths of Jesus (vs 9). It is easy to distinguish “religious” beliefs between the two groups. This, however, does little to bolster the point of God’s love. God’s love extends well beyond worldviews such as the Jews and Greeks. God’s love extends beyond borders and goes directly to the object, His people.

ii. There is certainly a dichotomy between the Jews and the Greeks. For instance, traditionally, the Jews were beholden to the Mosaic Laws and generally Worshipped God whereas the Greeks were often given to the worship of other gods. Salvation has nothing to do with former ways of thought. It has to do with one’s confession and belief in the works of Christ. This is why the text shows that there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek. God sent His Son for both. There is no distinction between them despite their histories.
iii. Romans 10:12b clearly shows the same Lord is Lord over ALL that call upon Him. There is no distinction. There are no predicates other than the calling on the Lord. All of mankind is invited to call upon the Name of the Lord and once He is called upon, no matter the people group, God will hear the call. The answer is unconditional.

c. I John 4:10 - 11 (point to unadulterated love)

i. The universality of God’s love becomes more evident as we look at this text. We did not love God but that He loved us so much that He sent His Son. Mankind was undeserving of that love.

ii. The action of the Father was shown to be so great that His Son was made a propitiation (an offering) for the sin of man. That is, He was sacrificed as was done in times past with animals. However, the offering of the Son would be different. The one-time sacrifice would be once for all. As the animal sacrifices were a type of what was to come through the sacrifice of the Son so is the love of God a type of how Christians should love each other.

iii. Christians are challenged, in verse 11, to love each other. That love has nothing to do with nationality or previous worldviews. It has to do with a longing to have God’s people restored to a rightful place with Him. If God loved so much that He gave His Son there is no reason the Christian should not be a living sacrifice so that God is pleased with that sacrifice. As God’s love is all-encompassing so must the love of the Christian be.
Lesson 2 – Love in Action

II. God’s love in action – God does not merely express His love with words. Instead, we find the love of God to be acts designed to build the object of His love. The emotive aspect of God’s love continues to be one of perfection. His love, or affection, for the world was the impetus for His action. As a result of that love, He demonstrated that love by giving His Son in order for man to have a way out of eternal damnation.

a. John 3:16b (God’s love brought about action for the object of His love).

i. It cannot be overstated that the love of God results in action toward the object of that love. The action of God shows selflessness coupled with a desire to see the object of His love lifted beyond destruction. This action is furthered by sacrifice. The Son of God had to lay aside certain of His attributes in order to become incarnate. Among the things, He laid aside was His omnipresence. This points to the idea that love, without sacrifice, is nothing more than tinkling cymbals and sounding brass. It also provides an excellent example of how Christians should love each other.

ii. The object of God’s love is the world. It includes people from every nation and from every land. The language and ethnicity of those in the world are irrelevant. Just as important, the term “world” includes everyone and excludes no one. Likewise, the text references the idea that whosoever believes in Him should not perish. This shows that anyone that calls on the Name of Jesus will be saved.

iii. There are no criteria for being of any particular people group. There is simply the need to believe according to the text.
b. Isaiah 53:4-7 (Love’s sacrifice)

i. Isaiah 53 points to the travail Christ was to endure. Verse 4 uses the word “our” twice and “we” once. However, the author does not focus on those for whom Christ was to suffer. Instead, the author notices how the travail of Christ was for a collection of people, not so much one people. John 1:10 looks to the fullness of the text as it points to the world not knowing Christ. This idea is furthered in Isaiah 53:5.

ii. Verse 6 continues the theme of inclusiveness as laid out in the chapter. It is universally true that all of mankind has faltered from the truths of God’s Word. Every tongue and every people have chosen to live contrary to God’s Word. The love and sacrifice of the Lord would not be deterred by reason of ethnicity. Instead, He took upon himself the sin of the world, all mankind.

iii. Verse 7 shows the fullness of the sacrificial love of the Christ. He was convicted for crimes He did not commit. Yet, he did nothing in defense of himself. I Corinthians 5:7 reveals the fact of the love of Christ in action. He gave himself as the Passover Lamb so the object of His love would not have to suffer the eternal consequences of sin.


i. While on the cross Christ had the opportunity to bring spiritual healing to those that hung with Him. The thief’s plea for remembrance by Christ was obviously and point of sorrow and repentance for him. Because of that Christ assured the thief that his plea was heard and that his sin was
forgiven. The One who is love became love for many although they
deserved no love. The very embodiment of love came forth as Christ
poured healing and forgiveness into one that felt he deserved no love.

ii. The love expressed by Christ on the cross is a type of love the Christian
should have for fellow Christians. He is to welcome them no matter their
plight in life. John 13:34 is Christ’s command that His people love each
other. There are no distinctions as to who is to love each other. Instead, the
command to love is universal just as God’s love is universal. The love of
God is also sacrificial, and so should the love of Christians be sacrificial.

iii. It was a good thing for Christ to forgive the thief. It is also a good thing
for the Christian to do good to all men. Romans 12:13 shows a way the
love of the saints can be expressed. It shows love in action by way of
giving. Unless one gives without expecting a return it is doubtful that he is
expressing love. The Christian is also charged to be hospitable. That is he
is to be kind, respectful, and accepting of fellow Christians. It continues to
be important to show that the love exuded by Christians is not given to any
people group or ethnicity. It is universal.
Lesson 3 – God’s People

III. The People of God

a. I John 4:7b (whoever loves is of God)

   i. When this text is examined it becomes apparent that the people of God are distinct in that they are the people that love God. That is, they honor Him with their lives. They praise and worship Him as a matter of lifestyle.

   ii. Love is not a mere feeling; it is action. It is a matter of devotion to the object of love. Part of that devotion is service. Service takes on many forms and is limitless insofar as people groups are concerned.

   iii. James 1:27 shows expressions of love by God’s people by giving service to the fatherless and widows. It can be safely said, then, that when one loves his brother, he loves God. By that love, he is born of God. It does not matter about his ethnicity, place of birth or pigmentation. The fact of his love expressed in action is sufficient to make him born of God.

b. Malachi 3:16-17 (those who fear the Lord)

   i. The idea of fear, in this case, has nothing to do with being afraid. It does not encompass the idea of shaking in one’s boots nor does it concern itself with worry. The fear discussed in Malachi has to do with reverence to God. It has to with admiring and worshipping Him. When one fears God, God becomes the object of his love. And, when one loves God a result is that he will provide testimony to others about the love of God.

   ii. When one fears the Lord, he cannot help but think of the Lord. One way those thoughts go is that the one who fears the Lord habitually believes in
Him. That is the one who fears the Lord trust that God will honor His
Word. Therefore, the one who fears the Lord has his mindset to hold the
Lord in high esteem and inasmuch as he values the holiness of the Lord. A
result of that fear, of that mindset to honor God, the godly person cannot
help but begin to see people the way God sees them; as His people not as
ethnicities and people groups.

iii. Malachi 3:17 does not show the people of God as being separated but as
one group. The text clearly states, “And they shall be mine.” The “they”
referenced are those that fear the Lord. It is the same group that
thinks on Him. There are no other distinctions. Those that fear the Lord and think on
His Name are the people of God.

c. Acts 2:41 (those that gladly received God’s Word)

i. Acts chapter two shows there were a number of people from different
parts of the world gathered to celebrate Pentecost. Among the places from
which the people came were Asia, Rome, Cretes, and Arabia. Their
origins were insignificant.

ii. These people had one thing in common and that was that the gladly
received the Word of God. This and this alone made them the people of
God. After these received the Word of God they were baptized. One might
argue the baptisms strengthened the bonds of unity.

iii. The people had much in common and that had nothing to do with ethnicity
or homelands. This commonality is I conjunction with them all receiving
the Word. Verse 46 of Acts 2 shows the people continued in agreement in
the temple in that they worshipped together and that they fellowshipped with each other in their homes. The fact of their differing ethnicities played no part in either their worship or fellowship.
God’s Command to His People

a. I John 4:7-8 (universal expressions of love)
   i. Because we are the people of God and because God has our best interest at heart, He has provided us with a very specific task. That task involves loving one another. John repeats that command in this text. In order for one to truly exude God in his life the love of God must be preeminent. That love does not consider such things as ethnicity. It only considers the human condition.

b. Romans 12:10 (kind affection for like-minded Christians is a requirement)
   i. Romans chapter twelve provides a blueprint of Christian duties. The idea of being kindly affectionate is another way to say that Christians should demonstrate love one toward another. The original language, though, is much stronger.
   ii. The Greek words that have been used include Philadelphia. The idea of Philadelphia lends to the idea of brotherly love. The text even mentions the term “brotherly love.” It references the idea of family love. It is a love that is unbending without compromise.
   iii. Family love is not concerned with what houses the members live in. It does not care about the stores in which the members shop. The cities, states, and countries of the members are irrelevant. The greatest thing about true love is that it seeks the best for the object of that love. Moreover, love is presented in action. It does not merely speak of the
emotive aspects of love. True love works to the betterment and protection of its object. So, must the Christian love his brother.

c. Galatians 6:10 (benevolence to those of the household of faith required)

i. This is a text that shows how that love is demonstrated. The entire sixth chapter of Galatians provides clear instructions of how that love is to be demonstrated. Verse ten, while it does not use the term “benevolence” it is certainly a main of the discussion. Being benevolent is to be kind and respectful to others. It is to do good when possible. It means lifting others above one’s self. That expressed love is for all of mankind. It is not specific to any people group. The acts of kindness should be universal including all and excluding none.

ii. The verse takes acts of kindness a bit further. While the benevolence should be to all, it should be especially the case to those of the household of faith. Those of the household of faith are those that trust in and rely on the Lord as a way of life. It is those that honor Him. Those of the household of faith are all who call on the Name of the Lord. These should receive preference yet are not the only ones who should receive kindness.

iii. Most importantly, the text provides no room for cherry-picking who should receive the acts of kindness. There are no people groups mentioned. There are no ethnicities considered. National origin does not play into the matter. The only consideration is that those doing the good have the opportunity to do the good.
Lesson 5 – The Unity of a People

V. A Unified People

a. Acts 2:5 (People from every nation)
   i. Acts Chapter two is a depiction of people from different nationalities coming together for one common cause. The Day of Pentecost would be like no other Pentecostal celebration. The men gathered were counted as being “devout” which lends to the idea that they were among the most honorable of people. Their intentions were not to harm. Their intentions were to celebrate a holy day on the Jewish calendar.
   ii. The text clearly shows the people were from every nation under Heaven. There are no indications of fighting in the streets. There was no separation by reason of nationalities. No discord can be found. Rather, the converse is true.
   iii. This celebration, also known as the Feast of Weeks or Feast of Harvest included invites to people of all statuses. Among the invited were servants, Levites, males, females, strangers, widows and every other demographic. Ethnicity is was not a consideration for the invitees.

b. 1 John 4:7-8 (love is not specific to ethnicity)
   i. The discourse on love found in this text is universal love. Verse 7 shows everyone that loves is born of God. Much like the unity shown in Acts chapter 2, there is no discussion of people groups when love is concerned.
There is also no concern for ethnicity and pigmentation is not brought to question. The only consideration for the unity of the people of God is love.

ii. The one that loves is not only born of God; he also knows God. By extension, if one knows God then he knows that God is love and that the very essence of God is universal and unadulterated love.

iii. Verse 8 underscores the idea of the love of God demonstrated in man by showing that whoever does not love does not know God. The universality remains the same. If one does not love, cannot know God.

c. I Corinthians 1:10 (universal unity)

i. Paul’s first letter to the Corinthian church has a theme of unity. Chapter 1, verse 10 is an admonishment for the church to be unified and on one accord. The first point made is that all should speak the same thing. Those speaking the same thing present the fact they are in agreement with each other. Those who are in agreement walk in unity.

ii. When walking in unity there is little room for division. This is the second point in the verse. Divisions serve only to weaken and destroy. This is contrary to the position of the Church. The Church is to be strong and united on every front. It means that all are welcome and that none that loves should be turned away. There should be no strife. Isms and schisms belong only to those who are not of Christ and who do not love. There is no place for division in the body of Christ.
iii. There should be a unified mind for those in the household of faith. That mind stems from the Word of God. When the Word of God is properly applied it unifies. The Word of God applied builds and brings people together in agreement so that there is one standard – The Word of God. That is the standard used to judge. That is the standard used to live. That is the standard whereby unadulterated, universal and sacrificial love can be applied so that the Church of God can be unified and emboldened so as to be a beckoning light to those who do not know God and His love.

With all this considered, it becomes reasonable that the Church in Southeast Texas lay aside the superficial focus of ethnicity and pick up the mantle of love in order to reach the downcast and broken. Racism in the Church needs to be erased and that can be done only when the people of God choose to love with the type of love demonstrated by God when He sent His Son to die in our place. That love remains so strong the Jesus continues on the right hand of the Father interceding for the people of God. That is the love that God requires of His people and is the only thing that will work to heal a broken and downcast people.
Appendix E

Day-Spring Church Unity Class Facebook Invite
The pastor of Day-Spring will be teaching a special series of lessons on church unity. As a result, the Sunday services will run from 1:00 PM rather than 10:30 AM for five weeks. All are welcome to participate in this important series of lessons. The start date for the classes is January 27, 2019.