CHURCH   RACISM AND POLITICS AND ITS IMPLICATION IN THE 21ST

CENTURY CHRISTIANITY

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This dissertation has been approved, having satisfied the conditions for the award of a Doctor Philosophy Degree (P hD) in Church Government and Administration of Dynamic Theological Seminary, Kwale, Delta State, Nigeria, Affiliated to Harvest Bible University, Los Angeles, California, United States

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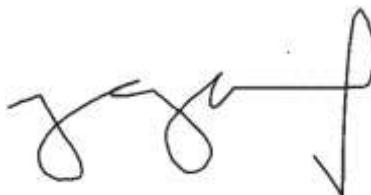**Supervisor**   Date: 9/11/2025

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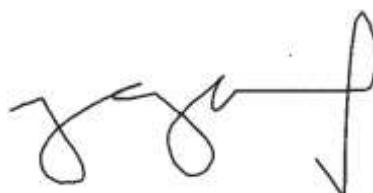**Supervisor**   Date: 9/11/2025

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DEDICATION

This project work is dedicated to the Almighty and everlasting God for his grace and mercy to me who also empowered me to go thus far in academic career.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

The dissertation used historical narration analysis to address church racism and politics and its implication in the 21st century Christianity. The work first analyzed Racism as a discrimination and prejudice against Christians based on their race. Concept of politics, world division along political parties, racial identities, racism as a sin and the need for Christian participation in politics, the study further examined relationship between Christianity and racism, The Cultural and Philosophical Context of Contemporary 'Racial' Tension and Sin and racism as destructive agent of the Theanthropocosmic[1] connection, the implication of church racism and politics in the 21st century Christianity, Principles that general assembly has endorsed opposing racism, The Church to combat racism in churches and society. It was concluded that Racism, caste-based discrimination and other forms of discrimination foster hatred and violence – the same are in opposition of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22, and a negation of human faith in God who gave human life and sent his Son to ensure survival for all, in all its abundance (Jn 10:10). These corrupt practices of de-humanizing exclusion are governed by a denial of the blessedness of the rich diversity within the Creation itself, where each kind of living thing was named and pronounced as being 'good' in Genesis 1. For this reason, member churches must be involved with combating racism within their geographical areas. Churches ought to initiate programmes designed to promote greater understanding and acceptance across multicultural and religious lines. Churches ought to challenge nightmarish reality in which men, women and children of God are condemned to live. Churches ought to be credible in proclaiming the message of reconciliation, justice and unity. The entire body of Christ has a prophetic task to denounce by word and deed all forms and expressions of existence which constrain the reality of the abundant life which God offered to us in Jesus Christ.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

CHAPTER TWO

THE WORLD DIVISION ALONG POLITICAL PARTIES AND RACIAL IDENTITY.

CHAPTER THREE

THE NEED FOR CHRISTIANS PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS.

CHAPTER FOUR

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND RACISM.

CHAPTER FIVE

SIN AND RACISM AS DESTRUCTIVE AGENTS OF THE ANTHROP COSMIC CONNECTIONS.

CHAPTER   SIX: SUMMARY,   CONCLUSION   AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Church, since its inception, has stood as a moral compass and a divine institution mandated to promote justice, love, unity, and equality among all peoples. Christianity, grounded in the teachings of Jesus Christ, advocates for a universal brotherhood that transcends race, tribe, and political ideology. However, in the 21st century, the Church has been confronted with the persistent realities of racism and political polarization, which continue to challenge its witness, mission, and credibility. The intersection of faith, race, and politics has produced complex tensions that threaten the unity and moral authority of the Christian Church globally.

Historically, the Church has played paradoxical roles in issues of race and politics—serving both as an instrument of liberation and as a participant in systems of oppression. From the colonial missionary enterprises of the 19th century to the apartheid system in South Africa and racial segregation in the United States, many church institutions were either complicit in racial injustice or silent in the face of it. In contemporary times, these racial and political divides have taken on new dimensions, influenced by globalization, migration, identity politics, and religious nationalism. The 21st-century Church finds itself

at a crossroads where its theological convictions must confront the social realities of inequality, discrimination, and partisan manipulation.

1.1   Background to the study

Racism has been defined as an institutionalized socioeconomic system or a pattern of behavior which divides people into groups identified by characteristics of origin or color for the purpose of establishing and perpetuating, on the basis of those characteristics, the subordinate status and the denigration and exploitation of one group to the benefit of the other. The church must declare that racism is sin. The 21st century Christians describes sin as disobedience to the known will of God. God's is made known to us in Jesus' teaching that we are to love God and love our neighbor as we love ourselves (Mark 12:29-31). Racism is sin, because it contradicts the teaching of Jesus and violates the known will of God. The sin of racism is also evidenced in its violation of God's call for the members of Christ's church to be reconciled to God and one another and to be engaged in a ministry of reconciliation in the world (2 Corinthians 5:16-21).

> *Contrarily, racism separates and perpetuates divisions, thus denying the unity of the church proclaimed in Holy Scripture: "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave nor free, there is no longer male or female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the*

promise" (Galatians 3:27-30). Through its struggle with the issue of including outsiders, the early Christian church discovered that God shows no partiality (Acts 10:34) and that Christians are called upon to do likewise (James 2:1).

Christians are called to testify that Jesus Christ brings Christians out of 'every race, kindred and tongue' into one body, pardons sinners beneath the cross and brings them together. We oppose any discrimination in our midst because of race or standing, and we regard it as a commandment of the Lord to bear public witness to this and to demonstrate by word and deed that we are brothers and sisters in Christ. The 21st century Christians teaches that Moravians oppose any discrimination based on color, gender, race, creed, or land of origin.

The Implication of Church Racism and Politics in the 21st Century Christianity

Racism is a sin, incompatible with Jesus' teachings and a blatant denial of the Christian faith (from the church's policy on Racial Harassment). The church also affirms that all doctrines, policies and practices based on or advocating for superiority of peoples or individuals on the basis of national origin or racial, religious, ethnic or cultural differences are racist, scientifically false, legally invalid, morally condemnable and socially unjust (A&P 2019, p. 35). The church has a responsibility to oppose all forms of systemic injustice and oppression and has a workplace Harassment Policy . It has committed to seeking ways for its leadership to reflect the diversity of the church (A&P 2008,

pp. 227-229). The church has made several statements regarding diversity and inclusion.

Principles that General Assembly has endorsed opposing Racism

- Any form of segregation based on race, colour or ethnic origin is contrary to the gospel. All forms of racism and apartheid are contrary to the mind and will of Christ (A&P 1972, pp. 269-270, 59)

- Systemic racism exists in all Canadian institutions, including the church, and has roots in colonialism. Racism is built into the policies, procedures and everyday practices of Canadian institutions. Resistance to labels like "systemic racism" is itself a symptom and of systemic racism. (A&P 2021, pp. 430-432, 38)

- Disproportionate levels of violence in encounters between police services and Black and Indigenous people in Canada are symptoms of systemic racism. (A&P 2021, pp. 430-432, 38)

- It is not enough for churches and groups to condemn the sin of racial arrogance and oppression. (A&P 1972, pp. 269-270, 59)

- Racism practiced by the white-skinned people against black people darker-skinned brothers is one of the world's basic problems, and a blatant denial of the Christian faith. (A&P 1972, pp. 269-270, 59)

- Racial harassment shall not be tolerated, and all allegations shall be dealt with seriously and fairly. (A&P 2008, pp. 220-7)

- The display and use of hate symbols, such as American Confederate banners and the Nazi swastika, are acts of intimidation. They are signs of tyranny and symbols of hate and genocide premised on a belief in white supremacy. Neither of these flags has any place in any demonstration that is concerned with justice. Their use is shameful, as are any attempts to defend these symbols of violence and hatred. (A&P 2022, pp. 191-2)

Principles That General Assembly Has Endorsed About Diversity And Inclusion

- We affirm the value and importance of congregations of distinct linguistic and cultural backgrounds for meeting the spiritual, social and cultural needs of their people and believe that the church should do everything possible to make people of all cultural and linguistic backgrounds welcome in worship, and congregational leadership. (A&P 1981, pp. 423-5, 92)

- We recognize the need for congregations to reflect the increasingly pluralistic nature of their communities. (A&P 1981, pp. 423-5, 92)

- The church should continue its efforts, with urgency, to enable all its members, existing and future, rural and urban, to feel a strong sense of belonging and having their identity rooted in a church that takes seriously what Christ has already accomplished for us: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). (A&P 2011, pp. 373-6, 32)

- Presbyteries and synods making nominations to committees should use their utmost efforts to see that 15% of such nominations come from groups not usually represented (e.g, youth, minorities, disabled persons). (A&P 1984, p. 49)

- Our pluralism must be creative and reciprocal with the majority as well as minority groups valuing what they can learn from others and indicating willingness to change assumptions and practices. (A&P 1984, pp. 478-9, 23)

- The church believes that being intentional regarding diversity expresses a genuine care and respect for all those who call The Presbyterian Church in Canada their home. The church believes more diversity on committees and on [national] staff brings new voices and new perspectives. (A&P 2008, pp. 220-229)

The function of the church is to raise the awareness and consciousness of the people of God. Hence, the researcher views the church as one of the societal institutions that ought to address racism in South Africa. Because racism in the context of this article is a sin, it is the function of the church to contest the sin and evil in society. The church has a role to perform, which is to assist the people of God to head towards reconciliation or redemption. Mofokeng and Goba (1983:8) set the tone in the 1980s that the church, despite its apparent weakness and lack of prophetic zeal, still plays an essential role in addressing the challenges of the social changes and racism. For example, in the South African context, the mainline Catholic and Protestant churches have attracted the criticism of the government. The church still has a critical task to perform in challenging those oppressive and racist structures that destroy human lives and prevent the development of just social order.

Tshaka (2009:159) indicates that the silence of the church on public issues is disturbing in democratic South Africa. It is fascinating to note that this silence of the church on general issues is in no way unique to the South African context but has become a global phenomenon (Tshaka 2009:159). In the same tone, Boesak (2005:243) pondered that the church is not a sociological phenomenon, fascinating chiefly because of the way we expose our weaknesses, internal strife and insecurities in the pages of newspapers. Neither are we just another non-

governmental organization trying to draw attention to our single-issue agenda. We are the church of Christ, called and mandated by God to speak to the whole of human existence, in the whole of society, to seek the Lordship of Jesus Christ by challenging, subverting and changing structures in society until they conform to the norms of the Kingdom of God (Boesak 2005:243).

Roberts (2005:13) contends that the churches as a collective (ecumenical), as structures of social, political and financial power, are called forth to attack racism as a serious concern for the world. Churches involved in empowerment and development programmes amongst blacks must utilise their example, their moral influence, and their political strength to activate an entire nation to heal the wounds of an oppressed race. It is also the concern of the ecumenical bodies like the World Council of Churches (WCC) to face the evil of racism. In 2010 the WCC made a declaration concerning racism as a sin. The declaration of the WCC Conference on Racism in 2010 indicates that racism is a sin as racism excludes other races from the so-called race. Racism, caste-based discrimination, and other exclusionary applications are integrally sinful because, on several levels, they overthrow the second commandment of love, 'to love God and our neighbour as ourselves' (Mt 20:37–39). These exclusionary practices are jargons of self-exaltation on the part of those who practise them and thereby violate the First Commandment (Ex 20:3), that states that humans

can have no other gods before the one true God, who creates, reconciles, and renews all, including human beings and those humans considered as 'them'. These forms of discrimination deny the biblical witness of Genesis 1:26–27, which affirms that the human being is created in the image of God. These harmful exclusionary acts contradict the reality that the socially constructed detachments human beings plan to detach the human selves from other human beings have no place in Christ (www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/racism).

Despite sound biblical teaching and clear statements of belief, the 21st century Christians has, from time to time, demonstrated the values of the surrounding world and thus has denied the very affirmation it professes. It has been affected by the very racism that is contrary to our beliefs. As evidence, Christians identify: an absence of racial diversity in some areas of the church; the disproportionate number of black and biracial churches that have been arson victims; the segregation apparent in our church's worship life and congregational life in general, and the tendency of congregations and Provincial Elders' Conferences to extend calls only to pastors of the same race as the congregation; the absence of widespread dialogue on the issue and the resulting congregational inaction to overcome the effects of racism in our society in housing, health care, and equitable salaries; and the inability of the majority to hear the expression of frustration, pain, and anger on the part of minority

peoples or even to recognize the hostility growing out of their experiences in the society.

The 21ˢᵗ century Christians are called to be salt and light: to set an example and show the way for a society which cries out for racial healing; to match statements with worthy deeds; to confess the sinfulness of failures to practice what is preached about discrimination; to examine personal and corporate life and repent; and, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to turn from racism and take a new direction in keeping with the teachings of God in Christ Jesus. Thus the church should practice racial inclusion in every area of its congregational and denominational life; and individual Christians and congregations shall work actively to identify and eliminate the patterns of discrimination both within the church and within society at large. It must be emphasized that over the years, there has been an argument as to whether Christians should be involved in politics or not. Why many claim that politics is a dirty game, very few people have drummed their support for Christians joining politics.

Between 2010 and 2020 there has been the tendency of racial conflicts and racist utterances, from social media to formal debates, in institutions of higher learning in South Africa. These utterances are heard in different provinces in South Africa and are found in institutions of higher learning such as the University of Eastern Cape and the University of Free State (Goga 2010;

Ntombana & Bubulu 2017; Soudien 2010). The vandalisation of the image of God was indicated by the incident in which cleaners at the University of the Free State were forced by four white students to eat food that was believed to have been urinated on (Ntombana & Bubulu 2017). Laws of the apartheid era have been changing, but the attitude of people towards each other has not changed. This is part of the problem we are facing in South Africa and the rest of the world. This tendency is a reflection of the vandalisation of the image of God by racism in South Africa. The argument put forth in this article is that racism is a sin that needs to be addressed from all areas of life in democratic South Africa. In this research, the author will discuss some of the manifestations of racism in South Africa, how racism manifests itself through the multiracial or multicultural education system and the role of the church in addressing the vandalised image of God by racism.

> *Over the years, we have seen a spate of racist incidents across the country. These include, but are not limited to, the vigilante lynching of AhmaudArbery in Georgia, the killing of George Floyd by police in Minnesota, and the killing of Breonna Taylor by police while she lay asleep in her home in Kentucky. Peaceful protests have been met with police brutality including tear-gassing, cruelly preventing protestors from breathing while protesting a man choked to death. We have seen otherwise peaceful protests led by African-American communities co-opted and exploited by white men committing violence, whether they be white supremacists, anarchists, or other agents-provocateurs.*

At every turn, we have been reminded of white privilege and of the weaponization of racism, most dramatically perhaps in Amy Cooper's false 911

call in New York City. These events have taken place against the backdrop of disproportionate number of deaths of Black, Brown, and Indigenous people due to decades of institutionalized racism.

As educators in religion, we are mindful of the ways in which religion has a long, complicated, and interconnected relationship with the legacy of racism. Religions, religious institutions, and the academic study of religion have been (and continue to be) utilized to uphold white supremacy and justify racism and ethnic discrimination. Religion is neither practiced nor studied in a vacuum. Rather, it is always informed by social contexts and social conditions. Hence, religion often functions as a mirror of society's broader assumptions and attempts to divide and discriminate, whether that be based on race, ethnicity, class, social status, nationality, religion, (dis)ability, gender, or sexuality.

The continued oppression and marginalization of African-Americans is preceded by centuries of religious speculation about the human status of Black and Indigenous people by European colonialists and theologians. The concept of a hierarchy of human races was developed throughout the long sixteenth century by white Christian Europeans who then used it to justify the enslavement of Africans and their colonialist endeavors against the indigenous peoples of the Americas. This concept was preceded by (among many events) the papal bull *Dum Diversas* (1452), which granted divine authority to Spain

and Portugal to capture Africans and subject them to lifetime servitude; by the forced conversion or expulsion of Jews and Muslims in Spain and Portugal; by Columbus's declaration that the inhabitants of Hispaniola were a "people without religion" and subsequent enslavement and torture of the Taino people (1493); and by the Valldolid trial (1552), which debated whether people of color were barbarians that could be "civilized" by Christian conversion, or worse, people without souls irreparably damned.

White supremacy was used to justify enslavement by many of the most powerful Christian leaders in America, including Rev. Cotton Mather, Rev. Jonathan Edwards, Rev. George Whitfield, Bishop John Carroll, and Rev. Robert Lewis Dabney, not to mention 12 of America's Presidents who owned slaves and had varying levels of commitment to Christianity. Racist assumptions were read back into sacred texts, most prominently in the so-called "curse of Ham," and they led to the development of the "slave Bible," a version of the text enslavers gave to slaves (when they were allowed to read) that redacted references to liberty and freedom from slavery.

Religious institutions like Princeton University and Georgetown University materially benefited from the exploitation of Black bodies. Almost every major denomination had rules about whether Black people could be in religious

buildings and policed efforts by Black people to have freedom of religious assembly.

White supremacy was preached from the pulpit by the tens of thousands of clergymen that were members of the KKK. Denominations such as the Southern Baptist Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Southern Presbyterian Church owe their existence to support for slavery. White mobs scheduled lynchings on Sunday afternoons so the entire town could attend as a form of entertainment, and did so on the lawns of Black churches as a form of intimidation and domestic terrorism. Throughout the twentieth century, religious leaders were at the forefront of supporting Jim Crow, segregation, and anti-miscegenation laws. And white supremacist assumptions undergird the religio-political mythologies of the Doctrine of Discovery, the "City on a Hill," Manifest Destiny, and American Exceptionalism.

At the same time, religion and spirituality have long been utilized as a rich resource for hope and subversive resistance by those who find themselves under the boot of Empire. Abolitionists, Civil Rights activists, and defenders of Black liberation under threat of racism—from Richard Allen to David Walker to Nat Turner to Sojourner Truth to Harriet Tubman to Frederick Douglass to Ida B. Wells to Rosa Parks to Martin Luther King Jr. to Malcolm X to James Cone to Nelson Mandela to Desmond Tutu to Alice Walker to Cornel West to Delores

Williams—have both appealed to and creatively innovated their religious traditions in order to advocate for justice and to highlight the unique aspects of the Black experience.

As educators in Religious Studies, our goal is to develop students into culturally literate citizens and compassionate professionals. Through the study of the ways that diverse individuals and groups have found purpose and value, we offer an academic opportunity for students to engage with life's most pressing questions. As such, it is our collective responsibility to amplify voices that have historically been excluded within the academic community, to educate students about the ways in which the history and practice of religion has been intertwined with the legacy of racism, and to be advocates and resources to our students who are particularly affected by these recent events and are daily marginalized by both individual and institutionalized acts of racism.

White Christians — including evangelical Protestants, mainline Protestants and Catholics — are nearly twice as likely as religiously unaffiliated whites to say the killings of Black men by police are isolated incidents rather than part of a pattern of how police treat African Americans and white Christians are about 30 percentage points more likely to say monuments to Confederate soldiers are symbols of Southern pride rather than symbols of racism. White Christians are also about 20 percentage points more likely to disagree with this statement:

"Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for Blacks to work their way out of the lower class." And these trends generally persist even in the wake of the recent protests for racial justice.

As a white Christian who was raised Southern Baptist and shaped by a denominational college and seminary, it pains me to see these patterns in the data. Even worse, these questions only hint at the magnitude of the problem. To determine the breadth of these attitudes, I created a "Racism Index," a measure consisting of 15 questions designed to get beyond personal biases and include perceptions of structural injustice. These questions included the three above, as well as questions about the treatment of African Americans in the criminal justice system and general perceptions of race, racism and racial discrimination.

Even at a glance, the Racism Index reveals a clear distinction. Compared to nonreligious whites, white Christians register higher median scores on the Racism Index, and the differences among white Christian subgroups are largely differences of degree rather than kind. Not surprisingly, given their concentration in the South, white evangelical Protestants have the highest median score on the Racism Index. But it is a mistake to see this as merely a Southern or an evangelical problem. The median scores of white Catholics and white mainline Protestants— groups that are more culturally dominant in the Northeast and the Midwest — are not far behind. Notably, the median score for

each white Christian subgroup is significantly above the median scores of the general population, white religiously unaffiliated Americans and Black Protestants.

This disparity in attitudes about systemic racism between white Christians and whites who claim no religious affiliation is important evidence that the common — and catalyzing — denominator here is religious identity. This consistent perception gap was the central research finding that launched the work on my new book, "White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity," out on Tuesday.

When confronted with unsettling results such as these, many of my fellow white Christians tend to explain them away with two objections. First, they assert that it is not white Christian identity itself but other intervening variables that account for such correlations. Second, they argue that even if white Christian identity is implicated, the results are muddied by the inclusion of people who have no real connection to actual churches, folks who are "Christian in name only." But even when controls are introduced in a statistical model for a range of demographic characteristics, such as partisanship, education levels and region, the connection between holding racist attitudes and white Christian identity remains stubbornly robust.

The results point to a stark conclusion: While most white Christians think of themselves as people who hold warm feelings toward African Americans, holding racist views is nonetheless positively and independently associated with white Christian identity. Again, this troubling relationship holds not just for white evangelical Protestants, but also for white mainline Protestants and white Catholics. The legacy of this unholy union still lives in the DNA of white Christianity today — and not just among white evangelical Protestants in Nigeria. Moreover, these statistical models refute the assertion that attending church makes white Christians less racist. Among white evangelicals, in fact, the opposite is true: The relationship between holding racist views and white Christian identity is actually stronger among more frequent church attendees than among less frequent church attendees.

Without suspect many Christians will be appalled by these findings, asking with genuine dismay: "How can this be?" Haven't white Christians created charities of all kinds, built the infrastructure of much of our civil society and provided leadership on a host of social reforms, including the abolitionist movement, which was led in part by Christians moved by their faith? But when we allow ourselves to cast our gaze beyond the rosy stories we tell about ourselves as champions and representatives of all that is good in America, a terrifyingly troubled alternative history emerges.

While it may seem obvious to mainstream white Christians today that slavery, segregation and overt declarations of white supremacy are antithetical to the teachings of Jesus, such a conviction is, in fact, a recent development for most white American Christians and churches, both Protestant and Catholic. The unsettling truth is that, for nearly all of American history, the light-skinned Jesus conjured up by most white congregations was not merely indifferent to the status quo of racial inequality; he demanded its defense and preservation as part of the natural, divinely ordained order of things.

Consider the cultural context in which American Christianity, both Protestant and Catholic, was born. In the 18th and 19th centuries, as Protestant churches were springing up in newly settled territories after Native American populations were forcibly removed, it was common practice — observed, for example, at the Baptist church that was the progenitor of my parents' church in Macon, Georgia — for slaveholding whites to take enslaved people to church with them.

The practice had it that whites sat in the front while enslaved Blacks sat in the back or in specially constructed galleries above. In late 18th-century Maryland, one-fifth of those included in a Catholic census were enslaved people owned by white Catholics or white Catholic institutions, and as late as the 1940s, urban Catholic parishes in major cities such as New York still required Black

members to sit in the back pews and approach the altar last to receive the bread and wine of the Eucharist.

Moreover, the content of what was preached confirmed that white supremacy was part of the Christian worldview. Sermons, by necessity, tended to be light on the themes of freedom and liberation in Exodus, for example, and heavy on the mandates of obedience and being content in one's social station from the New Testament writings of Paul. In these seedbeds of American Christianity, an a priori commitment to white supremacy shaped what could be practiced (a slave master could not share a common cup of Christian fellowship with his slaves) and preached (white dominance and Black subservience were expressions of God's ideal for the organization of human societies). Such early distortions influenced how white Christians came to embody and understand their faith and determined what was handed down from one generation to the next. Our fellow African American citizens, and indeed the entire country, are waiting to see whether we white Christians can finally find the humility and courage and love to face the truth.

The plain testimony of history is that, alongside what good we white Christians have done, white Christian theology and institutions have also declared the blessings of God on the enslavement of millions of African Americans, the construction of a brutal system of racial segregation enforced by law and

lynching, the resistance to the civil rights movement and the mass incarceration of millions of African Americans. When the patterns in the current public opinion data are seen in this light, they seem unsurprising and, indeed, inevitable. As monuments to white supremacy are falling all across America, a great cloud of witnesses is gathering. Our fellow African American citizens, and indeed the entire country, are waiting to see whether we white Christians can finally find the humility and courage and love to face the truth about our long relationship with white supremacy and to dismantle the Christian worldview we built to justify it (Goga 2010; Ntombana & Bubulu 2017).

1.2 The Statement of the Problem

Racism is a serious offense against God precisely because it violates the innate dignity of the human person. At its core racism is a failure to love our neighbor. Since we cannot claim to love God unless we love our neighbor, we can only be one with God if we reject racism and work aggressively to remove it from our personal lives, our church, and our society. I concur with my predecessor, Archbishop Roach, who said, "An appreciation of racial diversity begins with an understanding of how our own lives are affected by skin color and race. Each of us should examine how our thinking and our actions are influenced by the color of our skin. How has my skin color enhanced my life or hindered me, helped or prevented me from understanding people of others races? How can I

enhance my own life by learning more about other races?" (Reviving the Common Good, 1991)

It is not enough, however, to have a growing number of culturally specific worshiping communities. Our goal must be to create intercultural communities—where people of different cultures become part of one community in which all are transformed in Christ. In these communities, different cultural groups can maintain their unique cultural practices, but they participate in one diverse community in which all are enriched and all welcome one another.

As we confront our own complicity with the sin of racism, may we constantly refer back to that all-important teaching as a reminder of why we need to root racism out of our hearts, our culture, and the institutions of our society. You and I cannot truly be the reflection which our God desires until we have rooted out any traces of racism in our own hearts and decided to embrace all human persons as our brothers and sisters.

It is not difficult to make a statement condemning racism and white supremacy; in fact, even our position to do so reveals a social capital that has long been accrued through various kinds of white privilege. It is much harder to proactively commit to solidarity with the marginalized, to unlearn the ways in which white supremacy has been habituated into our embodied ways of being in

the world, and to decolonize the institutions and social structures that perpetuate whiteness as the assumed norm.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine church racism and politics and its implication in the 21st century Christianity. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine racism as discrimination and prejudice against Christians based on their race

2. Find out the implication of church racism and politics in the 21st century Christianity.

3. Ascertain the need for Christians participation in politics in the 21st century

4. Identify strategies of overcoming or eliminating church racism and politics in the 21st century Christianity.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is that it exposed church racism and politics and its implication in the 21st century Christianity. The study is significance in the sense that the Bible clearly teaches that the Christian church should be an inclusive community, making no distinction of race, gender, or status. The

apostle Paul writes in a letter to a new church in Galatia: 'Faith in Christ Jesus… makes each of you equal with each other, whether you are a Jew or a Greek, a slave or a free person, a man or a woman.' (Galatians 3:28).

As a result of the aforementioned teachings, the Christian church has spread worldwide, including all races and viewing all as equal in the sight of God. The Christian Church in the 21st century is united in its opposition to racism, although it has not always been the case – South African apartheid being a case in point. Even in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s, immigrants of Afro-Caribbean origin did not always find a warm reception in some British churches. Some of the 'white' congregations of Britain's cities preferred these people to go to their own 'black' churches.

Today, churches in Britain have many clearly defined policies around racism and discrimination. The Anglican Church defines racism as 'The theory, prejudice and practice of disadvantaging someone solely on the grounds of their colour, culture and ethnic origin.' George Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury (1999 – 2003) said: 'Racism has no part in the Christian Gospel. It contradicts our Lord's command to love our neighbours as ourselves. It offends the fundamental Christian belief that every person is made in the image of God and is equally precious. It solves no problems and creates nothing but fear and hatred.'

The Roman Catholic Church, in the Second Vatican Council, sent out this statement. 'Discrimination on grounds of sex, race, colour, social conditions, language or religion is incompatible with God's design.' In May 1998 the different denominations united and issued the following, as one voice, from 'The Churches Together.' 'Respect for the humanity we share with each and every neighbour is the only one basis for a peaceful and good society. Any attack on the dignity and human rights of any racial or religious group damages all of us.'

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study focused on church racism and politics and its implication in the 21st century Christianity. Three selected churches in Warri Metropolis were used for the research work there are, The Redeemed Christians Church World Wide, Assemblies' of God Church Nigeria and Living Faith Church World Wide.

1.6 Methodology and Sources

The dissertation used historical narration analysis to address church racism and politics and its implication in the 21st century Christianity.Information were collected from secondary sources which consist of textbooks, learned journals, magazines, newspaper, internet browsing and publications on church racism and politics and its implication in the 21st century Christianity. While this study is in no position to replace religious communities and pastoral resources, the researcher know that religious thinkers and scholars of religion have offered many resources for thinking about race, racism, and related issues. An evolving

bibliography and resource on church racism and politics and its implication in the 21st century Christianity was consulted on internets website

1.7 Literature Review

Racism can be present in social actions, practices, or political systems such as apartheid that support the expression of prejudice or aversion in discriminatory practices. The ideology underlying racist practices often assumes that humans can be subdivided into distinct groups that are different in their social behavior and innate capacities and that can be ranked as inferior or superior (Modise 2020).

Racist ideology can become manifest in many aspects of social life. Associated social actions may include nativism, xenophobia, segregation, hierarchical ranking and related social phenomena. Racism refers to violation of racial equality based on equal opportunities (formal equality) or based on equality of outcomes for different races or ethnicities, also called substantive equality. While the concepts of race and ethnicity are considered to be separate in contemporary social science, the two terms have a long history of equivalence in popular usage and older social science literature. "Ethnicity" is often used in a sense close to one traditionally attributed to "race", the division of human groups based on qualities assumed to be essential or innate to the group (e.g. shared ancestry or shared behavior (Modise 2020).

Racism and racial discrimination are often used to describe discrimination on an ethnic or cultural basis, independent of whether these differences are described as racial. According to the United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, there is no distinction between the terms "racial" and "ethnic" discrimination. It further concludes that superiority based on racial differentiation is scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust, and dangerous. The convention also declared that there is no justification for racial discrimination, anywhere, in theory or in practice.

Racism is frequently described as a relatively modern concept, including Anti-Jewish racism documented in the 3rd century BCE, evolving in the European age of imperialism, transformed by capitalism, and the Atlantic slave trade of which it was a major driving force. It was also a major force behind racial segregation in the United States in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and of apartheid in South Africa; 19th and 20th-century racism in Western culture is particularly well documented and constitutes a reference point in studies and discourses about racism.

Racism has played a role in genocides such as the Holocaust, the Armenian genocide, the Rwandan genocide, and the Genocide of Serbs in the Independent State of Croatia, as well as colonial projects including the European colonization of the Americas, Africa, Asia, and the population transfer in the

Soviet Union including deportations of indigenous minorities. Indigenous peoples have been—and are—often subject to racist attitudes.

Sin as a destructive agent of the anthropocosmic connection

In Christian theology, Genesis 1–3 is the pivotal point where the argument for the beginning of sin emanated. The destruction of the relationship between God and humanity started in Genesis 1–3. The event of the fall has severed the relationship between God and humanity, which impacts on nature because humanity needs to struggle to survive (Modise 2011). In Genesis 1–2, the ideal Creation of God that was sustained by the relationship between God and humanity was destroyed, for example the break between God and Adam, as well as Adam and Eve and their children. According to Modise (2011), there are two comprehensive strategies: firstly the Creation in Genesis 1 and 2, and consequently the evildoing and the appearance of sin in Genesis 3. Humanity knows that the descriptions in Genesis 1–3 are human depictions of Creation and the evildoing into sin and emergence of evil. Secondly, humans have the experience of social representations through human creatureliness, thus the consciousness of being created by God within a created natural world (Modise 2011:78).

According to Modise (2011:80), a conclusion cannot be drawn from the human state of being created and therefore from the experience of human Creation, the

interior scheme of the priestly depiction of nature in Genesis 1–2:3 is restricted, as shown in verse 31. According to the account of Genesis 1 and 2, God observed all that he created and viewed as good, reaching its amen in verse 1 of Genesis 2 where God concludes that he completed the Creation of heavens and the earth in all their vast array. The completion of the account is that the humanity and natural world were created and pronounced as good by God (Modise 2011:80).

According to the African-Christian philosophical perspective, African-Christians admit that sin and evil are destructions being done to the Theanthropocosmic relation (God–human beings physical–organic environment). Impairment done to the one is harm done to the other. It is generally known that racism was accepted as part of God's Creation (apartheid philosophy) and theologically justified. From a fundamentalist approach, however, the view that racism is part of God's Creation is stigmatised by viewing the curse placed at the end in Genesis as an explanation why we are no longer able to live together as human beings. The sting of racism as part of Creation is removed through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as God's main reconciliatory tools to humanity.

Basically speaking sin and evil are the destruction of the perfect divine and human connection. In the African context, a relationship with God, ancestors

and human beings in a community is very important as any break in this chain of relationship results in a natural disaster for which the term 'sin' is used to denote disaster (Mbiti 1969:98). The concept of sin means that falling into sin, as shown in the paradise portrayal of Adam and Eve, transpires in the life of every person and group. The critical perspective is that sin and evil have a connection to God and humanity. In every historical moment, sin and evil can be observed in the human experiential involvement in God's grand acts of Creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment (Modise 2011:81). Racism, typified sin, is disregarding this divine order that humanity is created in the image of God, to live in relationship with God and one another on earth with respect and a proper relationship with the environment. One needs to build on the classical sources as Mbiti (1969:98) puts it. So then, God withdrew from humanity, partly because of the human disobedience to God, and partly through an accident caused by humanity, and partly through the severing of the link between heaven and earth. However, destruction occurred, it brought disadvantageous and tragic consequences to humanity, which leaves human beings as the main losers. These consequences disrupted the original state of humanity, which eventually impacted on the natural environment.

Mbiti emphasises that humanity brought sin and evil upon itself by breaking the law. Human beings through their philosophies, ideologies and thinking have

contributed to the destruction of the relationship with God and with humanity itself, while God created them untarnished by sin and evil. The unfortunate and low level of experience resulting from such self-destruction goes hand in hand with an experienced presumed withdrawal of God from the relationship of existence as well as that one has a feeling of being left in the lurch by the natural physical–organic environment (Modise 2011).

Modise (2011:79) building on Thielicke (1969) and Mbiti (1969) argues that human beings were originators of sin that led to humanity's self-destruction. This destruction makes human beings powerful beasts. It produces a centrifugal tendency, which drives humanity apart from one another, which can be witnessed in the fratricide of Cain and dispersion at Babel. Furthermore, humanity breaks the chain of the meaningful existence between God, Oneself, Others and the environment. As a result of the destruction of this relationship between God, humanity and the environment, human development, with reference to the sense of greed and individualism, eventually destroys nature, which is supposed to sustain humanity and humanity sustain it.

König (1994:109) contends that a sound interconnectedness between God and human beings is the mark of humanity that lives in harmony with God; the alternate way of living is the destruction of the image of God. This alternative living is to survive by either using the wrongful way of life or the destruction of

relationship in human life, which has an impact on the destruction of God's image. In less meaningful relationships, human beings might still be bound to one another because of shared jealousy or hostility against each other, but these feelings can never promote fulfilment and a meaningful life. Human beings might experience the breaking down of their relationships and live in isolation. Sin, in this sense, is essential lawlessness and a denial of the injunction to love oneself. This denial of the injunction in a way undermines human dignity.

As it is argued that sin is the breaking or destruction of the relationship with God and other human beings, Roberts (2005:58) argues that sin is placed in oneself rather than in God. In the area of race, it is complicated for most whites in America and other parts of the world (South Africa for the context of this article) where racism is practised to overcome this deep-seated drive toward the worship of self. A realistic humanism requires blacks to be aware that their togetherness is shot through with the possibility of exploitation of one another. Under conditions of survival, human beings often lose real fellow feeling, as well as any willingness to inconvenience blacks even for the welfare of others. Sin as self-centeredness is a disease that inflicts the black community as well as the white population. Even the black church has not escaped the blight of self-centeredness.

Social sin is, however, a certainty in the contemporary society in the South African context during 25 years of democracy. It is often referred to as social injustice and racism. This practice of sin can be identified in many unfair acts by the government, political and economic structures, and in detrimental actions such as human rights violations, discrimination and racism. Politics and political economy can function as structural forces leading to evil practices. The classical words of Gutiérrez expound this reality vividly: that sin is manifest in oppressive structures, in the exploitation of human beings by human beings, in the domination and slavery of people, races, and social classes. Sin appears, therefore, as the fundamental alienation, the root of a situation of injustice and exploitation (Gutiérrez 1973:175). This argument leads to sin, which is modern racism, which destroys blacks and whites alike from within inherent racism in the form of a multicultural and multiracial inter-societal structure.

Modern racism as a destructive agent to a Theanthropocosmic connection

The first and fundamental aspect is that communities, which interact and influence each other, form the organisation. These communities in one way or another undergo certain stages of growth and development, and ultimately the whole society also becomes and extends towards a particular point of evolution (Bandura 1997:23). According to Bandura (1997:23), the perception that blacks are inherently inferior to whites has been referred to as old-fashioned racism.

Mugambi (2018:26–59) indicates that Africans learn from their parents and the entire community how to relate to peers and superiors. Furthermore, it illustrates that attitudes about race and ethnic relations are instructed at an early age, and after that perpetuated through conscious and subconscious reinforcement. Human dignity is destroyed when attitudes of both inferiority and superiority are reinforced through legislation, governance and media organs like radio, television, newspapers, film, social media and the internet. Blacks in the 21st century continue to be displayed negatively in these organs of communication, with the consequence that an inferiority complex has become normative among blacks. Simultaneously, the superiority complex has become normative for many whites. These complexes of superiority and inferiority undermine human dignity. A superiority complex dehumanises the image of God (Mugambi 2018:26–59). In the situation where racism is not legal, the former racists have a way of using concepts that threaten the human dignity of blacks. Concepts such as multiracial or multicultural or a diversity society are used to replace the racism. In the South African context, apartheid was legalised, and this sanctioned system delivered an extreme example of structural racism until 1994. This brand of racism involved behaviours, practices and attitudes that openly defined blacks as inferior to whites and less powerful. These behaviours, exercise and attitude have caused a severe division in South

African society during the apartheid era and have footprints in the democratic age as illustrated above.

Ntombana and Bubulu (2017:1) indicate that South Africa is still a racially divided space, wherein white people are still privileged. Some white people in some areas attempt to shift the racial boundaries and are able to create an interracial identity. Furthermore, they do not equate whiteness to privilege and superiority in a democratic South Africa but inclusiveness as multiracialism, which is challenged in this article as subtle racism.

Ntombana and Bubulu (2017) have confirmed that there is still a racial division amongst South Africans, and there are categories of whites, some of whom are willing to shift and others that resist change, away from racist behaviours and practices. This resistance to change is perceived as a modern form of racism (Batts 1989:18). Distinguishing between old-fashioned prejudice and modern racism helps to recognise and acknowledge how racism has changed and developed through the years in post-apartheid South Africa. This form of racism has created a sophisticated division amongst South Africans. Modern racism involves the giving of non-race related reasons for behaviours that continue to exclude and discriminate against each other. It is critical to think of contemporary racism as internalised dominance, attitudes that are so deeply entrenched that they exist at a subconscious level. While modern racism is often

not consciously malicious in its intent, it is still based on the assumption that black people are inferior to whites. As a result, this more subtle form of racism continues to deny black South Africans access to economic growth despite the initiatives made by the government to advance the previously disadvantaged through Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) and Affirmative Action (AA) policies (Ntombana & Bubulu 2017:2). The negative feelings that are attached to this belief do not change or disappear just because of changes in laws and practices. Instead, the emotions have to be submerged and hidden because of the differences in what is viewed as legal and politically correct in South African society. For the fact is that racism perpetuates itself within the community if left unchallenged, it cripples, scares and harms people and culture. Racism is so complex that one cannot honestly deal with it from one angle of life; it is multifaceted or multidimensional. Its complexities range from individualistic, institutional and symbolic.

It is imperative to argue that racism is still alive and experienced by many blacks who continue to suffer from the effects of racism. Mtose (2011:325) argues that racism is alive, active, pervasive and no less damaging. The abolishment of apartheid laws that are replaced by progressive policies like BEE and AA have not solved the challenge of racism in South Africa. There is a tendency of not speaking of racism amongst whites and blacks. No one,

therefore, can be neutral or silent in the face of this great evil or sin. We are either for it or against it. Black theologians must end their silence too. We have opposed racism much too gently. We have permitted white theology in exchange for the rewards of being accepted by the white religious establishment (Cone 2012:438–453). Racism is a sin that needs courageous people to confront it in all its complexity.

In the face of racism, people see the gross denial that human beings are all created in the image of God (*imago Dei*), that as human beings, people share an ordinary life and destiny. The Christian belief that human beings are created in the image of God has severe moral consequences, not only in terms of human beings' responsibility for the physical–organic world but also in terms of human relationships. This view emphasises the indivisible unity of what constitutes human beings before God. In this view of human nature, there is no place for racism. For racism represents sin and utter disobedience (Mofokeng &Goba1983:56). It is stated that, as human beings are created in the image of God, therefore they must enjoy human rights and dignity. As fellow workers with God, human beings are confronted by the demands of obedience to the will of God. The relationship to God always involves moral obligations (Carey 1977:35–36). Therefore, by investigating racism, human beings observe the manifestation of human sinfulness, a person who denies the essence of

humankind. For in racism we come across a view of humanity that emphasises biological and cultural differences. There is an observation of division of the human community which relegates some by their race to an inferior position in society. The biblical view which emphasises that human beings are created in the image of God also points to the broader relationship people have with God, one another and the physical–organic environment.

Furthermore, to state that human beings are made in the image of God is to create a profound theological statement that human beings' relationship with God, other human beings and the natural world is regarded as the African spirituality. The issue of interconnectedness is an integral part of life, especially in the way Africans relate to nature. Africans do not primarily hold the dignity of life, but value nature. The concept of body, mind and soul also includes issues of ecology (Masango 2018:81) – this relationship is destroyed by racism. In this sense, racism represents a categorical denial that human beings have this unique relationship within the Theanthropocosmic principle of life. Hence racism is described as a form of idolatry (Mofokeng & Goba1983:56–57). Hodgson (1976) postulates:

> *It [racism] represents a primal manifestation of idolatry, for it entails the apotheosis of one's race and negation of the others; its logic is genocide, although its practice is segregation. It demonstrates the inherent deceptiveness of all sin because 'race' is a fantastic concept that calls attention to merely superficial differences between ethnic groups. (p. 197). This postulation is*

supported by Goba (1980) in his address to the consultation on racism organised by the South African Council of Churches where he points out:

From a theological point of view, racism is a form of sin, for it denies the essential oneness of God's people. It is a form of idolatry in the sense that it denies the significance of God's intention for human relations. Racism, according to our Christian understanding of sin, is bondage, one which originates from an interior act of self-enslavement. This inner bondage of racism is objectified in the building of oppressive socio-political structures. (p. 19)

What Goba (1980) did not cover in his argument is that in addition to denial of the essential relationship between God and human beings, and the denial of one's inner relationship of spirit, soul and body, there is a denial of the involvement of human beings amongst themselves and the physical organic environment (Theanthropocosmic relationship). Racism destroys the relationship between God and human beings, as well as the intrapersonal and interpersonal relationship. Demenchonok (2009:466–467) indicates that bad faith constitutes the sinner speaking the truth to the self, instead of the sinner attempting to avoid one's freedom. Racism is dehumanisation, which is a form of bad faith, which denies the humanity of human dignity and rights, and requires lying to the human self about something of which humanity is aware. In bad faith, humanity handles authentically the stumbling blocks that stand

between self-postulating and self-realisation. These stumbling blocks are believed not only to be socio-politico-economic or racial but also ontological ones. Race matters are expounded in terms of the ontologies of black and white personalities and of the interactive dynamics of these ontologies, which result in a conflict between these two personalities. Bad faith is a form of sin, and if racism is a form of bad faith, according to Demenchonok (2009), therefore racism is a sin. Hence, racism in the form of multiculturalism or multiracism needs to be exterminated at its roots.

Internalized racism in South Africa in the form of multicultural institutions

Legally speaking, racism is illegal in South Africa, but in how people live and interact there is a lot of evidence of racism. Inherent racism manifests itself as an internal suppression and domestic domination. Roberts (2005:58) postulates that multicultural and multiracial initiatives have appeared to such an extent that matters of human relations are more complex than ever. Racial tensions have been strengthened by a substantial influence of other non-white ethnics from the southern hemisphere in the American context. Unfortunately, there was less progress made in black–white relations before this more complex situation was initiated. The tension is now at an epidemic stage between blacks and Hispanics, blacks and Asians, as well as others. Other non-white ethnic peoples

are competing with blacks in urban America for limited resources (Roberts 2005).

South Africans are now suffering the similar challenge of multicultural, multiracial and multidimensional schools, but racial tension is so high that, even in some of these schools blacks will travel by bus while whites will travel in their private coach to the same sports event, at the same ground. A further example of problematic multiracial schools is the code of conduct that still reflects apartheid rules. In 2016, Pretoria Girls High School was confronted with criticism from South Africans that the school is racist in terms of its code of conduct that excludes and suppresses black learners from conveying and being themselves. Waltham (28 July 2017, p. 1) comments:

> *In this case, the focus was on hair and the realisation that something as natural and healthy as a black person's hairstyle was a problem for the school. The main reason for this, of course, was the fact that many schools' codes of conduct still have apartheid principles, values and rules which have not changed despite us now living in a constitutional democracy with more freedoms and rights.*

Another example is from the Pietermaritzburg area where schools were under fire in 2017, for defending white learners who were being overtly racist towards black learners in white schools; they claimed that the learners' racism was a result of 'stress'. In reply to this action, community and alumni protested

against these schools and raised awareness about racism in South African schools (Waltham, 2017:1).

It is not only a code of conduct or learners that reflect internalised racism, but even educators who are supposed to teach and protect democratic principles are found to be racist in their practice. In 2017 another reflection of the internalised racism had manifested itself in South Africa at St Johns College where an educator was accused of being racist towards black learners and had made some offensive, dehumanising and demeaning comments about them. Waltham (28 July 2017, p. 1) comments:

It extremely concerns [us] that we have teachers with racist mindsets in post-apartheid South Africa who continue to teach our students. In addition to this, it is also a massive problem that we have teachers who have warped, white supremacist viewpoints, who taught during the apartheid era and are still teaching students today in our constitutional, democratic South Africa.

These are just a few examples of cases of racism that are found in the so-called multiracial schools in South Africa. Hence multiculturalism is seen as a current term and a failed ideology to address racism in church and society.

Demenchonok (2009:470) indicates that multiculturalism has become a current term, while it is merely lip service being paid to the development of diverse culture. He further state that, in liberal multiculturalism, the other's 'right to exist' is acknowledged, while

considering one's own culture or truth superior or absolute. Multiculturalism is the form of pseudo-oneness or assimilation of different races in the same basket without any change of cultural transmission from the so-called inferior elements in the bucket to the superior portion, but is the transfer of culture from the principal component to the superior ones.

The postmodern thinkers' critique of the dominating 'mass culture' unmasked the relations of knowledge and power. The one with experience and ability will always be the dominating one. However, its weakness is relativism and scepticism regarding global concepts and values. In the postmodern theories of culture, there is an internal tension between multiculturalism and deconstruction. Multiculturalist implies an essentialist connection between cultural production and ethnic or physical origin. In contrast, intercultural philosophy and 'transcultural' argue for the concept of cultural diversity free from determinism and representation (Demenchonok 2009:471).

The failure of multiculturalism has stimulated the efforts of many philosophers to find an alternative theoretical view of cultural diversity and to rethink the matters of identity and diversity. Racism is embedded in multiculturalism; hence, there is a need for an alternative approach to different cultures in society. In this article I will follow the alternative path to cultural diversity, which is 'transculture', developed by Mikhail Epstein, a philosopher from Russia.

Epstein (1999:24–25) proposes that transculture will work better than multiculture in a society that has experienced racism division and is still living

in a context of racial division. The reason for the choice of transculture is that it is a different brand of cultural advance, which is an open symbolic substitute for the current cultures and their established sign systems. Meanwhile multiculturalism is an essentialist construction between cultural production and ethnic and physical origin (race and gender), perceived in terms of 'representation'. Transculture can be an alternative to internalised oppression and domination, because transculture is a process of liberation from the symbolic habits of culture itself, from its linguistic confinement and self-enforced cultural identities. It surpasses the limitations of 'innate cultures' thus liberating people from those symbolic limitations, ideological addictions, patriotic obsessions that belong to people as members of a particular cultural group (Epstein 1999:24).

Transculture is considered as an inalienable right of the individual's liberty from one's own 'inborn' culture. It implies the diffusion of initial cultural identities as individuals cross the borders of different cultures and assimilate them. Transculture is a state of belonging of the individual to many cultures. In building up one's identity, an individual may rely on the variety of potential cultural signs, similar to the those experienced by an artist in freely choosing from a universal symbolic palette the colours for painting one's uniquely universal self-portrait. The universality is viewed as internal diversity of

individuals, their dialogical openness to others and self-identification primarily as members of humanity.

Importantly, universality does not prescribe any pre-established value system or canon identified with a specific culture. Universality articulates a critical philosophical, methodological approach at the heart of which is an 'outsiderness' and critical distancing about any existing culture, including one's native culture. It is humble and self-critical, to the time and place of its claims on truth. From a transcultural perspective, each religion is incomplete, and its potential can be realised only if it transcends its borders and is engaged in dialogue with other cultures (Demenchonok 2009:471). In this regard, the Ghanaian philosopher Kwasi Wiredu described the negotiation process of interchange and exchange, fusion and restraint between different thought patterns, cultures, societies, religions, philosophies and sciences as follows:

*F*or a set of ideas to be genuine possession of people, they need not have originated them, they need only appropriate them, make use of them, develop them, if the spirit so moves them, and thrive on them. The intellectual history of humanity is a series of mutual borrowings and adaptations among races, nations, tribes, and even smaller sub-groups. (Bodunrin 1991:177)

The 'moving spirit' to which Wiredu refers can be translated to mean a moving spirit that moves as an interchange and exchange, fusion and restraint between

and within cults, churches, cultures, religiosities, ethnicities, societies, sciences and languages. It is the net effect or distillation of the various sense-making orientations and views of people that animate, encourage and move them to more cultic, ecclesial, cultural, religious, ethnic, societal and lingual borrowings and adaptations within and between themselves. Racism is all about consciousness, and the combating of racism needs to be approached from the consciousness perspective.

1.8 Conceptual Clarifications

Concept of Politics

Politics is the set of activities that are associated with making decisions in groups, or other forms of power relations among individuals, such as the distribution of status or resources. The branch of social science that studies politics and government is referred to as political science. Politics may be used positively in the context of a "political solution" which is compromising and non-violent, or descriptively as "the art or science of government", but the word often also carries a negative connotation. The concept has been defined in various ways, and different approaches have fundamentally differing views on whether it should be used extensively or in a limited way, empirically or normatively, and on whether conflict or co-operation is more essential to it.

A variety of methods are deployed in politics, which include promoting one's own political views among people, negotiation with other political subjects, making laws, and exercising internal and external force, including warfare against adversaries. Politics is exercised on a wide range of social levels, from clans and tribes of traditional societies, through modern local governments, companies and institutions up to sovereign states, to the international level. In modern times, people often form political parties to represent their ideas., Members of a party often agree to take the same position on many issues and agree to support the same changes to law and the same leaders. An election is usually a competition between different parties. A political system is a framework which defines acceptable political methods within a society. The history of political thought can be traced back to early antiquity.

CHAPTER TWO

THE WORLD DIVISION ALONG POLITICAL PARTIES AND RACIAL IDENTITY.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explored the world division along political parties and racial identity. The study revealed that for the past two, three, four years, we have been reminded by the media that we live in a divided country. We are divided along the lines of political parties, divided along racial identity, divided along religious piety and action—politics, race and religion. The researcher think we unconsciously foster the false impression that if we continue to ignore it, it will go away. So, we wait for the division along the lines of religion, race, and politics to disappear. If we examine closely, I believe, these topics speak to the core of our existence, the core of our spiritual life, the core of our physical life, the core of our emotional and psychological life.

2.1 The World Division Along Political Parties And Racial Identity

The Gospel of Mathew is very clear: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt 18:20). God is our core. Therefore, when we gather to discuss the topics related to the core of our

existence, it brings us closer to knowing, as Sister Thea Bowman, the first African American member of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, said, "who we are and whose we are." It brings us closer to knowing God, loving God, and serving God and God's people.

As we use it, the term "race" describes people based on skin color and the origins of their ancestors. It is a social construct with no scientific backing. In other words, the term race as it relates to human beings was created by humans based solely on physical characteristics. However, some evidence points to the building of this construct as a declaration of the intellectual greatness of people of European descent versus those from the continents of Asia and Africa—and the unknown Indigenous people found in the Americas.

In their 2018 pastoral letter on racism, "Open Wide our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love," the U.S. bishops state that, "Consciously or subconsciously, this attitude of superiority can be seen in how certain groups of people are vilified, called criminals, or are perceived as being unable to contribute to society, even unworthy of its benefits."

This racial classification is one of the structural and systemic foundations that keep racism alive in our country. Racism is a dance, a dance between superiority and inferiority. As a Black Catholic whose ancestry traces through the horrific chattel and slave trade of this country, I know that our survival as a

people was and continues to be intertwined with race, religion and politics. These topics, whether discussed in public or private settings, bring deep emotions to the surface, which only affirms my belief that they speak to the core of our existence.

The Catholic Church in the U.S. follows the same rules based on this unproven social construct. We divide ourselves among this same racial classification, including within some of our parishes. Even the windows, statues and other sacred items in our parishes reflect mostly European culture. This is the case even in parishes that have a racially diverse population. So, my question is: how do we become more inclusive on all levels? How do we reflect—in our parishes, leadership, liturgies, catechesis —the universal Church? I agree with the U.S. bishops, who in their pastoral letter on racism, state that "What is needed, and what we are calling for, is a genuine conversion of heart, a conversion that will compel change, and the reform of our institutions and society." If we are truly the universal Church, we need to talk on topics that speak to the core of our existence. We need to learn how to talk about race, religion and politics (Mofokeng and Goba, 1983).

Racial discrimination possesses at the moment a character of very great relevance by reason of the tension which it stirs up both within countries and on the international level. Men rightly consider unjustifiable and reject as

inadmissible the tendency to maintain or introduce legislation or behavior systematically inspired by racialist prejudice. The members of mankind share the same basic rights and duties, as well as the same supernatural destiny. Within a country which belongs to each one, all should be equal before the law, find equal admittance to economic, cultural, civic and social life and benefit from a fair sharing of the nation's riches.

> *Racism is a sin; a sin that divides the human family, blots out the image of God among specific members of that family, and violates the fundamental human dignity of those called to be children of the same Father. Racism is the sin that says some human beings are inherently superior and others essentially inferior because of races. It is the sin that makes racial characteristics the determining factor for the exercise of human rights. It mocks the words of Jesus: "Treat others the way you would have them treat you." Indeed, racism is more than a disregard for the words of Jesus; it is a denial of the truth of the dignity of each human being revealed by the mystery of the Incarnation.*

The structures of our society are subtly racist, for these structures reflect the values which society upholds. They are geared to the success of the majority and the failure of the minority. Members of both groups give unwitting approval by accepting things as they are. Perhaps no single individual is to blame. The sinfulness is often anonymous but nonetheless real. The sin is social in nature in that each of us, in varying degrees, is responsible. All of us in some measure are accomplices. As our recent pastoral letter on moral values states: "The absence of personal fault for an evil does not absolve one of all responsibility. We must

seek to resist and undo injustices we have not ceased, least we become bystanders who tacitly endorse evil and so share in guilt in it." (Epstein 1999).

Each of us as Catholics must acknowledge a share in the mistakes and sins of the past. Many of us have been prisoners of fear and prejudice. We have preached the Gospel while closing our eyes to the racism it condemns. We have allowed conformity to social pressures to replace compliance with social justice. Let the Church proclaim to all that the sin of racism defiles the image of God and degrades the sacred dignity of humankind which has been revealed by the mystery of the Incarnation. Let all know that it is a terrible sin that mocks the cross of Christ and ridicules the Incarnation. For the brother and sister of our Brother Jesus Christ are brother and sister to us. Racism and economic oppression are distinct but interrelated forces which dehumanize our society. Movement toward authentic justice demands a simultaneous attack on both evils.

The difficulties of these new times demand a new vision and a renewed courage to transform our society and achieve justice for all. We must fight for the dual goals of racial and economic justice with determination and creativity. There must be no turning back along the road of justice, not sighing for bygone times of privilege, no nostalgia for simple solutions from another age. For we are the children of the age to come, when the first shall be last and the last shall be first,

when blessed are they who serve Christ the Lord in all His brothers and sisters, especially those who are poor and suffer injustice.

Racism is not merely one sin among many; it is a radical evil that divides the human family and denies the new creation of a redeemed world. To struggle against it demands an equally radical transformation, in our own minds and hearts as well as in the structure of our society. Crude and blatant expression of racist sentiment, though they occasionally exists are today considered bad form. Yet racism itself persists in convert ways. Under the guise of other motives, it is manifest in the tendency to stereotype and marginalize whole segments of the population whose presence perceived as a threat. It is manifest also in the indifference that replaces open hatred. Many times the new face of racism is the computer print-out, the graph of profits and losses, the pink slip, the nameless statistic. Today's racism flourishes in the triumph of private concern over public responsibility, individual success over social commitment, and personal fulfillment over authentic compassion (Mofokeng and Goba 1983).

> *The new forms of racism must be brought face-to-face with the figure of Christ. It is Christ's word that is the judgment on this world; it is Christ's cross that is the measure of our response; and it is Christ's face that is the composite of all persons but in a most significant way of today's poor, today's marginal people, today's minorities.*

The legal system and the criminal justice system both work in a society which bears in its psychological, social, and economic patterns the marks of racism.

These marks remain long after the demolition of segregation as a legal institution. The end result of all this is a situation in which those condemned to die are nearly always poor and are disproportionately black…Abolition of the death penalty will not eliminate racism and its effects, an evil which we are called to combat in many different ways. But it is a reasonable judgment that racist attitudes and the social consequences of racism have some influence in determining who is sentenced to die in our society. This we do not regard as acceptable.

We have many gifts from our African past that we must share. Our Blackness is a gift as well as our Catholic faith. By sharing we will enrich our community, our Church, and ourselves. We must encourage Black leaders in the American Church – clergy, religious and lay. Unhappily, we must acknowledge that the major hindrance to the full development of Black leadership within the Church is still racism. Blacks and other minorities are meagerly represented on the decision-making level. Inner-city schools are disappearing and Black vocational recruitment lacks support. This subtle racism still festers within our Church as it does in society. Some progress has been made, but much remains to do. This stain of racism, which is so alien to the Spirit of Christ, is an opportunity to work for renewal through evangelization….The causes of justice and social concern are an essential part of evangelization. To preach to the powerful

without denouncing oppression is to trivialize the Gospel. As Black people we must have concern for those who hunger and thirst for justice throughout the world. We must not ignore those whom others tend to forget, and even contribute our efforts and money. When we share our talents and our possessions with the forgotten ones of this world, we share Christ. This is the essence of evangelization itself (Gutiérrez, 1973).

John Paul II in turn reaffirmed: "Man's creation by God `in his own image' confers upon every human person an eminent dignity; it also postulates the fundamental equality of all human beings. For the Church, this equality, which is rooted in man's being, acquires the dimension of an altogether special brotherhood through the Incarnation of the Son of God. In the Redemption effected by Jesus Christ the Church sees a further basis of the rights and duties of the human person. Hence every form of discrimination based on race…is absolutely unacceptable." (Goba, 1980)

> *This principle of the equal dignity of all persons, of whatever race, already finds solid support in the sciences and a firm basis in philosophy, ethics and religions in general. The Christian faith respects this intuition, this affirmation, and rejoices in it. It represents a considerable convergence among the various disciplines which reinforces the convictions of the majority of people of good will and allows the drawing up of universal declarations, conventions and international agreements for the protection of human rights, and the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination. It is in this sense that Paul VI spoke about "an axiom of the highest human wisdom of all times."*(Mofokeng and Goba 1983).

Faith in the one God, Creator and Redeemer of all humankind made in his image and likeness, constitutes the absolute and inescapable negation of any racist ideologies. It is still necessary to draw out all the consequences of this: "We cannot truly pray to God the Father of all if we treat any people in other than brotherly fashion, for all men are created in God's image." (Mofokeng and Goba 1983).

The Church has therefore the vocation in the midst of the world to be the people redeemed and reconciled with God and among themselves, forming "one body, one spirit in Christ," and giving witness before all to respect and love. "Every nation under heaven" was symbolically represented in Jerusalem at Pentecost, the antitype and victory over the dispersion of Babel. As Peter said, when he was called to the house of the pagan, Cornelius, "God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean…. God shows no partiality…." The Church has the sublime vocation of realizing, first of all within herself, the unity of humankind over and above any ethnic, cultural, national, social or other divisions in order to signify precisely that such divisions are now obsolete, having been abolished by the cross of Christ.

The Second Vatican Council has rightly defined the Church as "sacrament, a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all men" since "both Christ and the Church. . .transcend the distinctions of race and

nationality." Within the Church "no inequality arising from race or nationality, social condition or sex" should exist. This is indeed the meaning of the word "Catholic"-i.e., universal, which is one of the marks of the Church. As the Church spreads, this catholicity becomes more manifest.

2.2 Racism as a Sin

Racism is a sin, and its practice is contrary to the teaching of Scripture and the Church. Since our culture influences institutions as well as individuals, racism has expressed itself in a manner referred to as institutional racism. Sociologically this is an ideology which prevents many from becoming fully included in society and enjoying the opportunities which are open to others. Institutional racism is primarily manifested in laws, or in the practices and procedures of an institution such as a financial company, health facility, government office, school, church, the media, etc… Thus, the sin of racism is seen as social. It is not just the sin of individuals but has become so ingrained in the institutions of society itself that it is a social as well as personal sin.

The history of the Church shows that Christianity does not have simply one cultural expression, but rather, "remaining completely true to itself, with unswerving fidelity to the proclamation of the Gospel and the tradition of the Church, it will also reflect the different faces of the cultures and peoples in which it is received and takes root". In the diversity of peoples who experience

the gift of God, each in accordance with its own culture, the Church expresses her genuine catholicity and shows forth the "beauty of her varied face." (Gutiérrez, 1973)

The researchers join his voice with civic and religious leaders in pledging to work for healing and reconciliation. Our efforts must address racism and the violence so visible today. Catholic Bishops said in our pastoral letter on racism, "Racism is not merely one sin among many; it is a radical evil that divides the human family and denies the new creation of a redeemed world. To struggle against it demands an equally radical transformation, in our own minds and hearts as well as in the structure of our society." (Kakwata, 2016).

The church stands with all people who struggle for an end to racism and violence, in our families, in our places of worship, in our communities and in our world. We must continue to build bridges and we must confront racism and violence with a commitment to life, a vision of hope, and a call to action.

A consumerist vision of human beings, encouraged by the mechanisms of today's globalized economy, has a leveling effect on cultures, diminishing the immense variety which is the heritage of all humanity. Attempts to resolve all problems through uniform regulations or technical interventions can lead to overlooking the complexities of local problems which demand the active participation of all members of the community. New processes taking shape

cannot always fit into frameworks imported from outside; they need to be based in the local culture itself. As life and the world are dynamic realities, so our care for the world must also be flexible and dynamic. Merely technical solutions run the risk of addressing symptoms and not the more serious underlying problems (Kakwata, 2016).

> *There is a need to respect the rights of peoples and cultures, and to appreciate that the development of a social group presupposes an historical process which takes place within a cultural context and demands the constant and active involvement of local people from within their proper culture. Nor can the notion of the quality of life be imposed from without, for quality of life must be understood within the world of symbols and customs proper to each human group.*

The message of peace is not about a negotiated settlement but rather the conviction that the unity brought by the Spirit can harmonize every diversity; It overcomes every conflict by creating a new and promising synthesis. Diversity is a beautiful thing when it can constantly enter into a process of reconciliation and seal a sort of cultural covenant resulting in a "reconciled diversity". As the bishops of the Congo have put it: "Our ethnic diversity is our wealth… It is only in unity, through conversion of hearts and reconciliation that we will be able to help our country to develop on all levels." (Hodgson, 1976)

Equality does not mean uniformity. It is important to recognize the diversity and complementarily of one another's cultural riches and moral qualities. Equality of treatment therefore implies a certain recognition of differences which

minorities themselves demand in order to develop according to their own specific characteristics, in respect for others and for the common good of society and the world community. No human group, however, can boast of having a natural superiority over others, or of exercising any discrimination that affects the basic rights of the person.

Doctrine and examples by themselves are not sufficient. The victims of racism, wherever they may be, must be defended. Acts of discrimination among persons and peoples for racist or other reasons-religious or ideological-and which lead to contempt and to the phenomena of exclusion, must be denounced and brought to light without hesitation and strongly rejected in order to promote equitable behavior, legislative dispositions and social structures (Hodgson, 1976).

Racism will disappear from legal texts only when it dies in people's hearts. However, there must also be direct action in the legislative field. Wherever discriminatory laws still exist, the citizens who are aware of the perversity of this ideology must assume their responsibilities so that, through democratic processes, legislation will be put in harmony with the moral law. Within a given State, the law must be equal for all citizens without distinction. A dominant group, whether numerically in the majority or minority, can never do as it likes with the basic rights of other groups. It is important for ethnic, linguistic or

religious minorities who live within the borders of the same State, to enjoy recognition of the same inalienable rights as other citizens, including the right to live together according to their specific cultural and religious characteristics. Their choice to be integrated into the surrounding culture must be a free one.

The 1965 U.N. Convention expressed this conviction forcefully: "Any doctrine of superiority based on the difference between races is scientifically false, morally condemnable and socially unjust and dangerous." The Church's doctrine affirms it with no less vigor: all racist theories are contrary to Christian faith and love. And yet, in sharp contrast to this growing awareness of human dignity, racism still exists and continually reappears in different forms. It is a wound in humanity's side that mysteriously remains open. Everyone, therefore, must make efforts to heal it with great firmness and patience (Masango, 2018)

The equality of men rests essentially on their dignity as persons and the rights that flow from it: Every form of social or cultural discrimination in fundamental personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, color, social conditions, language, or religion must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's design. Access to employment and to professions must be open to all without unjust discrimination: men and women, healthy and disabled, natives and immigrants. For its part society should, according to circumstances, help citizens find work and employment."

The Christian should never make racist claims or indulge in racist or discriminatory behaviour, but sadly that has not always been the case in practice nor has it been so in history. In this regard, Pope John Paul II wanted to mark the Jubilee of the Year 2000 by requests for pardon made in the name of the Church, so that the Church's memory might be purified from all "forms of counter-witness and scandal" (John Paul II, Apostolic Letter Tertiomillennioadveniente, n. 33) which have taken place in the past millennium (cf. International Theological Commission, Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past) (Kakwata, 2016).

The international community is aware that the roots of racism, discrimination and intolerance are found in prejudice and ignorance, which are first of all the fruits of sin, but also of faulty and inadequate education (cf. CR, Part IV, n. 28). To take a main theme of the Durban Conference, the role of education, understood as a "good practice to be promoted" in the struggle against these evils, is fundamental. In this regard too, the Catholic Church recalls her very extensive active role "on the ground", in educating and instructing young people of every confession and on every continent through many centuries.

Quoting from the Bishops of Asia: "Harmony is not simply the absence of strife. . . . The test of true harmony lies in acceptance of diversity and richness." I believe that two broad types of racism need to be recognized and resisted:

individual and institutional. Individual racism is evident when a person adopts attitudes or takes actions that are based on the assumption of racial superiority. Such attitudes and actions violate the rights and dignity of other people because of race. A second type of racism is institutional or structural. This type of racism exists where patterns of racial superiority are embedded in the systems and institutions of society. Such racism is less blatant and more complex, but it exists nonetheless. It is present wherever systems and institutions are created and maintained in such a way that they provide privilege or prejudice for one race over others. This type of racism can be seen, to varying degrees, in many of our social, economic, and political structures, including the structures of our Church.

During the interview, one the questions asked was; How has racism and politics affected the Church in this 21st century?

The following responses were given by different respondents;

According to Pastor John Adewale – Redeemed Christian Church of God, Lagos

> *"Racism often stems from pride, ignorance, and a superiority mindset passed down from historical injustices. In the church, I've seen how politics influences leadership structures, sometimes along tribal or racial lines. Instead of Christ being central, people divide themselves. In the 21st century, this has weakened our evangelism because outsiders see us as divided."*

Pastor Samuel Musa – Deeper Life Bible Church, Kaduna noted that;

> *"Racism is fueled by cultural prejudice and political manipulation. In the church, politics has amplified racism—government appointments and tribal favoritism influence even denominational leadership. The church has lost moral ground because we sometimes copy the world instead of setting the example."*

Pastor David Olalekan – Mountain of Fire Ministries, Ibadan stated that;

> *"Racism persists because of inherited colonial structures and selfish ambition. The 21st-century church is political, sometimes more political than spiritual. We fight over positions, recognition, and resources along racial or tribal lines. This weakens revival fire."*

According to Mrs. Chika Nnaji – Teacher, Owerri

> *"People engage in racism due to ignorance and fear of difference. The church should be the light, but I notice even churches are divided along tribe and language. This affects how non-Christians view Christianity."*

Mr. James Okoro – Taxi Driver, Port Harcourt stated that;

> *"Politics and racism are the same game—power and division. The church is affected because when people see tribalism in church leadership, they lose trust in the message. I know some who stopped attending because of this."*

On her part, Deaconess Ruth Akpan – Catholic Church, Uyo

> *"Racism is learned behavior. Unfortunately, politics has amplified it in the church. In Catholic parishes, even though we are supposed to be universal, I've seen favoritism in appointments. This makes the church less effective as a witness of Christ's love."*

Peter Musa – University Student;

> *"Racism is about power. Politics makes it worse. I don't attend church, but my friends tell me the same tribalism in politics is inside churches too. It makes Christianity look like just another system of power."*

Michael Adeyemi – Tech Worker;

> *"Racism is about who controls the system. Politics in church makes it worse because it puts man's agenda above God's. That's why I prefer to practice my faith privately."*

CHAPTER THREE

THE NEED FOR CHRISTIANS PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS.

3.0 Introduction

This chapter explored the need for Christian's participation in politics. The study revealed that over the years, there has been an argument as to whether Christians should be involved in politics or not. Why many claim that politics is a dirty game, very few people have drummed their support for Christians joining politics. In this publication, we are going to weigh whether Christians should be involved in politics or not. Let us first see these Scriptures which would serve as anchors to today's teaching. First, Prov. 29:2 "when the righteous is in authority the people rejoice". From the above Scripture, it is worthy of note to understand that God wants the righteous to be in authority. This is because when the righteous are in authority, they will make policies that would bring transformational changes and thereby bring joy to society, if you remember the case of Mordecai. There was a decree that God's people be wiped out. Mordecai and the entire Jewish race prayed that God should intervene. But God intervened by sending Esther to the throne.

3.1 The Need for Christians Participation in Politics

As we pray in Church and as Christians, we must also encourage Christians to participate in politics because if we are not involved, we must also not complain about bad leadership. This is because you can only change a system from within the system, not outside the system. Had Esther not gotten involved in the politics of her day (which came in form of a beauty contest), the entire Jewish race would have been wiped out in her day. In Esther 4:14, Mordecai told Esther '' For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this? . The statement of Mordecai to Esther spurred Esther into making a difference in her own day. We must also not forget that the reason God brings us into great positions is to affect lives positively and not for personal interest and selfishness. There is so much decay in Nigeria and African society today because very few politicians have the interest of the masses at heart while many are so selfish and corrupt.

In Matthew 5:13-16, the Bible calls us the salt and the light of the world. As you know, salt's value is seen only when it is added. This means that the usefulness of every salt is in adding value. Also, light is useless if it does not give light.

Salt is a preservative which means as believers we have been raised by God to preserve the societal value and norms of our day. Light brings illumination thereby expelling darkness. So, as believers, we must make a difference when we get elected, appointed, or promoted into high offices. The key point is to realize that we are involved anyway; we have no choice about being political because if we choose not to engage then it is the vote for the status quo- the way things are.

Christians need to be involved in politics because we believe in a God who cares passionately about His world and His creation and consequently how it is run. The Bible is hugely political- in that it is about how God wants people to behave and act toward Him and toward each other. This involves economics and law because these are tools that need to be used to build justice. As believers in God, we have much to bring to politics- a deeper commitment to justice and compassion which throughout history has made a difference in the political sphere.

Christians should join politics so they can bring righteous public service governance because righteousness exalts a nation but sin is a reproach. Also, Christians should be involved in politics to correct the wicked errors of our day. When we allow dirty people to play politics, society decays and their evil policies affect us gravely. So, Jesus is commanding us to be 'salt' and 'light' in

the world, encouraging us to influence our society rather than isolate ourselves from our society. Let us all rise as believers and get involved directly or indirectly in politics. Directly when we run for political offices and indirectly when we encourage godly people to join politics and also when we go out and fulfil our civic responsibility which is to vote. The future is in our hands if we all rise and do the needful.

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Over the years, nations across the globe have engaged in a long-overdue reckoning with the racist symbols of the past, tearing down monuments to figures complicit in slavery and removing Confederate flags from public displays. But little scrutiny has been given to the cultural institutions that legitimized the worldview behind these symbols: white Christian churches.

In public opinion polls, a clear pattern has always emerged: White Christians are consistently more likely than whites who are religiously unaffiliated to deny the existence of structural racism. A close read of history reveals that we white Christians have not just been complacent or complicit; rather, as the nation's dominant cultural power, we have constructed and sustained a project of perpetuating white supremacy that has framed the entire Nations story.

The legacy of the aforementioned unholy union still lives in the DNA of white Christianity today — and not just among white evangelical Protestants in the South, but also among white mainline Protestants in the Midwest and white Catholics in the Northeast. For more than two decades, I've studied the attitudes of religiously affiliated Americans across the country. And year over year, in question after question in public opinion polls, a clear pattern has emerged: White Christians are consistently more likely than whites who are religiously unaffiliated to deny the existence of structural racism.

3.2 Expectations from Christians as they navigate politics, especially in this divided age:

Here are some things I would like to see from Christians as we navigate politics, especially in this divided age:

First, I would like to see much less entanglement in different forms of politics. This is, my brothers and sisters, a terrible trap! We are being played for fools by the right and the left. It is a massive distraction from the proclamation of, and living out of, Jesus as Lord, which is our real politics. The Christian church is not a means for delivering a conservative or a progressive political agenda. A sign that you are entangled is when you *never* disagree with a particular vision of politics. This is a form of idolatry, in which Jesus is not in fact Lord but rather some idea of politics, or some beloved leader, is.

Second, could we sound a bit less tribal and defensive? Our political vision is not to safeguard our place in the world—or in the West—out of fear, but to seek justice and flourishing for all because of our hope. Why does so much of our political talk sound so self-serving? Christians of all people ought to have the confidence—the hope—to speak to matters that aren't about our self-preservation.

Third, since the business of political judgement is complicated and depends on necessarily incomplete knowledge, could we not be so gullible? Could we please not get our 'information' from such shonky sources—the deeply biased website, or the rantings of this or that pundit? This is a sin against the truth, a bearing of false witness. We live in an age not simply of lies, but (to use a euphemism) of verbal manure. We've gone way beyond simple lies! A liar at

least acknowledges the category of the truth, but in the 21ˢᵗcentury I am not sure that we believe that there is such a thing as the truth that we can lie about anymore. We trade in conspiracy theories. We complain about the bias in the media when it is against us, but trust completely unreliable sources that have no regard for facts. We want entertainment rather than news.

Fourth, could we be the ones who seek to find common ground with those who apparently oppose us? Can we not say that justice for the weak and for the poor and the vulnerable is a given of a Christian political vision—even as we may disagree about how to get there? I am nostalgic for the days when this used to happen in the political world more often. A particularly nasty dynamic of the current political scene is the way in which special ideological interests co-opt good causes to their own purposes, as if they can have a proprietorial right over, say, family values, or racial equality, or anti-poverty, or the environment. Does this mean that we are to be silenced when we see rampant injustice, or—heaven forbid—be thought to be its advocates? This is the satanic consequence of division: when Christians are silent about (for example) racial inequality because they fear being in league with some ratbag element that supports the same cause.

Fifth, could we remember that political discussion is about what is best for here and for now? We make decisions in the midst of history. And we, the church, stand in different places at different times. Sometimes we've had to accept political power and administer it. Sometimes we've been denied it. Things may look different in a liberal democracy than in theocratic Saudi Arabia than in medieval Spain. Christian politics takes discernment of the 'signs of the times'.

Sixth, and so: could we all be a little less dogmatic and more curious about politics? Why not be curious about why the other person disagrees so profoundly? Why not patiently respond to the person who inquires into your views? Jonathan Haidt's book *The Righteous Mind* is an eye-opening account of how and why people of good will disagree—perhaps the disagreement lies more in personality differences than anything? And maybe, just maybe, your political preferences are more about your personality than about your faith. Revd Dr Michael Jensen was an English teacher, then studied theology in Oxford before teaching at Moore College, Sydney. Since 2013 he has been Rector at St Mark's, Darling Point in Sydney, Australia. He has written a number of books including 'Between Tick and Tock', 'Is Forgiveness Really Free?' and 'My God, My God – Is it possible to believe anymore?' He is married to Catherine and they have four children, a cocker spaniel and a domestic medium hair cat.

Racial discrimination possesses at the moment a character of very great relevance by reason of the tension which it stirs up both within countries and on the international level. Men rightly consider unjustifiable and reject as inadmissible the tendency to maintain or introduce legislation or behavior systematically inspired by racialist prejudice. The members of mankind share the same basic rights and duties, as well as the same supernatural destiny. Within a country which belongs to each one, all should be equal before the law, find equal admittance to economic, cultural, civic and social life and benefit from a fair sharing of the nation's riches.

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and the failure of the minority. Members of both groups give unwitting approval by accepting things as they are. Perhaps no single individual is to blame. The sinfulness is often anonymous but nonetheless real. The sin is social in nature in that each of us, in varying degrees, is responsible. All of us in some measure are accomplices. As our recent pastoral letter on moral values states: "The absence of personal fault for an evil does not absolve one of all responsibility. We must seek to resist and undo injustices we have not ceased, least we become bystanders who tacitly endorse evil and so share in guilt in it."

> *Each of us as Catholics must acknowledge a share in the mistakes and sins of the past. Many of us have been prisoners of fear and prejudice. We have preached the Gospel while closing our eyes to the racism it condemns. We have allowed conformity to social pressures to replace compliance with social justice. Let the Church proclaim to all that the sin of racism defiles the image of God and degrades the sacred dignity of humankind which has been revealed by the mystery of the Incarnation. Let all know that it is a terrible sin that mocks the cross of Christ and ridicules the Incarnation. For the brother and sister of our Brother Jesus Christ are brother and sister to us. Racism and economic oppression are distinct but interrelated forces which dehumanize our society. Movement toward authentic justice demands a simultaneous attack on both evils.*

The difficulties of these new times demand a new vision and a renewed courage to transform our society and achieve justice for all. We must fight for the dual goals of racial and economic justice with determination and creativity. There must be no turning back along the road of justice, not sighing for bygone times of privilege, no nostalgia for simple solutions from another age. For we are the

children of the age to come, when the first shall be last and the last shall be first, when blessed are they who serve Christ the Lord in all His brothers and sisters, especially those who are poor and suffer injustice.

Racism is not merely one sin among many; it is a radical evil that divides the human family and denies the new creation of a redeemed world. To struggle against it demands an equally radical transformation, in our own minds and hearts as well as in the structure of our society.

Crude and blatant expression of racist sentiment, though they occasionally exists are today considered bad form. Yet racism itself persists in convert ways. Under the guise of other motives, it is manifest in the tendency to stereotype and marginalize whole segments of the population whose presence perceived as a threat. It is manifest also in the indifference that replaces open hatred. Many times the new face of racism is the computer print-out, the graph of profits and losses, the pink slip, the nameless statistic. Today's racism flourishes in the triumph of private concern over public responsibility, individual success over social commitment, and personal fulfillment over authentic compassion.

The new forms of racism must be brought face-to-face with the figure of Christ. It is Christ's word that is the judgment on this world; it is Christ's cross that is the measure of our response; and it is Christ's face that is the composite of all

persons but in a most significant way of today's poor, today's marginal people, today's minorities.

The legal system and the criminal justice system both work in a society which bears in its psychological, social, and economic patterns the marks of racism. These marks remain long after the demolition of segregation as a legal institution. The end result of all this is a situation in which those condemned to die are nearly always poor and are disproportionately black…Abolition of the death penalty will not eliminate racism and its effects, an evil which we are called to combat in many different ways. But it is a reasonable judgment that racist attitudes and the social consequences of racism have some influence in determining who is sentenced to die in our society. This we do not regard as acceptable.

We have many gifts from our African past that we must share. Our Blackness is a gift as well as our Catholic faith. By sharing we will enrich our community, our Church, and ourselves.

We must encourage Black leaders in the American Church – clergy, religious and lay. Unhappily, we must acknowledge that the major hindrance to the full development of Black leadership within the Church is still racism. Blacks and other minorities are meagerly represented on the decision-making level. Inner-city schools are disappearing and Black vocational recruitment lacks support.

This subtle racism still festers within our Church as it does in society. Some progress has been made, but much remains to do. This stain of racism, which is so alien to the Spirit of Christ, is an opportunity to work for renewal through evangelization….The causes of justice and social concern are an essential part of evangelization. To preach to the powerful without denouncing oppression is to trivialize the Gospel. As Black people we must have concern for those who hunger and thirst for justice throughout the world. We must not ignore those whom others tend to forget, and even contribute our efforts and money. When we share our talents and our possessions with the forgotten ones of this world, we share Christ. This is the essence of evangelization itself.

> *John Paul II in turn reaffirmed: "Man's creation by God `in his own image' confers upon every human person an eminent dignity; it also postulates the fundamental equality of all human beings. For the Church, this equality, which is rooted in man's being, acquires the dimension of an altogether special brotherhood through the Incarnation of the Son of God…. In the Redemption effected by Jesus Christ the Church sees a further basis of the rights and duties of the human person. Hence every form of discrimination based on race…is absolutely unacceptable."*

This principle of the equal dignity of all persons, of whatever race, already finds solid support in the sciences and a firm basis in philosophy, ethics and religions in general. The Christian faith respects this intuition, this affirmation, and rejoices in it. It represents a considerable convergence among the various disciplines which reinforces the convictions of the majority of people of good

will and allows the drawing up of universal declarations, conventions and international agreements for the protection of human rights, and the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination. It is in this sense that Paul VI spoke about "an axiom of the highest human wisdom of all times."

Faith in the one God, Creator and Redeemer of all humankind made in his image and likeness, constitutes the absolute and inescapable negation of any racist ideologies. It is still necessary to draw out all the consequences of this: "We cannot truly pray to God the Father of all if we treat any people in other than brotherly fashion, for all men are created in God's image." The Church has therefore the vocation in the midst of the world to be the people redeemed and reconciled with God and among themselves, forming "one body, one spirit in Christ," and giving witness before all to respect and love. "Every nation under heaven" was symbolically represented in Jerusalem at Pentecost, the antitype and victory over the dispersion of Babel. As Peter said, when he was called to the house of the pagan, Cornelius, "God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean…. God shows no partiality…."

The Church has the sublime vocation of realizing, first of all within herself, the unity of humankind over and above any ethnic, cultural, national, social or other divisions in order to signify precisely that such divisions are now obsolete, having been abolished by the cross of Christ.

The Second Vatican Council has rightly defined the Church as "sacrament, a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all men" since "both Christ and the Church. . .transcend the distinctions of race and nationality." Within the Church "no inequality arising from race or nationality, social condition or sex" should exist. This is indeed the meaning of the word "Catholic"-i.e., universal, which is one of the marks of the Church. As the Church spreads, this catholicity becomes more manifest.

Equality does not mean uniformity. It is important to recognize the diversity and complementarity of one another's cultural riches and moral qualities. Equality of treatment therefore implies a certain recognition of differences which minorities themselves demand in order to develop according to their own specific characteristics, in respect for others and for the common good of society and the world community. No human group, however, can boast of having a natural superiority over others, or of exercising any discrimination that affects the basic rights of the person.

Doctrine and examples by themselves are not sufficient. The victims of racism, wherever they may be, must be defended. Acts of discrimination among persons and peoples for racist or other reasons-religious or ideological-and which lead to contempt and to the phenomena of exclusion, must be denounced and

brought to light without hesitation and strongly rejected in order to promote equitable behavior, legislative dispositions and social structures.

Racism will disappear from legal texts only when it dies in people's hearts. However, there must also be direct action in the legislative field. Wherever discriminatory laws still exist, the citizens who are aware of the perversity of this ideology must assume their responsibilities so that, through democratic processes, legislation will be put in harmony with the moral law. Within a given State, the law must be equal for all citizens without distinction. A dominant group, whether numerically in the majority or minority can never do as it likes with the basic rights of other groups. It is important for ethnic, linguistic or religious minorities who live within the borders of the same State, to enjoy recognition of the same inalienable rights as other citizens, including the right to live together according to their specific cultural and religious characteristics. Their choice to be integrated into the surrounding culture must be a free one.

The 1965 U.N. Convention expressed this conviction forcefully: "Any doctrine of superiority based on the difference between races is scientifically false, morally condemnable and socially unjust and dangerous." The Church's doctrine affirms it with no less vigor: all racist theories are contrary to Christian faith and love. And yet, in sharp contrast to this growing awareness of human dignity, racism still exists and continually reappears in different forms. It is a

wound in humanity's side that mysteriously remains open. Everyone, therefore, must make efforts to heal it with great firmness and patience.

The equality of men rests essentially on their dignity as persons and the rights that flow from it: Every form of social or cultural discrimination in fundamental personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, color, social conditions, language, or religion must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's design. Access to employment and to professions must be open to all without unjust discrimination: men and women, healthy and disabled, natives and immigrants. For its part society should, according to circumstances, help citizens find work and employment."

The Christian should never make racist claims or indulge in racist or discriminatory behaviour, but sadly that has not always been the case in practice nor has it been so in history. In this regard, Pope John Paul II wanted to mark the Jubilee of the Year 2000 by requests for pardon made in the name of the Church, so that the Church's memory might be purified from all "forms of counter-witness and scandal" (John Paul II, Apostolic Letter Tertiomillennioadveniente, n. 33) which have taken place in the past millennium (cf. International Theological Commission, Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past.)).

The international community is aware that the roots of racism, discrimination and intolerance are found in prejudice and ignorance, which are first of all the fruits of sin, but also of faulty and inadequate education (cf. CR, Part IV, n. 28). To take a main theme of the Durban Conference, the role of education, understood as a "good practice to be promoted" in the struggle against these evils, is fundamental. In this regard too, the Catholic Church recalls her very extensive active role "on the ground", in educating and instructing young people of every confession and on every continent through many centuries.

Quoting from the Bishops of Asia: "Harmony is not simply the absence of strife. . . . The test of true harmony lies in acceptance of diversity and richness." I believe that two broad types of racism need to be recognized and resisted: individual and institutional. Individual racism is evident when a person adopts attitudes or takes actions that are based on the assumption of racial superiority. Such attitudes and actions violate the rights and dignity of other people because of race. A second type of racism is institutional or structural. This type of racism exists where patterns of racial superiority are embedded in the systems and institutions of society. Such racism is less blatant and more complex, but it exists nonetheless. It is present wherever systems and institutions are created and maintained in such a way that they provide privilege or prejudice for one race over others. This type of racism can be seen, to varying degrees, in many of

our social, economic, and political structures, including the structures of our Church.

Racism is a serious offense against God precisely because it violates the innate dignity of the human person. At its core racism is a failure to love our neighbor. Since we cannot claim to love God unless we love our neighbor, we can only be one with God if we reject racism and work aggressively to remove it from our personal lives, our church, and our society.

I concur with my predecessor, Archbishop Roach, who said, "An appreciation of racial diversity begins with an understanding of how our own lives are affected by skin color and race. Each of us should examine how our thinking and our actions are influenced by the color of our skin. How has my skin color enhanced my life or hindered me, helped or prevented me from understanding people of others races? How can I enhance my own life by learning more about other races?" (Reviving the Common Good, 1991)

It is not enough, however, to have a growing number of culturally specific worshiping communities. Our goal must be to create intercultural communities—where people of different cultures become part of one community in which all are transformed in Christ. In these communities, different cultural groups can maintain their unique cultural practices, but they

participate in one diverse community in which all are enriched and all welcome one another.

As we confront our own complicity with the sin of racism, may we constantly refer back to that all-important teaching as a reminder of why we need to root racism out of our hearts, our culture, and the institutions of our society. You and I cannot truly be the reflection which our God desires until we have rooted out any traces of racism in our own hearts and decided to embrace all human persons as our brothers and sisters.

CHAPTER FOUR

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND RACISM.

4.0 Introduction

This chapter explored the relationship between Christianity and racism. The study revealed that biblical faith does not recognize the modern conception of 'race.' As such, addressing the topic necessitates reframing of the subject within biblical presuppositions. Scripture surely does speak of tribes, peoples, and nations (Gen. 10-11; Rev. 7:9), but the word 'race' is not part of the lexicon of the New Testament nor the idea of 'races' part of the DNA of inspired revelation. In Scripture there is only one 'race' or blood in Adam (Acts 17:26), and so, although now greatly extended, there is ultimately only one human family – a fact vital to our theological understanding of the unity of all mankind in both our fallenness and potential inclusion within redeemed humanity in Jesus Christ, the last Adam (1 Cor. 15:21-28), our kinsman-redeemer (Is. 59:20). The gospel itself is at stake when we consider the root-unity of all humanity. It was this barrier-breaking message of the gospel of peace in the early church that overcame the old division, prejudice, and resentment obtaining between Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:11-22).

4.1 Relationship Between Christianity And Racism

The ancient world into which the Christian church was birthed by the preaching of this gospel was in many respects remarkably cosmopolitan due to growing trade, increased mobility, and the expansion of Roman imperial power. Ancient peoples no doubt had their tribal and ethnic prejudices, but they tended to think of themselves in terms of religious and political collective identities rather than in the modern sense of 'races,' and certainly not in the 'racial' denominators of Mongoloid, Negroid and Caucasoid – a largely arbitrary European classification for the members of the human family. Instead, religion was the defining factor for life and so at times, religious discrimination and prejudice were widespread.

The modern idea of 'race relations' emerged when, after some centuries of relative isolation during the Middle Ages, explorers among European nations began discovering hitherto unknown lands and peoples from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries onward. With the so-called Enlightenment and a growing exposure to foreign peoples, a *race consciousness* began to emerge in Europe, simultaneously developing a hierarchical pattern in which ethnic groups were arranged in order of superiority. This hierarchy was not confined to black, white and yellow 'races;' differences amongst Slavs, Jews, Europeans and even Anglo-Saxons were often referred to as 'racial differences' as well. Cultural differences in civilizational advancement, technological development, moral rectitude and refinement began to be seen not as the result or outworking of vital *religious* differences between peoples – resulting in the 'opening' or 'closing' of cultures to the reality of God's law

and kingdom – but as inherent, natural, or even God-ordained limitations within a biological type.

This way of thinking was given a massive boost in the nineteenth century with the evolutionary speculations of Charles Darwin – an inherently racist theory in which 'races' of people were thought to have evolved at different times and rates. This implied some people were closer to and much more like their apelike progenitors than others. Australian Aborigines, for example, were classified by some as 'missing links' between pre-hominid ancestors and modern humans. The noted evolutionist Stephen Jay Gould has admitted, "Biological arguments for racism may have been common before 1859, but they increased by orders of magnitude following the acceptance of evolutionary theory." This Enlightenment movement from a *theological* understanding of humanity to a *'scientific'* one is highly significant (Rushdoony 2017).

In the modern era, as Christianity's influence receded and science began to govern together with humanism, biology came to predominate over theology. The differences between men were seen increasingly as biological and racial rather than religious…the theory of evolution fueled this developing scientific racism…. The human race was no longer the human race! It was a collection of possibly human races, a very different doctrine. [iii]

So, while ethnic prejudice is as old as humanity, 'racism' as a category of thought is a distinctly modern notion in the Western world. It is characterized by specific ideas of superiority and inferiority and correlated to behavioural practices involving domination and subordination on the basis of particular *recognizable external features*. When this kind of thinking, whether arising religiously or 'scientifically,' gets embedded in societal norms or institutions, 'racism' can take on a socio-political reality and result in various forms of discrimination in human societies.

It was, for example, paler-skinned outside invaders who brought Hinduism (Brahminism) to India. Unsurprisingly, the Brahmin (priestly) upper caste in Hindu society are typically much paler-skinned, while the lowest caste 'untouchables' are the darker-skinned descendants of the indigenous defeated population. The vile caste system has a religious root in the Hindu conception of the divine and at the cultural level keeps a class of people in perpetual servitude. Similar examples abound from across the world. In Japan, around the time of World War II, doctrines of Japanese racial superiority blended effectively with evolutionary thought and were widely propagated, leading to great cruelty – the hairy long-armed Europeans were thought closer to apes. The Yamato people, in particular, considered

themselves a superior race, and others were brutalized and discriminated against as a result.

In Europe, a notorious and murderous ideology arose in Nazi Germany around a romanticised and mythic notion of an Aryan line of racial purity to be recovered and selectively 'bred' to facilitate the emergence of a superior race. Blending with evolutionary ideas, this folk religion of blood and soil required the 'purification' of Germanic stock and greater segregated 'living space' at the expense of Slavic peoples, Jews, and all people of colour. In the United States, "Jim Crow" laws in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were introduced because black Americans were considered inferior to whites. Miscegenation laws were also enacted in many Southern and Western states, forbidding 'interracial' marriages– typically these involved laws prohibiting marriages between whites and blacks, Asians, or native American Indians. In a similar vein, the eugenics program in America and the work of Planned Parenthood led by race ideologues like Margaret Sanger viewed Italians and Jews, not just blacks, as inferior undesirables to be targeted for abortion and sterilization (Richard 2004)

Tragically, some Christians, lacking a clear scriptural understanding, have all too easily been caught up in cultural attitudes of superiority rooted in some form of race biology. Charles Kingsley, for example, was a clergyman and

one of Darwin's close friends. He was an avid promoter of Darwinian ideas and wanted them synthesized with Christianity. Kingsley wrote:

The black people of Australia, exactly the same race as the African Negro, cannot take in the Gospel…all attempts to bring them to a knowledge of the true God have as yet failed utterly…poor brutes in human shape…they must perish off the face of the earth like brute beasts.

It is clear then that much of this virulent prejudice, including the attitudes of domination or superiority, was based not just in fear of the unknown but in rationalistic assumptions and, as we have noted, false understandings of human origins. Despite the perennial appeal for intellectuals in East and West of an idea of *hierarchy* in nature leading to a hierarchy of peoples – whereby Aristotle held some people were slaves by nature – biblical Christianity rejects any notion of superiority and subordination of one people to another based in physical, biological, or so-called 'racial' characteristics and asserts that no people or culture is free from grievous sin in past and present.

4.2 The Cultural and Philosophical Context of Contemporary 'Racial' Tension

When it comes to the present social fixation with 'racism,' context is very important. The Western world is currently in a profound state of crisis. As

Christian conviction and a biblical worldview has eroded leaving a deep sense of spiritual up rootedness, a loss of cultural identity has quickly ensued. Having been deliberately demoralized and de-Christianized through a process of indoctrination and social subversion, the ideology of 'multiculturalism' or 'pluralism' has been invoked to offer a new identity and sense of belonging. The problem is that it hasn't worked. Multiculturalism and religious pluralism as ideology under the supervision and endorsement of the secular state have utterly failed and instead of harmony, radical divisions are emerging everywhere.[vi] As culturally very different peoples are forced to integrate through technocratic social engineering, including near-unrestricted legal or mass illegal immigration, tensions are reaching boiling point. The migrant crisis in both America and Europe is very real, stoking both frustration and resentment.[vii] Pointing out the self-destructive urge involved in such immigration practices gets one labeled a 'racist.' Yet 'race riots' have frequently broken out across Europe and America,[viii] whilst serious prejudice and hatred between the Black and Asian communities in Britain as well as between Indians and Pakistani's are commonplace; here the problems of the Indian subcontinent are simply exported to the United Kingdom.[ix] This resentment is exacerbated by the political meaning of multiculturalism summed up perfectly by Thomas Sowell: "What multiculturalism boils down to is that you can praise any culture in the world

except Western culture – and you cannot blame any culture in the world except Western culture."[x] This 'progressive' agenda is utter folly because it is directed at the evident superiority of Western *culture* for at least four centuries. However, that undeniable advancement and superiority (now in rapid decline) is not rooted in biological facts, but values, beliefs, and common faith – in short, religion.

The socio-political landscape of multiculturalism provides the backdrop for this even deeper problem: the crisis of meaning at the centre of Western thought. When the meaning and thereby ordering of life shifts from centeredness in Jesus Christ, the triune God, and his Word, it is inevitably sought elsewhere and because all such meaning is an imitation, a counterfeit, it will inevitably fail. One vital aspect of the question of meaning since the beginning of philosophical inquiry has been the source and ground of *unity* in *diversity*. It is this problem, expressed at the religious and cultural level, which lies at the root of the West's social travails – including 'racism.'

Finding unity in diversity is a question for every nation and culture. What can provide the unity to bind societies together? Central to the answer is shared meaning and purpose. As a shared meaning declines, movements for devolution or separation become commonplace. As Christianity has collapsed in Scotland, the Celtic ethnic heritage and sympathies with republicanism

have replaced it, stoking a powerful Scottish Nationalist movement. In de-Christianizing Canada, French language and identity perennially feed an independence movement in the province of Quebec. The root and source of meaning for any society is inherently teleological and eschatological – that is, it involves purpose and direction or fulfillment – its movement is toward the source of ultimate meaning and cohesion, which is an inescapably *religious* matter. So long as the West refuses to acknowledge and grapple with the central *religious* dimension of shared meaning, value, and purpose in society, it will neither understand nor be able to overcome the present problem of 'racism.'

The tension between peoples living in the West is further complicated today because it is now caught up in a three-way eschatological-meaning conflict between utopian/globalist-Marxian and ethno-nationalistic views of society over against that of the gospel of the kingdom in and through Jesus Christ. Having been variously influenced by faulty Enlightenment and Marxian conceptions of 'race,' ethnic origins and hierarchy, both competing groups, falling short of the truly Christian answer, propose a false solution to the difficulties. On the Marxian side *Critical Race Theorists* (CRT) presently dominate the political landscape who believe that only by permanent

revolution against the white oppressor can we move toward the vanishing horizon of so-called 'racial justice.'

On the growing ethno-nationalistic side, reacting to the false gospel of Marxism, advocates have their own socio-political solution to the tensions involving a need for greater 'race consciousness' (whether in the language of ethnicity or nation) and some measure of ethnic segregation. On this view, a careful study of nature's law by reason is said to reveal inherent distinctions between 'races' or ethnicities – differences also grasped intuitively by our natural instincts regarding kith and kin to be acknowledged and applied socio-politically. This can take an Aristotelian form rooted in ancient conceptions of Natural Law, social order and custom or an evolutionary and Darwinian form rooted in biology and heredity.[xi] Ethnocentric nationalists tend to have a *primordial* view[xii] of identity in which your 'race' (blood) and 'place' (socio-cultural heredity) is at the *centre* of defining who you are – the romantic call of blood and soil – whilst Critical Theorists subscribe to a *constructionist* view of 'race' as a real but culturally invented social category used to exploit and oppress people.[xiii] The primordial nationalists tend toward absolutizing ethnic *particularity* (diversity) for truly living well, whilst the Marxian globalists tend toward absolutizing *universality* (unity), where all distinctions must be levelled and discarded. In forthcoming

installments of this blog I will describe the CRT and primordial nationalist movements, demonstrating how both poles hold only a *partial* truth and are consequently errors (Rushdoony, 2017).

CHAPTER FIVE

SIN AND RACISM AS DESTRUCTIVE AGENTS OF THE ANTHROP COSMIC CONNECTIONS.

5.0 Introduction

This chapter explored sin and racism as destructive agents of the anthrop cosmic connections, the study revealed that Racism as one type of sin has the common features of any other sin, which is the breaking of the connection between human beings that has an impact on the relationship between God and human beings. It is imperative to define and clarify the concept of sin, so that the reader may have a better understanding of this concept. In a racist society, individualism is the key as opposed to interconnectedness with God, human beings and the natural-organic environment. According to Ntombana and Bubulu (2017:1), people are living in different locations based on racial divisions and privileges, whites are still privileged, while the majority of blacks and a small number of whites are poor and marginalized. This racial and class division vandalises the image of God.

This chapter focused on racism as a type of sin, not developing the theory of sin in modern society. This chapter also provided a brief definition and clarification of the concept of sin. This chapter explores this incongruence and the

relationship between Christianity and implicit forms of racism. By discussing theological individualism and the principle of 'homophily', the study contributes to discussions about the relationship between the moral and human economy. Through this, a Christian morality of salvific aspiration is translated into a morality of personal economic responsibility and duty Bosco (2016).

5.1 The History of Religion and Racism in the U.S.

According to Bosco (2016) the relationship between Christianity and racism in the United States has a long history. In an age of 'multiculturalism' and 'colour-blind' ideology, explicit forms of racism have become less conspicuous. Still, disparities arise across the country's human economy, and explicit statements of egalitarianism are incongruent with practices of discrimination in U.S. Christian churches. The history of religion and racism in the U.S. extends back to the first encounters between European immigrants and the indigenous people of America. According to historian Howard Zinn, Christopher Columbus reported that the inhabitants were 'so naive and so free with their possessions that no one who has witnessed them would believe it. When you ask for something they have, they never say no. To the contrary, they offer to share with anyone …'. Columbus, in return for a little help from his sponsoring Majesties, stated he would provide 'as much gold … and as many slaves as they ask' and signed off with: 'thus the eternal God, our Lord, gives victory to those who follow His way

over apparent impossibilities'. Again, while in Haiti, Columbus proclaimed: 'Let us in the name of the Holy Trinity go on sending all the slaves that can be sold'.2 Despite such episodes, Columbus has been elevated in status, and the negative consequences of his actions were overshadowed by his faith in an exclusive Christianity. In some respects, the birth of racism in the U.S. begins with religiously justified exploitation, massacre and war with the Native Americans – although an explicit racist ideology in the U.S. did not fully develop until after the abolition of slavery.

When the Puritans arrived in New England, they wanted the Indigenous people 'out of the way [and] wanted their land'.5 They 'appealed to the Bible, Psalm 2:8: "Ask of me, and I shall give thee, the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." And to justify their use of force to take the land, they cited Romans 13:2: "Whatsoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation"'.6 Columbus and the early Puritans set a precedent and established the trajectory for a moral economy that revolves around the intersectional axis of religion, economy, and race. In other words, the history of religion and racism is embedded in America's economic history. This history was also highlighted by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. during his speech at the end of the march from Selma to Montgomery on March 25, 1965. He spoke of how

segregation was a political economic stratagem 'to keep the southern masses divided and southern labor the cheapest in the world'. This stratagem was designed to placate 'the poor white masses' and suppress a 19th century populist movement. The aristocracy made it a crime for white and black 'to come together as equals at any level' and while the 'southern aristocracy took the world', they gave 'the poor white man Jim Crow'.8 Such divisive strategies were not new in the U.S. During the 17th century, when 'black and white worked together, fraternized together', laws were enacted to forbid such relations.9 Again, during the early 18th century, after proclaiming that 'all white men were superior to black', a number of previously denied benefits were provided to white servants.10 In exchange for psychological and material gifts, i.e. symbols of status, the aristocracy gained a degree of complicity from whites. By using the legal system as an extension of power, the aristocrats cultivated in-group/out-group divisions premised on race, privilege, and entitlement Bosco (2016). The historical precedent of racial separation – engineered specifically for economic gain and complicity of the poor – is an important strand within the broader trajectory of various moral economies in the U.S. For the purposes of this article, I draw on anthropologist Didier Fassin's definition of the moral economy as 'the production, distribution, circulation, and use of moral sentiments, emotions and values, norms and obligations in social space' Bosco (2016).

The emphasis on modes of producing and reproducing a moral climate allows us to use the 'moral economy' as a concept to examine the various intersections between persons as well as their relations to various institutions and social structures. In this regard, the 'moral economy' provides an avenue to engage implicit forms of racism as constituent elements that highlight the relationship between people and the economy. This extends the concept beyond its original application in discussing a society's subjugated people in a particular historical context, so that it becomes applicable to a broader range of groups and demographics across a variety of social spheres and activities. In other words, Fassin's use of 'moral economy' is intimately tied to the multi-faceted dimensions of the 'human economy', which refers to 'human needs – not just those that can be met through private market transactions, but also the need for public goods, such as education, security and a healthy environment, and intangible qualities such as dignity that cannot be reduced to dollars spent per capita'. In the U.S., one intersection between the moral and human economy lies in the role of race and the functions of social institutions in perpetuating structural inequalities: mass incarceration,15 property rights and ownership,16 housing, employment,18 judicial prejudice,19 healthcare discrimination, predatory lending and foreclosure practices,21 and among many other things, the recent hypervisibility of police brutality. There is an urgent need to identify the trends of thought and action that perpetuate the socio-economic and racial

inequalities that exist across lived realities, epistemologies, and the social ethos, as well as the compounded effect of multiple cultures that direct U.S. social institutions.

This study focused particularly on the institution of Christianity and its contribution to implicit forms of racism within the contemporary context of U.S. multiculturalism and 'colour blind' ideology. The study begins by considering the principle of 'homophily' and the discriminatory reception practices of Christian churches against non-white newcomers. This opens up a discrepancy between explicit declarations of egalitarianism and practices of discrimination. In order to investigate this further, the article considers three forms of implicit racism and argues that Christianity contributes to the reproduction of implicit racisms by way of in-group/out-group dynamics and the cultivation of theological individualism. The article further argues that such theological individualism translates to an economic individualism that negates history in the context of multiculturalism and colour-blindness

5.2 Discriminating Reception in Christian Churches

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of the U.S. is estimated to be 77% white, and according to the Pew Forum approximately 70% of whites are Christian. Much like a study of race in the U.S. job market,24 Bradley Wright and associates recently conducted a study of race in U.S. Christian

churches. Taking on the persona of a newcomer looking for a new church to attend ('church shopping'), the researchers constructed a generic email and sent it to Christian churches across the United States. While the content of the email remained the same, the name of the newcomer was manipulated: white ('Scott Taylor, Greg Murphy'), black ('Jamal Washington, Tyrone Jefferson'), Hispanic ('Carlos Garcia, Jose Hernandez'), and Asian ('Wen-Lang Li, Jong Soo Kim'). Controlling for geographical variation, emails were sent to 3,120 churches of '12 major, organized Christian denominations:

1. Mainline Protestant: United Methodist Church, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Presbyterian Church, and the American Baptist Churches

2. Evangelical Protestant: churches in the Southern Baptist Convention, Assemblies of God, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS), Church of Christ, congregations affiliated with the Willow Creek Association, and churches self-identifying as Pentecostal

3. and Catholic.

The researchers then measured the response rate and the length of response. Notably, mainline Protestant churches displayed the most variation according to race. They responded 'most frequently and most welcomingly to emails with

white-sounding names, followed by black and Hispanic names, followed by Asian names'. By contrast, 'Evangelical Protestant and Catholic churches showed little to no variation in their response rates and moderate variation in the quality of their responses'27 – a finding that contrasts with studies illustrating that Protestant Evangelical attitudes and ideas are dependent on anti-black sentiments. The researchers interpreted their findings in terms of 'homophily', a principle which holds that people prefer to associate with those similar to them, particularly for socially-salient characteristics such as age, sex, geographic location, socioeconomic status, ethnicity and race. However, 'homophily' cannot be the only explanation for such a phenomenon. The results of this study and the argument for 'homophily' lend further support to a broader argument regarding in-group and out-group dynamics of prejudice in religion,30 which I will return to later.

At this juncture, what is interesting about such discriminatory practices in Christian churches is their inconsistency: mainline Christians report holding ideological commitments to justice and equality (an espousal of 'liberal, egalitarian attitudes toward race relations'32) as well as to the values of love and tolerance.33 In other words, the self-reported attitudes of whites about racial and ethnic groups are incongruent with their behaviour.34 In a review of studies in the U.S. between 1940 and 1990 (most of which were before 1970),

37 of 47 studies showed a positive relationship between 'religiousness' and prejudice. As social psychologist Gordon Allport proclaimed: 'The role of religion is paradoxical… While the creeds of the great religions are universalistic, all stressing brotherhood; the practices of these creeds are frequently divisive and brutal'.36 The incongruence between belief and practice indicates a covert/overt or an implicit/explicit distinction, which is also to say that both forms are simultaneously possible.37 Persons are capable of holding explicit, overt, and conscious racist attitudes while concealing them in survey or interview responses, just as it is possible for individuals to have implicit or unconscious attitudes of racism that are also concealed in such data. While explicit and overt forms of racism were freely displayed in the past, declarations of egalitarianism and 'multiculturalism' have today made these practices more likely to be covert or implicit. This raises the question of whether religion does indeed contribute to the formation and reproduction of implicit or covert racism. If so, how does religion contribute to racism, and what does this entail for the U.S. moral and human economy? Before proceeding to these questions it is useful to consider what is meant by implicit racism Bosco (2016).

One of the questions asked during the interview was; What are the reasons why people practice or engage in the act of racism?

Different respondents gave different answers to this question.

Mr. Ibrahim Sule – Businessman, Kano stated that;

> "Racism is about superiority and exclusion. Even in business, I see it. In the church, I hear stories from friends that politics and race affect leadership opportunities. To me, this makes the church look no different from government politics."

According to Pastor Grace Okonkwo – Living Faith Church, Abuja (Interview Year: 2025, 18 years in church);

> "People practice racism because they fear what they do not understand. In church politics, racism creeps in subtly—leaders preferring their ethnic group in ordination or favoring those who speak the same language. This damages the unity Christ prayed for in John 17. Many young people leave the church because they feel it does not practice the equality it preaches."

Pastor Linda Ume – Assemblies of God, Enugu (Interview Year: 2025, 15 years in church) noted that;

> "The reasons include lack of teaching on unity in Christ. Racism in politics has affected the church by creating suspicion and mistrust. When elections or leadership appointments come up,

ethnicity becomes a factor. This limits the Spirit's move because where division thrives, love cannot abound."

Mr. James Okoro – Taxi Driver, Port Harcourt stated that;

"Politics and racism are the same game—power and division. The church is affected because when people see tribalism in church leadership, they lose trust in the message. I know some who stopped attending because of this."

On his part, Elder Matthew Eze – Christ Embassy, Lagos said that;

"People practice racism because of historical and cultural conditioning. The church is meant to be one body, but politics has entered the pulpit. Today, elders and pastors sometimes fight over positions along ethnic lines. It's a shame."

Esther Johnson – Youth, Winners Chapel, Lagos, stated that;

"People practice racism because of insecurity. In my church, sometimes youth programs are dominated by one ethnic group. This discourages others from participating fully."

Deborah Danjuma – Youth Choir Member, Baptist Church, Jos, emphasized that;

"The main reason is ignorance and selfishness. In my choir, sometimes song selections or leadership decisions are biased. It creates division. This is how racism and politics have affected our worship."

5.3 Three Forms of Implicit Racism

According to Hart Blanton and James Jaccard,38 there are three discernible forms of implicit racism which illustrate the ways that people can be complicit in systemic racial inequalities and injustice.

The first is the 'lack of awareness of the effects of one's own actions on other persons and social institutions, and so on'. That is, persons are unaware/ignorant that their actions and speech patterns can promote racial disparities and perpetuate systematic forms of racism40; they 'fail to see how their adherence to accepted social norms inadvertently reinforces existing inequalities'.41 A prime example is the view that the justice system is 'fair and balanced' or that the police are necessarily positive social forces. When the #Black Lives Matter movement was on full display in the public eye, and soon after the death of John Gray in New York, the media also reported on the death of two police officers in New York. This initiated a #Blue Lives Matter meme advocating for the lives of police officers and an appreciation of their sacrifice in 'the line of duty'. Apologetic arguments began to emerge: civilians are targeting police and police

officers are dying more frequently in the line of duty; critics of the police (it was argued) could not possibly understand the situations officers find themselves in or the split-second decisions they must make. This line of reasoning, despite visual evidence to the contrary, further justified the hasty, unnecessary, and even radically excessive use of force and violence against black individuals.

Joshua Correll and associates designed a study to test the quick decisions police officers had to make in scenarios with black or white suspects. Using video game simulation, participants were placed in situations where immediate decisions had to be made on whether to shoot the suspect. The study found that participants were quicker to shoot at armed black suspects than armed white suspects. The same trend also emerged when the suspect was only holding a cell phone. According to the National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund, the average number of police officer shootings from 2005 to 2015 was. In 2015, the year after Michael Brown's death, 43 police officers were shot and killed. The average number of police officer deaths has, in fact, decreased from 1970 to 2014.43 In contrast, in 2015 a total of 578 non-Hispanic whites, 301 blacks, 193 Hispanic/Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native Americans and 4 Arab Americans were killed by the police; this is according to an analysis by the *Guardian*.44 According to the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, among

minorities, Native Americans are the most likely to be killed by police officers (which hardly ever gets any press) followed by blacks and Latinos.

Angela Davis notes how much the U.S. population seems to 'believe in what the law says' as if it were a religion; she notes how little the general public is informed of the judicial-penal system. A. Leon Higginbotham Jr. has illustrated how the legislative and judicial system has played a considerable role in substantiating and legitimizing the precept of black inferiority47 while Reginald Horsman has documented the construction of Anglo-Saxon superiority and subsequent racial ideology.48 The 1992 verdict against four police officers in the brutal beating of Rodney King and the subsequent cases which have drawn considerable attention from the media in the 2010s – e.g. Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Sandra Bland, Laquan McDonald, and more – indicate that neither the police nor the legal system has progressed in addressing the unequal treatment of black persons and minorities. In other words, continuing to hold the view that police officers are inherently 'good', or holding a kind of faith in the law as fair and unbiased, reinforces and enables the discriminatory treatment of non-whites. Furthermore, police killings have financial implications for many black and non-white families. For example, in Sacramento, the mother of Dazion Flenaugh told the press that she was unable 'to afford a funeral for more than three months' until the mayor donated funds. This financial strain on

families, in addition to the increasing inequality of income and systemic discrimination noted above, is further accentuated when the victim is the primary source of income for a family.

By contrast, Ethan Couch, a white teenager, who killed four people and injured nine in an episode of drunk driving on a suspended licence, was *not* shot and killed nor was he placed in jail. Instead, he was sentenced to ten years of probation because his attorneys managed to persuade the judge of a condition called 'affluenza'. That is, Couch's irresponsibility and horrendous killing of four persons was merely a consequence of his financial privilege. Such stark differences between the treatment of black and white persons further illustrates how non-white bodies can be considered to be without value, invisible, or not worth defending.

According to Bosco (2016) the second form of implicit racism is constituted by the lack of consciousness of 'racist leanings' and a failure 'to perceive the factors that cause them to exhibit racial preferences'. For example, a shove may appear aggressive when the actor is black but seem playful when the actor is white.52 When the shove is clearly aggressive or clearly playful, however, race does not play a factor in the interpretation. In other words, race is significant during the interpretation of ambiguous scenarios and many are unaware of this influence. Researchers have suggested 'that social stereotypes fill gaps in

meaning when the implications of an action or event are unclear, thereby causing reactions to seem objective, rational, and justified'. This was also exhibited in children when they were asked to construct a narrative of an ambiguous picture illustrating a black child standing next to a crying white child beside a swing, which was then compared to the same picture with the skin colour reversed. Positive character traits were attributed to the white child standing next to the crying black child (i.e. 'he is trying to help') while negative traits were attributed to the black child (i.e. 'he pushed the child off the swing'). This form of implicit racism in its application of negative social stereotypes plays a significant role in ambiguous situations within many of the discriminatory practices of the human economy mentioned above Bosco (2016).

According to Bosco (2016) the third form is exhibited by the use of rationalization and deferment to preserve one's self-image, self-concept or sense of integrity. That is, a person may hold an attitude of racism without acknowledging it as such and attribute their actions to other causes. When white persons are alone in a situation and either a white or a black person is in need of help (when the individual alone is in a position to help), the majority (over 85%) will help that person in need. However, when white individuals are in a situation with multiple persons and all of them are nonresponsive to the person

in need of help, a race effect emerges. While the majority still helped the white person in need (75%), only a minority helped the black person (38%).

In the case of the latter, rationalization took place: 'no one else was helping and so I did not think it was an emergency'. A similar result was reported by David Frey and Samuel Gaertner. Their study showed that white students, when faced with another student who had not worked hard enough at the task, were more likely to refuse a black student's request for help than a white student's request. Social psychologist Elliot Aronson suggests that subtle racism tends to emerge when the action can be easily rationalized by appealing to a character trait. This enables people to act in prejudiced ways while protecting and maintaining their self-image: 'Justification undoes suppression, it provides cover, and it protects a sense of egalitarianism and a non-prejudiced self-image'.

The reduction of dissonance through methods of justification and rationalization unconsciously serves to protect one's self-image, self-concept and sense of integrity. These three forms of implicit racism are *not* illustrated here to argue for an essentialization of white persons, nor is it to argue for a 'white culture' that stands in contrast to 'non-white cultures'. But the findings indicate that 'people may sometimes lack knowledge of and control over the causes and consequences of their actions'.60 In this regard, the social scientific literature has excavated patterns of thought and action in the United States that cultivate

an environment of complicity and, directly or indirectly, reproduce systemic forms of racism. The above analysis of implicit racism is an indictment of the U.S. moral and human economy on issues of race. That is, the U.S. fosters a form of ignorance regarding the causes and effects of one's actions that contribute to the country's racialization and the systemic inequalities bound up in that racializationBosco (2016).

5.4   Sin and Racism as Destructive Agent of the Theanthropocosmic Connection

It is primarily necessary to examine this concept (sin) based on the Old Testament and the New Testament, in chronological order starting with the old then moving to the new. In the Hebrew Bible, the word used for sin (transgression) is *abar*, meaning to 'cross over'. It can also mean to 'turn away'. Kakwata (2016) defines sin from the Old Testament commonly utilised word to designate sin, which is the Hebrew word   חָטָא(*chāt*ā'), which denotes 'to miss the right point or to deviate from the norm.'

The writings in the New Testament were originally in Greek. There are words in Greek to denote sin in the New Testament like '*anomia*' and '*hamartia*'. The word for transgression in 1 John 3:4 is *anomia*, meaning lawlessness (law breaking). The word for sin is *hamartia*, which denotes 'missing of the mark' (Kakwata 2016). Zodhiates (1992:130) defines the Greek term '*hamartia*'

meaning 'sin', as a missing of the ultimate goal and the possibility of humanity, which is the creator (God) of humanity. Sin is wrongdoing towards the Creator, with more emphasis on the guilt aspect of the missing of the ultimate results and possibility of the life of humanity. *Hamartia* denotes the destruction of humanity as well as human dignity. Racism does not see human beings as equal and with dignity as intended by God, but it misses that point of the relationship between God and humanity as God's image. In this context, racism as a sin is to miss the point that all human beings are an image of God. Berkouwer (1971:1–3) indicates that human reaction to the challenge of where evil comes from (*undemalum*) is only to be noticed as that of not knowing the origin of sin. It is problematic to draw correlations between sin and evil on the one hand, and racism on the other. Sin, as a destructive agent to a Theanthropocosmic relationship, will lead the author to the argument that racism is a sin.

The terms 'white' and 'black' can be provocative. They invoke concepts of 'race', 'ethnicity', 'culture' and 'identity' as well as, more importantly, their respective historical contexts and discursive practices. These concepts have been dutifully deconstructed and de-essentialized in the field of anthropology and are taught as historic social constructions and fictive concepts.94 And yet, this important and highly relevant scholarship has not facilitated the eradication of the term nor has it dismantled the embedded systemic practices of racism; the

'relativizing, deconstructionist exercise seemed irrelevant to the material history of oppressed and oppressor'.95 According to anthropologist Keith Hart, the world's poor are 'the outcome of western expansion over the last 500 years' and more specifically of 19th century imperialism driven by an ideology of racism. And 'although racism is nowhere officially sanctioned today, it still plays a major part in organizing cultural responses to global inequality'.96 In the U.S., during the Ronald Reagan administration, a 'New Racism' emerged which 'devalued civil rights, encouraged resentment against affirmative action, andfostered racial polarization by cutting back on social programs'

The social reproduction of institutional racism, much like the morality of exchange involved with money,98 is tied up with a morality of freedom by which the short-term cycles of individual actions contribute to the long-term reproduction of social orders. Anthropologist Clifford Geertz99 argued that the province of religion is where models *of* the world and models *for* living in that world are brought together in a complementary fashion. Drawing on a system of symbols, which go on to establish powerful and long-lasting moods and motivations, religion makes the model *of* and the model *for* 'seem realistic and reasonable'.100 Religion thus holds a reflexive tension. While the professed views of egalitarianism and 'equality before God' is arguably a model *for* the

world, the model *of* the world that Christianity propagates in practice directly contradicts the former. Tanya Luhrmann, anthropologist, states,

The relationship between implicit forms of racism and Christianity hangs on this paradox of 'faith.' For Luhrmann, faith and 'belief in a just, fair, good world' is not a 'mistake' or some 'deluded misconception' but rather it is the 'nature of the faith commitment'.102 Drawing on her own research of evangelical Christianity, she claims that 'faith is the management of the contradiction rather than the blind ignorance about the contradiction.' This begs the question raised at the beginning of this article: To what extent are these implicit forms of racism held unconsciously? Are they the causes or the effects of ignorance? Irrespective of whether Christians are indeed managing this contradiction, the issue highlights the tension between what *ought* to be the case in this world and how its practice is carried out in a model *of* the world (i.e. what *is* the case) which simultaneously contradicts and creates a discrepancy with the former by contributing to the concerns it wishes to dispel.

The disparities in belief and practice have been represented in homophilial aspirations of white homogeneity in Christian churches. This article argued that 'homophily' is only one side of a larger phenomenon of voluntary segregation and exclusion that contributes to in-group/out-group dynamics along racial lines (although such exclusion is certainly not limited to race; religious group identity

may also coincide with opposition to views of sexuality, non-Christian religions, political views e.g. communism, immigrants, or any combination of views). This is not to say that 'multicultural' Christian churches do not exist. They certainly do and much research has been conducted on them.103 However, much of the debate has revolved around the relationship between religious and ethnic identity, which is underpinned by debates regarding 'the relationship between the process of ethnic *reinforcement* and ethnic *transcendence* within congregational structures' – a discussion that is also beyond the scope of this article but nevertheless germane. Michael Emerson and Korie Edwards106 have both argued for the centrality of 'race' in such churches. For Emerson, this was construed in terms of whites failing to acknowledge their 'dominant structural position' and using 'their power to insist that churches operate in ways preferred to them' while Edwards noted how African-Americans had to adopt 'white-dominant cultural norms and practices in order to fit' into an integrated church.

The disparities noted above in Christianity and the theological individualism which various traditions espouse have been argued to construct a morality of individual salvific aspiration that translates into a morality of personal economic responsibility and duty. Not only is access to heaven in the afterlife dependent upon who you are and what you have done, but your economic salvation is also

your responsibility and a function of your agency. By adopting a 'colour-blind' ideology and the view of 'multiculturalism', race has no bearing on one's theological salvation and no consequence on one's economic salvation. The model *for*the world is conflated with a model *of* the world by which the former presumes the existence of equality in the latter. The idealization of what the world *should* be, and the practice of religion in accordance with that romance, negates and dismisses past racial inequalities – effectively creating an absence of history. The social and historical residue shrouded in present discourses of multiculturalism and colour-blindness further cultivate and reproduce implicit forms of racism that permeate throughout the fabric of the U.S. moral and human economy Bosco (2016).

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive discussion of the critical issues surrounding church racism and politics and their implications for 21st-century Christianity. It synthesizes the major findings, theoretical perspectives, and theological reflections explored in the previous chapters to offer a holistic understanding of how racial discrimination and political manipulation within the church continue to challenge the integrity, unity, and witness of the Christian faith in contemporary society.

In the 21st century, the church is expected to embody inclusivity, love, justice, and equality—core values rooted in the teachings of Christ. However, the persistent reality of racism and the increasing politicization of religious institutions have raised serious moral and spiritual questions about the church's true role in promoting the kingdom of God on earth. This chapter therefore seeks to analyze the intersection of race, power, and politics within the body of Christ, examining how these factors influence theological reflection, church leadership, and Christian practice in a globalized and multicultural world.

Furthermore, the chapter evaluates the socio-political and spiritual consequences of these dynamics for Christian witness and mission. It considers how denominational divisions, ethnocentric tendencies, and political affiliations undermine the church's unity and credibility in addressing social justice, peacebuilding, and reconciliation.

Ultimately, this chapter aims to provide a theological and ethical framework for overcoming racism and unhealthy political influences within the church, proposing pathways for renewal, inclusiveness, and authentic Christian discipleship in the 21st century.

6.1 SUMMARY

Chapter one provided the framework on the evaluation of church racism and politics and its implication in the 21st century Christianity.. The researcher was challenged to investigate this issue against the background of his persona observations of the daily conducts in the private and public lives of majority of church members and Nigerians in general as indicated in the study. To this end, the chapter examines background to the study. The chapter highlighted the statement of Problem, the purpose of the Study which included the evaluation of church racism and politics and its implication in the 21st century Christianity. The chapter also analyzed Racism as a discrimination and prejudice against Christians based on their race. Concept of politics, world division along

political parties and racial identity, racism as a sin and the need for Christian participation in politics. The study further examined relationship between Christianity and racism.

The chapter also highlighted the significance of the Study which included educating the church authorities and the general public in Nigeria on what the church need to do to combat the problem of racism in Nigeria. The research explained that the study should a resource base to other scholars and researchers interested in carrying out further research in this field subsequently, if applied will go to an extent to provide new explanation to church racism and politics and its implication in the 21st century Christianity.

The study explored the scope of the study which covered church   racism and politics and its implication in the 21st century Christianity. The study highlighted those who are included or excluded front it. This helped to narrow the scope of the field of study and enabled the researcher to articulate the relevant facts surrounding the investigation. A brief review of the relevant literature was done on church racism and politics and its implication in the 21st century Christianity.

Consequently,the study explored themethodology and sources of data used in the course of the study which indicated that information were collected from secondary sources which consist of textbooks, learned journals, magazines,

newspaper, internet browsing and publications on church   racism and politics and its implication in the 21st century Christianity. This work is a qualitative research, specifically a documentary research in which data is sourced from books, journals and other records. That is, researcher's own writing and that of other scholars in political and social philosophy in particular and other related areas of philosophy in general the critical hermeneutics which is geared at analyzing church   racism and politics and its implication in the 21st century Christianity.

The method of documentation used in this work is classical method; there are end notes at the end of each chapter and bibliography at the end of the work. This work is divided into five chapters. The chapter highlighted the conceptual clarifications which included the three concepts that will facilitate the objective understanding of the article are "church racism "and politics and its implication in the 21st century Christianity, and 'church'. Both conceptual and operational definitions of these terms were applied to drive the study's point home. The chapter highlighted the organization of study which indicated that the study was organized into six chapters as follows: chapter one deals with background to the study, Statement of Problem, Purpose of the Study, Significance of the Study, Scope of the Study, Methodology and Sources, Conceptual Clarifications, Theoretical Framework, Literature Review and references. Racism was defined

as an institutionalized socioeconomic system or a pattern of behavior which divides people into groups identified by characteristics of origin or color for the purpose of establishing and perpetuating, on the basis of those characteristics, the subordinate status and the denigration and exploitation of one group to the benefit of the other.

Chapter two explored the world division along political parties and racial identity. The study revealed that for the past two, three, four years, we have been reminded by the media that we live in a divided country. We are divided along the lines of political parties, divided along racial identity, divided along religious piety and action—politics, race and religion. The researcher think we unconsciously foster the false impression that if we continue to ignore it, it will go away. So, we wait for the division along the lines of religion, race, and politics to disappear. If we examine closely, I believe, these topics speak to the core of our existence, the core of our spiritual life, the core of our physical life, the core of our emotional and psychological life.

Chapter three explored the need for Christian's participation in politics. The study revealed that over the years, there has been an argument as to whether Christians should be involved in politics or not. Why many claim that politics is a dirty game, very few people have drummed their support for Christians joining politics. In this publication, we are going to weigh whether Christians

should be involved in politics or not. Let us first see these Scriptures which would serve as anchors to today's teaching. First, Prov. 29:2 "when the righteous is in authority the people rejoice". From the above Scripture, it is worthy of note to understand that God wants the righteous to be in authority. This is because when the righteous are in authority, they will make policies that would bring transformational changes and thereby bring joy to society, if you remember the case of Mordecai. There was a decree that God's people be wiped out. Mordecai and the entire Jewish race prayed that God should intervene. But God intervened by sending Esther to the throne.

Chapter four explored the relationship between Christianity and racism. The study revealed that biblical faith does not recognize the modern conception of 'race.' As such, addressing the topic necessitates reframing of the subject within biblical presuppositions. Scripture surely does speak of tribes, peoples, and nations (Gen. 10-11; Rev. 7:9), but the word 'race' is not part of the lexicon of the New Testament nor the idea of 'races' part of the DNA of inspired revelation. In Scripture there is only one 'race' or blood in Adam (Acts 17:26), and so, although now greatly extended, there is ultimately only one human family – a fact vital to our theological understanding of the unity of all mankind in both our fallenness and potential inclusion within redeemed humanity in Jesus Christ, the last Adam (1 Cor. 15:21-28), our kinsman-

redeemer (Is. 59:20). The gospel itself is at stake when we consider the root-unity of all humanity. It was this barrier-breaking message of the gospel of peace in the early church that overcame the old division, prejudice, and resentment obtaining between Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:11-22).

Chapter five explored sin and racism as destructive agents of the anthrop cosmic connections, the study revealed that Racism as one type of sin has the common features of any other sin, which is the breaking of the connection between human beings that has an impact on the relationship between God and human beings. It is imperative to define and clarify the concept of sin, so that the reader may have a better understanding of this concept. In a racist society, individualism is the key as opposed to interconnectedness with God, human beings and the natural-organic environment. According to Ntombana and Bubulu (2017:1), people are living in different locations based on racial divisions and privileges, whites are still privileged, while the majority of blacks and a small number of whites are poor and marginalised. This racial and class division vandalises the image of God. Chapter six explored the summary, conclusion and recommendations.

6.2 Conclusion

The argument in this research work suggests that there is a correlation between sin and racism. This sin impacts negatively on the relationship between human

beings and eventually between God and human beings as well as the environment. This sin has many faces, which manifest as internalised racism in the form of multiculturalism that was discussed in this research study. The researcher proposed transculturalism as an alternative to multiculturalism as borrowed from Demenchonok's view. However, this study illustrates that despite all influence of racism from apartheid, the church still has a role to play to address racism within democratic Nigeria.

6.3 Recommendations

Racism, caste-based discrimination and other forms of discrimination foster hatred and violence – the same are in opposition of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22, and a negation of human faith in God who gave human life and sent his Son to ensure survival for all, in all its abundance (Jn 10:10). These corrupt practices of dehumanising exclusion are governed by a denial of the blessedness of the rich diversity within the Creation itself, where each kind of living thing was named and pronounced as being 'good' in Genesis 1 (www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/racism). The difference in the beautiful nature is a reflection of the value of diversity within the very life of the triune God, who creates, preserves, and loves in freedom and plenty (www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/racism). The biblical witness urges us to celebrate the blessedness of diversity as a gift (Rm 12) designed to bless the

churches and the communities which they serve. Wherever and whenever we reject these instances of God's fecundity and abundance, we deny the very nature of the God we claim to profess (www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/racism).

For this reason, member churches must be involved with combating racism within their geographical areas. The WCC has also encouraged its member churches to participate in campaigns, advocacy and programmes to combat racism in church and society. The WCC conference on Racism in 2010 proposed the following as the role the church needs to play:

- Churches ought to initiate programmes designed to promote greater understanding and acceptance across multicultural and religious lines.

- Churches ought to challenge nightmarish reality in which men, women and children of God are condemned to live.

- Churches ought to be credible in proclaiming the message of reconciliation, justice and unity.

- The entire body of Christ has a prophetic task to denounce by word and deed all forms and expressions of existence which constrain the reality of the abundant life which God offered to us in Jesus Christ.

The church as the body of Christ and faith community has something more to offer the world. God has entrusted the church with the message of addressing injustices that are faced by poor people. This message of the gospel will lead them to have justice, and thus lead them in the issue of reconciliation. God entrusted the church not only to proclaim the good news of reconciliation but also to be the agents of reconciliation. The church, as a faith community needs to engage constructively with the issue of racism in all walks of life. The Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA), in its Pastoral letter on Racism of 2012, thinks that the following would be helpful for the church when engaging racism in its institutions like church services, faculties and seminaries:

A hermeneutical approach to racism should be followed so that people may understand:

- the dynamics of society and church that created and perpetuated racism

- the teachings of Scripture about human dignity

- the teachings of Christ, who came to be our peace and to destroy the barriers between people

- The role of the church as a healing community in society (URCSA 2012).

People who understand these hermeneutic approaches can make strategies together to engage with racism constructively. In fighting racism, the church

needs to acknowledge that a programme alone will not solve the problems, but rather a *process* in which the church is involved is required. People do not change overnight. It takes time, and it takes work (URCSA 2012). The following activities can assist in building a good relationship and dealing with racism. Theological education can be utilised to eradicate racism in democratic South Africa. The following can be done: research and publication on racism and how to eradicate racism and a workshop for ministers of the word and sacrament to enrich their sermons on humanity and God. These theological education activities will empower denominations like URCSA and others to address racism in their midst.

The URCSA in addressing racism in South Africa designed a programme for a long-term solution, with the hope that in 2016 the church would get the programme running. The URCSA followed the WCC's goals and plan of actions to implement these directives. The main goal is for churches to acknowledge the existence of racism in the church and society to address racism in church and community (URCSA 2016).

The action plans for the programme for churches to combat racism as captured on two levels are at the personal and institutional level. The church needs to learn the dynamics of society and the process of how racism extends and is perpetuated in humanity, the impact of psychology and internalisation of

racism, learning how to relate Scriptural passages that recognise human dignity with combatting racism, and finally the church should act as a healing community of unity, reconciliation and justice within diversity (URCSA 2016).

Galatians 3:28 – "There is neither Jew nor Greek…"

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