

JUSTICE AND THE JUSTIFIED:

A work of revitalization and exploration of justice theologically and socially through the ministry of outreach within the African American Pentecostal Church.

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ABSTRACT

JUSTICE AND THE JUSTIFIED: A WORK OF REVITALIZATION AND EXPLORATION OF JUSTICE WITHIN THE PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

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The issue of justice has pervaded the rights and lifespan of African Americans for centuries. These injustices systemically impact African Americans through racial constructs, economic disparities, and it even pervades the work of the Spirit in our church. This project was created with hopes of bringing a renewal, a revitalization of social justice back to the fundamental roots of the African American Pentecostal church, placing social justice at the core as the spirit is at work in the life of the Pentecostal. The same works of justice enacted at the cross for redemption of humankind has been perverted by evil systems rendering systemic injustices. These injustices have created systems of disenfranchisement that have historically had negative effects on the church's theological and ecclesial pedagogy and practices.

As a result, a renewing of the biblical mandate for the social actions of justice must return to the core of the gospel. The Church of the Redeemed of the Lord is an urban church located in Baltimore, MD that has committed itself to great works in Christendom. This project proclaims to refocus, rediscover, and experience a pedagogical renewal as the voice of justice is reintroduced to the justified, those who transmit the gospel to the world both in word and deed.

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Chapter 1:

“No Social Justice, No Pentecostal Church”

The term “revolutionary love” immediately brings to mind the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Isaiah 53 states that “he was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering...but he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole.”¹ This is the kind of love that comes to mind when I was first introduced to the term revolutionary love. In 2017, a class requirement for the Doctor of Ministry program was titled, “Revolutionary Love.” Surely this class will be an in-depth exploration and explication of the life of Christ and indeed it was but in an all new revolutionary way that has changed the trajectory of my ministry and understanding forever. Immediate thoughts of the suffering, shame, and embarrassment endured by Christ on the cross for the sins of all humankind flood the

¹ All scripture references contained in this paper are from the NRSV, unless noted otherwise.

Is. 53:3-12 “He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account. Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain. When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the Lord shall prosper. Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

soul, yet the overarching mandate had been missed for many years in my local church context. The Revolutionary Love conference centers its mission on love in action through strategic mobilization of religious thought leaders and social justice advocates to hold elected officials accountable on the premise of equity in justice for all. My attendance at this conference conjured some very uncomfortable introspection and evaluation of my African American Pentecostal approach to the work and mission of the advancement of the kingdom of God on earth.

The work of the cross was the greatest act of justice for all of humanity. This work of the cross provides the outlet of redemption through which we have been charged to share the good news and be about a good work. The good news is not only that this same act of justification is available to all but that as we are in life together, we should be both advocates and actors of justice one for the other. Jeremiah 22:3a says, “Thus says the Lord: Do justice and righteousness and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed.” This nation has been infiltrated with gross acts of systemic social marginalization and denigration racially, economically, and politically. Historical marches and protests have countered these acts in the name of justice. Historically, these marches and protests within the African American context began in the physical church and was spearheaded by young people.

After taking a real in depth look at my local congregation, I concluded that effective measures for social engagement in the name of justice had been abandoned potentially resulting in the languished condition of the outreach ministry. The current state of the outreach ministry is deteriorating at a fast pace, is operated by an older generation, and functions under a needs-based auspice. My observation of the gradual

decline of this outreach ministry, which includes the challenge of retaining consistent/committed volunteers, has uncovered outstanding needs of the local church and community and has led to this study. The goals of this study include the revitalization of the outreach ministry through theological and social pedagogy around the work of justice, the education and empowerment of the youth population to be the forerunners, and the revival of the work of justice in action as the duty of the African American Pentecostal.

Before one ventures into assessing the local congregational context, it is only fitting to explore the work of justice within both the African American and Pentecostal contexts. The African American context has been vilified and marginalized since the onset of slavery. In 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. shared a radical and revolutionary dream of social and economic justice in the March on Washington and insisted that the marchers go back to their homes, organize, and continue the fight.² There are those who continue that message to this day but the revolution seems to have drifted, yet the power of the opposition has strategically re-implemented its approach. In recent years, there has been an influx of crimes against African American men through law enforcement, a large increase of abduction in African American women, and an overall increase of food deserts in local urban communities. The work of Dr. King further urged that the continued work be through a faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.³ What then has been and/or is the role of Pentecostal faith believers?

The Pentecostal faith prides itself on the transformative power of the work of the Spirit through justification, sanctification, and a life lived out that embodies the Holy

² William Barber, *Forward Together: A Moral Message For the Nation*, (Missouri: Chalice Press, 2011), 92

³ *Ibid.*, 92

Spirit. Has the work of justice, exhibited fully by the life of Christ, been a mission mandate misplaced? Overlooked? Western European Pentecostals have been predominantly silent on the liberating and empowering experience the Spirit provides to institute social change.⁴ However, within the past 15 years a social ethic in African American and Latino Pentecostalism has resumed development from the Azusa movement in 1906. The gospel of Matthew 28, Jesus instructs mission as a core fiber of the Christian walk. Mission is the life blood of the church and Spirit and the eschatological nature of the Pentecostal church needs to ensure it is always mission-driven or else it becomes static and settled.⁵ The work of the Pentecostal church through transformative mission is the missing piece of the African American Pentecostal presence as advocates for justice in the world.

The purpose of this project is to lift the historical, theological, and social need for the work of justice in action through the revitalization of a local parish outreach ministry. Through the recent social and political climate, there have been several racial and economic issues that have come to the forefront, based in age old systemic issues. The question often heard during times of "action" was, "where is the church? Where are the religious leaders?" These questions were often met with a silent response or a one-time clergy appearance often resulting in inevitable absence. The issues that exist attract social attention immediately pending its severity; however, there are micro-aggressions that are endured throughout every day. If Christians, in Matthew 28:19, have been called to do

⁴ Matthias Wenk, "The Holy Spirit as Transforming Power Within a Society: Pneumatological Spirituality and its Political/Social Relevance for Western Europe," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 11, no. 1 (2002): 130

⁵ Andrew Lord, "Mission Eschatology: A Framework for Mission in the Spirit," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 11 (1997): 111

the work of sharing the gospel and justice is at the root of that gospel, are we doing enough? Additionally, the question is posed, what is the place of justice for those who are the recipients of Christ's divine act of justification? I submit that the commission given in Matthew 28 is a result of Christ's act of justification for the believer to become the embodiment of that justice lived out in the earth.

There are a number of places that can be identified as the starting point but for this project the most ideal place would be within an African American Pentecostal ministry where the transformative work of the Spirit is center but the work of justice stands to be revisited pragmatically and pedagogically. The Church of the Redeemed of the Lord (CRL-located in Baltimore, Maryland) has been in existence for 35 years and has included justice-driven work such as the prison ministry, mission (international) ministry, and local ministry to families and communities in need. The work of the ministry has not struggled in effectiveness however the consistency and commitment of volunteerism has strongly impacted the span and breadth of its potential. The church has a growing attendance of about 7,000 people and one would question why such a large church would have such minimal commitment from the parishioners rendering little to no impact. The research and evaluation of this project will stem from three vantage points historically, theologically, and socially in order to gauge new talking points and measures for next steps for the revitalization and revival of this critical outreach ministry.

CRL's mission statement is "to win souls and to see the development of the total person through the Word of God and the ministries offered" accompanied by a vision "committed to seeing the lives of the people ministered to, the community transformed, and seeing solid relationships with Jesus Christ developed by the Word of God through

the church.”⁶ The community transformed is where the work of justice is clearly articulated and in clear alignment with the word of God and the work of the Spirit. The church has a flourishing music, arts, and media ministry however the ministry of missions is at an all-time low through participation and commitment. Lord suggests that the work of the Spirit works in mission through both growing [the good things that are already happening in this world] and by inbreaking [challenge the way things are and to usher in the new].⁷ The inbreaking understanding prompts the Pentecostal church to revisit how we challenge the way things are and what new things are we ushering in through the lens of justice. It is no longer beneficial to have mere personal experiences with the Spirit with little to no external implications and/or transformations to the world and the community in which we live.

Theologically, what is the Pentecostal church’s stance on social justice in lieu of the Christian life lived out? Has this denomination’s consumption with sanctification and heavenly recruitment blurred the work of social justice here on earth? It is a work that is an overlooked tool by which others come to know Christ through His love and advocacy. What pragmatic instructions are given to the hearers of the word to help them fulfill the mandate of what the Lord requires, “to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 3) The set apart nature of the church is visible. The sacred space of the church and its associated honor are visible. The order of the church and its leadership are visible. The goal of sanctification and its accompanying goal to obtain entry into heaven are very visible. What remains grey and unclear is the zeal to

⁶ “CRL Ministries,” Privacy & Terms, www.crlministries.org

⁷ Andrew Lord, “Mission Eschatology: A Framework for Mission in the Spirit,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 11 (1997): 114

stand up for the tenets of social justice. Justice has a questionable consistent place in the church, both in word and indeed as a moral core and a constant hymn of reflection. Are we (knowingly/unknowingly) preaching a biased gospel and/or are we subsequently living out a biased gospel? There can be no gospel without the salvific nature of justice at the center of the work of the church.

As stated in CRL's mission and vision statement, the Spiritual health and embodiment of the believer is primary. So likewise, is this the case in Pentecostalism, much emphasis is placed upon the empowerment of the believer. For Pentecostals, all church members are bearers of the Spirit, contribute to the edification of the each other, and to the fulfillment of God's mission.⁸ The Pentecostal worship services tend to have more emphasis on the manifestation of the power of the Spirit in the room than the translation of said power in the world. The high-level worship services have an indirect bearing on the social/political relevance of the Spiritual experience but there is a more direct link between the two as the book of Matthew articulates a clear concern for the poor, marginalized, denigrated, excluded, and for the overall restoration of human dignity. Justice defined encompasses all the aforementioned and justice lived out likens itself to that of the Jesus spoken of in Isaiah, who was taken away by the perversion of justice.

There are a number of Pentecostal churches that are enamored by the move of the Spirit within a service with the preached word and prophetic declarations, but the same anticipation is not fully translated as a move of the Spirit across the nations, across racial

⁸ Matthias Wenk, "The Holy Spirit as Transforming Power Within a Society: Pneumatological Spirituality and its Political/Social Relevance for Western Europe," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 11, no. 1 (2002): 134

divides, across economic injustices, across political infrastructures of toxicity strategically structured to subjugate and control a group(s) of people pending their socioeconomic status. The role of the Spirit is no longer seen to be limited to inspiring a certain speech, but it also comprises the intended effect of such a speech.⁹ How then does this play out with the African American engagement with Pentecostalism? For example, the trauma suffered through years of enslavement and segregation. Engagement with Pentecostalism and the work of the Spirit is one of freedom and liberation within one's inner person, how then do we translate such euphoria into the work of justice? Harris suggests that mere blackness legitimizes the black Pentecostal proclivities for the integration of faith, Spirituality, and social advocacy.¹⁰

Historically and socially, the plight of the African American has endured the opposing hurdles of slavery, segregation, marginalization, gentrification, and more recently police brutality targeting African American men and the school to prison pipelines to name a few. If we were to explore and we will further into the paper, how the onset of western Christianity and the slave mentality strongly impacted the African American Pentecostal's approach to social justice. The Spirituality of the black bond servant failed to be met through the feeding of the gospel by the white preacher's sermon due to self-serving motives and condescending delivery.¹¹ What trauma has been caused for the African American Christian due to this heinous mode of gospel delivery and what trauma remains hidden but alive and well? What happens when a gospel of deliverance walks

⁹ Matthias Wenk, "The Holy Spirit as Transforming Power Within a Society: Pneumatological Spirituality and its Political/Social Relevance for Western Europe," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 11, no. 1 (2002): 134

¹⁰ Antipas Harris, "Black Folk Religion in Black Holiness Pentecostalism: Spiritual Formation Among Black Pentecostals," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 28 (2019): 193f

¹¹ Derek S. Hicks, *Reclaiming Spirit in the Black Faith Tradition*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), xv

hand in hand with social/political injustices seeking to dehumanize and dominate? Evangelicals during the late 18th/early 19th century, who initially disagreed with slavery found themselves defending Christian conversion as a way to make them more serviceable to the plantation.¹² One has to wonder if this docile, settled, manipulated mentality has transitioned its way through the generational lines and denominational differences, and settled in our theologies and pedagogies creating a church that is content with the safety of the four-walled ecclesia. Conversely, it is appropriate to submit that there is a reclaiming impulse that commissions us to divorce such a docile mentality for the sake of servitude and convert it into divine servanthood on behalf of the other. Hicks suggests that a revised, amended self-concept moves blacks from a wounded status as objects of history, toward the fuller status of being creating their own stories and further creates a response to crisis of identity and reconciliation in black faith.¹³ The power of change and revitalization is within the African American Pentecostal to resurrect the tenets of social justice in equal alignment with the inner Spiritual experience of the Spirit and the eschatological hope of the next life.

As a means of intolerance and nonviolent engagement during the Jim Crow era, marches and protests were held and meetings took place during the civil rights era to identify ways in which these injustices could be addressed and defeated for the sake of equal justice. A well-known interesting fact is that one of the most prominent movements for civil rights began in the basements of churches, spearheaded by young people, and the church was the safe haven during such turbulent times. Is the church that same haven of safety? Has the church's presence dissipated over the years as the negative happenings in

¹² Ibid., xv

¹³ Ibid., 90-91

society began to normalize or rescind into abyss, yet remaining potently present? None of these injustices have disappeared and it is the church's duty to resume its place as the hub of change and advocates of justice to war against these societal ills on every level, beginning with one's immediate community. This project seeks to explore the task of revitalization of the outreach ministry in a local parish under the theological lens of justice and the work of the gospel lived out, the historical lens of social paradigms and systems that has given way to a number of injustices, and the social lens of empowerment to/for young people who are readily able, with the right pedagogical tools, to begin the work of revival and restoration resulting in monumental impact and social change within the surrounding community.

“Yes, there’s a revolution under way among today’s kid—a good news revolution. This generation is going to rebel by behaving not worse, but better. Their life mission will not be to tear down old institutions that don’t work, but to build up new ones that do....Today’s kids are on track to become a powerhouse generation, full of technology planners, community shapers, institution builders, and world leaders, perhaps destined to dominate the twenty-first century like today’s fading and ennobled G.I. Generation dominated the twentieth.”¹⁴

The Millennial generation said to be born between 1982-1994, is the keen and primary generation to take on this baton of social justice in Pentecostalism and cause it to manifest in all churches and religious platforms. Because of their warm relationships with their adults (primarily their parents), Millennials tend to trust the government and believe it

¹⁴ Neil Howe and William Strauss, *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2000),5

should be more actively involved in taking care of its citizens.¹⁵ Millennials show a strong and deep concern for today's inequalities and social stratification along with the fact that ethnic and racial diversity is a hallmark of this generation partially due to immigration.¹⁶ The trailblazers of such an initiative is almost a no-brainer as it fits within the ethos of the millennial generation. Adam Foss, in a recent Ted Talk asked who will be the next generational leader of/for social justice? Who will be the next to carry the baton? Millennials possess a hunger for action and engagement, but will not move without knowledge and validation.

If Millennials feel educationally empowered and socially affirmed, they will launch out to save the world, but without the aforementioned, there will be no hesitation or delay in sharing their disdain for the ills and/or injustices that they see. In order to mobilize, they require fortification but will not communicate that to avoid appearing ignorant. Fox lifts that knowing is very critical for the millennials as it helps to ground their anticipated work and formulate their goals. Millennials are not interested in what happened in the historical past, but rather they are seeking connections within their modern technology to gain better understanding and implement better strategy for mobilization.¹⁷ The next wave of millennial leadership is equipping themselves by themselves. Millennial leadership is happening without the benefit of supervision and they are teaching each other how to be social justice leaders by learning from more experienced peers with a admirable level of excitement and energy.¹⁸ Here is where this study seeks to guide this millennial freedom

¹⁵ Helen Fox, *Their Highest Vocation: Social Justice and the Millennial Generation*, (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2012), 8

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 8

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 49

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 125

through intentional pedagogy of social justice and the biblical mandate and intergenerational connection as necessary, in the baton exchange of leadership. This approach seeks to revitalize and revive the passion and connection with the work of justice through the transformative work of the Holy Spirit.

The current state of the outreach ministry, in my opinion, has gleaned minimal support and lacks the presence of young, vibrant leadership bringing fresh eyes and perspective. To remedy this issue, this project includes a four-week bible study centered around justice and the church as a beacon in the community. After receiving the information through a small group study, I proposed that the perception of outreach ministry will be one of renewal and will reinvigorate the call to be missional in one's Christian walk. Furthermore, the work of justice will render itself fruitful to those within their Christian journey and provide more benefits of merciful engagement to serve than one of a taxing obligation of mere church attendance. I foresee a new launch of justice fighters like that of the freedom riders of the 1960's who will work tirelessly on behalf of the gospel in their work for justice and lived out in the outreach components of ministry. There will be anticipated opposition as such a project aims to jolt the local parish from its complacent state to one of revival, re-engagement, and realignment with the call to be advocates for the poor, the displaced, and the oppressed.

Chapter 2:

Social Justice as a Foundational Rock

From the onset of the Pentecostal movement, both social justice and social transformation have been at the core. The early Pentecostal experience of the Azusa Mission overcame social barriers at play in the early twentieth century North American culture and coheres with the social transcendent activity of the Spirit in both Acts 2 and Joel 2.¹⁹ Historically there was a connection to the biblical rudiments of the liberating power of the Spirit at work not just within the inner person but this power was made applicable and addressed the social ills of the day. Seymour describes the Azusa street revival as a multicultural and multiethnic experience but also lamented the division that arose along racial lines, which he believed grieved the Holy Spirit and urged the Pentecostal participants to seek unity.²⁰ The Azusa Mission is often identified as the starting point of Pentecostalism however its roots both in the theological understanding of the liberating power of the Spirit and its advocacy for social equality and freedom finds its footing in the Holiness Movement.

The timeline of the Holiness Movement runs concurrently with the systemic ills of slavery further transitioning into Jim Crow and segregation. The start of the Holiness Movement was not so free in a world of bondage, denigration, and marginalization.

¹⁹ Michael Wilkinson and Steven Studebaker, *A Liberating Spirit: Pentecostals and Social Action in North America* (Oregon: Pickwick Pub, 2010), 11

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 11

There is a split in the historical narrative of the start of the Holiness Movement and the birth of world Pentecostalism. The split is racial in nature, but it does not appear that such a split in the Holiness Movement is intentional. The intentionality appears to show its ugly face through racial tensions in the birth of world Pentecostalism. The Holiness Movement began through the American missionary experience of the supernatural at a Mukti Mission in Kedgaon, India. There was a series of revivals that included praying, preaching, speaking in tongues, casting out demons, miraculous healings and additional incidents involving fire sensation.²¹ These revival outbreaks and charismatic happenings were recorded by American missionaries and published back in the states.

There was a major breakout of interest for an experiential engagement with the Spirit and this ignited a rise in revivals in America and the Holiness Movement was alive and growing. The work of the Holiness Movement (whose roots are found in mission work) spread like wildfire not only in the United States but in Wales, Australia, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Uganda, South Africa, Liberia, Egypt, Chile, Brazil and Canada. These holiness revivals could be found on six continents in 1908 and marked the birth of world Pentecostalism. However, Pentecostalism set itself apart from the Holiness Movement by upholding the practice of speaking in tongues as a sign of baptism of the Holy Spirit.²² The Holiness Movement was rooted in the mission of the church through the powerful engagement with the Holy Spirit and its implementation within the world transcended racial, cultural, and regional differences. Missionaries traveled from place to place to host the fiery revivals that wrought miracles, signs, and wonders. The split from

²¹ Jay R. Case, "And Ever the Twain Shall Meet: The Holiness Missionary Movement and the Birth of World Pentecostalism," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 16, no. 2 (2006), 125

²² *Ibid.*, 125-126

the Holiness Movement by early Pentecostals narrowed the focus of mission from external to internal through the specification of one particular practice—the mandate of speaking in tongues. If this practice was not upheld by others, then those persons were excluded. This misinterpreted exclusionary invasion of theology is a beginning marker to the mission of the movement losing its focus and the charge of Matthew 25 begins to shift.

The other historical narrative of the start of the Holiness Movement is specific to the African American culture and finds it start in the late 19th century with a leader by the name of William Christian. William Christian's religious roots are found in the Baptist church but he broke away in 1889 seeking to find a black church that modeled the biblical life of Jesus directly and the life of the apostles, while hoping to recapture the true "Spirit" of Christianity.²³ Christian began the "Church of the Living God" and was very vocal on economic and social injustices that used the religious platform to seek growth and mass production. He strongly refuted the Baptist and Methodist engagement with modern techniques of buying and selling, he opposed southern preachers who worked for northern manufacturers, and charged them all with unjust profit from their social roles to the negation of God's requirement to live a simple life.²⁴ Christian's church by the early 20th century, had nearly 10,000 members who were mostly comprised of sharecroppers and farmers.²⁵ Due to Christian's insistence upon the biblical experience void of the social (after the Civil War), the African American Holiness

²³ John Giggle, "The African-American Holiness Movement," *Social Science and Modern* 44, no. 1 (Nov/Dec 2006), 50

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 50

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 50

Movement began to spread quickly from its original starting places in Mississippi and Arkansas.

Christian had two counterparts who assisted in this spread: Charles Mason and Charles Jones. Such a quick spread is said to be attributed to these three leaders' assertion that the black denominational churches were too enmeshed into the economic market and they in turn pledged to build a new faith community that liberated them from the clutches of materialism.²⁶ The attractiveness of a faith during a time where there was total reliance from the black community on the product, resources, and economic development controlled by the white community created a foundational footing from African American holiness. The focus transitioned from reliance upon the market to reliance upon the supernatural work of God. During this same time in history, in the early 20th century there was the voice of Marcus Garvey and the boycotts of Martin Luther King mid-century contending for justice through the social and economic injustices. The African American Holiness Movement was birthed from this intersection and the birthing of the movement comes from a greater focus on the sanctification of the Spirit and the Spiritual life. Charles Mason and Charles Jones disagreed on the credentials for membership in the holiness church and this led to another split as Mason went on to form the Church of God in Christ and Jones began The Church of God (Holiness). Though they differed in their understanding of the pneuma, both preached a similar message in that the religion of black people was being corrupted by the injustices of the day and there was need for urgent reform.²⁷

²⁶ Ibid., 51

²⁷ John Giggie, "The African-American Holiness Movement," *Social Science and Modern* 44, no. 1 (Nov/Dec 2006), 54

It is critical to note that the Holiness Movements and the birth of Pentecostalism charged strongly the freedom of the Spirit and the just acts of Christ in the work of salvation that freed us from the systemic ills of the day. Radical holiness granted authority to Chinese men, Indian girls, Spirit-filled Zulus, female evangelists, working-class Chileans, African-American leaders, as well as white American males.²⁸ The movement is often characterized as one that transcended race, culture and social economic statuses at its inception but things would soon change and complicate the liberating power of the Spirit and immobilize its supernatural release into the earth. The birth of Pentecostalism is often attributed to the date of 1906 and located in Los Angeles at the Azusa Street church. The movement was founded by William Seymour who was raised Baptist but was inspired by the Holiness Movement and the teachings of Charles F. Parham, leader of the midwestern Apostolic Faith movement. Due to the segregation era of Jim Crow, Parham was not allowed to sit with other students in the class but rather he had to listen to lectures sitting apart from the other students.²⁹ Seymour began to preach and started a church on Azusa Street that brought hundreds from all over regardless of race, culture, and gender.

Due to Seymour's strong advocacy for the speaking of tongues and the charismatic experience with the Spirit, there were persons who came to Azusa to join and to observe what was going on. In 1906 the LA Times wrote that there was a bizarre religious sect that involved people "breathing strange utterances...and working themselves into a state of mad excitement" and that the congregation included "colored

²⁸ Jay R. Case, "And Ever the Twain Shall Meet: The Holiness Missionary Movement and the Birth of World Pentecostalism," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 16, no. 2 (2006), 127

²⁹ "William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival" <https://news.ag.org/en/Features/William-J-Seymour-and-the-Azusa-Street-Revival>

people and a sprinkling of whites.”³⁰ The unleashing movement of the Holy Spirit made way for individuals of all colors and cultures to start churches and host revivals in preparation to allow for this movement of the Spirit. This series of supernatural manifestations prompted social reconstructions within the Azusa Street Mission that produced an unprecedented level of equality and inclusion.³¹ The focus was not on the color of one’s skin but the necessity and hunger of the Spirit in one’s heart and soul. All cultures and colors prayed together and sang together creating a Spiritual unity and a dimension of equality that was extremely unprecedented for the time.³² The revival movement of the outpouring of the Spirit rested on both Spiritual empowerment and mission. The justified humble recipients of this power created an explosion of hunger and peace not only in the name of experiencing the power of the Spirit but sharing the good news in mission and joining hands together for the fight against the wiles of this world. The injustices of color, which was marked deeply in the roots of America seemed powerless in this experience of Spiritual power. Bartlemann stated that the unusual mixture of blacks and whites was best explained in the notion that, “the color line was washed away in the blood.”³³ It is further thought that the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit took the sin of racial prejudice and removed it by the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ.³⁴ This hunger, this yearning put the injustices of the day at rest but, unfortunately, the wildfire spread of the Holy Spirit did not consume or eradicate these injustices.

³⁰ Ibid., website

³¹ Robby Waddell and Peter Althouse, “The Promises and Perils of the Azusa Street Myth,” *Pneuma* 38 (2016), 367

³² Ibid., 367

³³ *need to locate—failed to note while writing

³⁴ *need to locate—failed to note while writing

What would have been the fate of Pentecostalism and its impact on Christianity had the move of the Holy Spirit eradicated the power of racial, social, and economic injustices? What would have been the impact if faith trumped the frivolity of racial and economic differences? Nearly 40 years after Azusa there was the creation of the Pentecostal Fellowship of North American (PFNA) which was strictly white in membership. In 1994, there was meeting in which the PFNA admitted to its racist past and began a dialogue about how to move forward with integration. As recently as a little over 20 years ago, the separatism of race remained prominent within a denomination that claims full access to the power of the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit that seeks to change and to reconcile. During the time of the PFNA, not one member made any steps toward repudiating racism and affirming equality.³⁵ This racial approach of leaders in the Pentecostal church was exemplified in a greater divide in full church membership. Often times the race of its pastor determined the predominant race of the church and there was little to no fellowship of churches of different races both locally and nationally. Azusa was not the only start or finish of this ongoing fight of injustice within the faith movement. Cultural pressures of racism, sexism, classism, and nationalism pressed in on the community of believers from external sources and from fellow Pentecostals.³⁶ One scholar refers to the initial harmony of the movement as one of myth and digs further to show that the experiential nature of the Holy Spirit had minimal impact on the deeply toxic social fibers of the day.

³⁵ Frank Macchia, "From Azusa to Memphis: Evaluating the Racial Reconciliation Dialogue Among Pentecostals." *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 17, no. 2 (1995), 203

³⁶ Robby Waddell and Peter Althouse, "The Promises and Perils of the Azusa Street Myth," *Pneuma* 38 (2016), 367

Historically the Azusa moment is often reflected as a time where cultures of all type came together and engaged the power of the Spirit. Yet, research shows that this was not entirely true. This historical reflection is a myth of sorts that was true at the onset but did not carry throughout the movement's impact and future growth. Pluss defines myth as "a traditional story in the experience of time, with a plot that leads to an unexpected reversal of fortune and a surplus of meaning, thus providing people with grounds for ritual action as well as ethical commitment."³⁷ History therefore charges one with the task of identifying if a renewal of mission within the Pentecostal church is conducive in this generation for the generations to come or if the corruption of the systemic ills runs too deep into the human psyche; the latter therefore negates the transformative power of the Spirit. One would look at Pentecostalism and deem these issues as non-important, yet it contradicts the foundational fiber of our Pentecostal footing. The divisions within Pentecostalism are ongoing and although there is global growth numerically and multiculturally, the critical reflection of the deep social fissures stand to be assessed. This does not leave Pentecostalism at a hopeless crossroad for missional engagement but rather the exploration of denominational history and theological support creates the opening for the rejuvenation and restoration of the original intent in Acts 2. It is asserted that while there may be a myth that Pentecostals have dispensed with social inequalities, it is equally true that the Azusa street myth can still inspire a transformational hope for a sustainable work of the Spirit.³⁸ Here lies the historical crux of this paper in that Pentecostals stand in need of a renewed pedagogy

³⁷ Ibid., 368

³⁸ Ibid., 369

both historical and theological that will refocus the missional engagement with the world as the embodiment of the Spirit on earth.

It is important to modify the approach to this subject from a racial one incited by the mere proclivity of humanity to a spiritual one. While it is sensitive and touchy in nature, it is also a subject that must be raised and explored with missional objectives and the work of the Spirit at the center. The humanity of Pentecostals cannot be ignored and/or dismissed as carriers of the gospel of Christ and those who have been the recipients of just mercy. Consider Azusa and the Memphis meetings, there is hope that through reconciliation a brighter and just future is on the horizon. Both the offended and offender are not asked to “forgive and forget” but “remember and forgive” in the reconciliation and healing process as this affords the offended to be fueled to action by their memories and the offenders to be repudiators of injustice.³⁹ Pentecostalism then comes to the table of moral obligation in which actions are not only expected but mandated. One is then able to see the transformative work of the Spirit in full action through the same mercy and repudiation that was afforded to the sinner. The justice of the cross continues to impact and have intersectional presence throughout the generations both historically and theologically. The work of social justice and social reformations are not new to Pentecostalism as the work has been ongoing amidst the cultural pressures of racism, economic inequities, and social marginalization.

When one researches the “work” of Pentecostalism with social justice it is deeply tangled with the leading theologies of Pentecostalism. The practical notion of the work of justice is not one that is easily extracted and identified because historically there have

³⁹ Frank Macchia, “From Azusa to Memphis: Evaluating the Racial Reconciliation Dialogue Among Pentecostals.” *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 17, no. 2 (1995), 207

been a number of early Pentecostal views on the Christian's engagement with the world; there is a juxtaposition between devotion to an early governmental system and citizenship within a heavenly kingdom. Some of these theologies will be unpacked in the next chapter, however it is critical to highlight how evasive these thoughts are and how they have pervaded the establishment of the works of justice in Pentecostalism. There are several thoughts on socialism, patriotism, nationalism, and non-resistance. Tomlinson, considering early Pentecostal thought in 1917, contends that it is not the job of the Christian to discuss war from the world's standpoint but to rather show that the children of God are citizens of another country (referencing John 17:16).⁴⁰ He goes further to assert the notion of Spiritual warfare which should primarily occupy the focus of the Pentecostal. The war that we are engaged in is of far more importance than the wars of the world as our job is to save souls from hell instead of sending them there by flashing steel into their vital organs.⁴¹

This is a critical notion to lift up in the history of Pentecostalism and its connection to justice because it renders the possibility that much of the historical work of justice is not one that can be compiled and statistically evaluated but rather such work has been done in the realm of the Spirit. While there is some agreement with this perspective, it is equally important that the work of justice be done here on earth. Such a perspective cannot be used as legitimate rationale as to why the Pentecostal church has permitted itself to be crippled in the work of justice in the world. Another early Pentecostal view is that within the Christian duty there is a moral obligation to put into

⁴⁰ Ambrose Jessup Tomlinson, "The Awful World War," in *Early Pentecostals on Nonviolence and Social Justice*, ed. Brian Pipkin and Jay Beaman (Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2016), 83-84

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 84

practice what has been preached. Booth-Clibborn suggests that the participation of the Christian in acts of justice (e.g. war) is such a large one but the space allowed to unpack it is very small. Booth-Clibborn stands strongly on the Word of God and asserts that under the dispensation of grace and mercy the Christian has been sent to share the good news and not to butcher anyone as cattle.⁴² Does this historical thought pattern create a foundation of lack of action on the part of the Christian and sole dependence on the Spirit? To whom has the work of justice been given, to the church or to the Spirit? In the early 20th century, socialists and pacifists were all criticized while the Pentecostal church found refuge under the umbrella of the call to save souls. The majority of early 20th century Pentecostal denominations were peace churches that encouraged conscientious objection saying “no” to combatant participation in the work of justice.⁴³ Here is where history and historical-theological thought has crippled the missional work of the Pentecostal.

This crippling is relevant but not all inclusive as there has been those who have accepted the mantle of moral duty to work alongside the work of the Spirit. There are some Pentecostals/Charismatics that are exploring this history and working for a recovery and expansion of this witness.⁴⁴ This work of recovery and expansion has a more global look and impact but certainly a helpful precursor to the revitalization thesis of this paper.

“I used to be a Jesus-lovin,’ tongue-talkin,’ gun-totin,’ American-flag-wavin’ Pentecostal Christian farm boy who cheered as the missiles flew and enthusiastically sang, ‘Bomb, bomb, bomb, bomb, bomb, Iraq’ during the Gulf War of 1991. I told racist jokes, supported torture, and was a hardcore one-sided

⁴² Sam Booth-Clibborn, “The Christian and War: Is it Too Late?” in *Early Pentecostals on Nonviolence and Social Justice*, ed. Brian Pipkin and Jay Beaman (Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2016), 69

⁴³ Paul N. Alexander, *Christ at the Checkpoint: Theology In the Service of Justice & Peace*, (Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2012), vii

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, vii

Christian Zionist. All in the name of Jesus, and all at my local Pentecostal Church.”-Paul Alexander⁴⁵

For these issues to be rightly addressed through a historical evaluation, it is important for Pentecostals to really sit and understand what they used to be and/or what they are and what really are they called to be/do. The historical prevalence of discrimination in Pentecostalism makes a clear justification for the present-day divisions and attempts to rethink and find new methodologies of social and theological engagement.

There is a group of peacemakers who have taken this on and focus on the areas of gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, economics, class, globalization, trade, poverty, health, consumerism, development, and other social justice related themes and issues within the Pentecostal tradition. The claim is that seeking peace and justice are different ways to understand God’s salvation, justice, and peace.⁴⁶ In my research, I have found that majority of these individuals are primarily male and white. It is very difficult in the research and study of Pentecostalism and justice to hear the primary voices of social reform to be those of one dominant race to the negation of a more diverse discourse and explication of voices. The actual work of social justice is, however, exemplified through peace making and social justice efforts through global engagement with Israel and Palestinian Christians and Canadian Aboriginal people. Nationally, there are growing developments with Pentecostalism and gender specific inequities, classism, ecology, and reconciling the age-old racial injustice with African American holiness/Pentecostal leaders.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 61

⁴⁶ Paul N. Alexander, *Christ at the Checkpoint: Theology In the Service of Justice & Peace*, (Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2012), viii

For example, there has been a call to the American Pentecostal church to reassess how they respect Palestinian Christians. The time has come for American Christians to critique our policies in the Middle East from a biblical perspective and modify our perception.⁴⁷ Undoubtedly, there is clear and blatant racism when it comes to the Palestinians from America as a whole and certainly such hatred has bled into the hearts of American Christians, even Pentecostals. The notion of racism must be condemned as increasing animosity has been allowed since the tragic terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, and there are those who have no clue that Arab Christians exist. This strong force of racism has made some very impenetrable divisions and created what some may call, irreconcilable damage. “I got to know the real Jesus. Jesus saved me from thinking that injustice and occupation, even in the name of God, is okay. I am now a Pentecostal-charismatic, tongue-talking, Bible-believing, Jesus following, Spirit-filled, peacemaker and justice seeker.”⁴⁸ As there was a change in understanding by Paul Alexander through his research and personal journey for truth, so likewise the Pentecostal church stands at a place where the same should be done by all. For the African American Pentecostal, there are layers upon layers of injustices and the work here requires a lot more power and work of the Spirit in order to accomplish racial reconciliation and refocus the primary goal of the justified and salvific life; love, mercy, and justice.

The enslavement of Africans began in the early 17th century and continues to this very day. Enslavement takes on many different shapes, hues, tones, and faces. One of the primary effects of slavery that cannot ever be reconciled, is the intentional stripping

⁴⁷ Ibid., 129

⁴⁸ Paul N. Alexander, *Christ at the Checkpoint: Theology In the Service of Justice & Peace*, (Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2012), 62

away of heritage and identity from the African people and then labeling them with an unidentifiable classification of “African American.” Included within this stripping away was indigenous religions, peculiar connectivity to God, and an overall confidence that rests within the foundation of knowing one’s self and the power of heritage. Besides sleeping, working, and eating, there was one activity that slave masters allowed their slaves to participate in and that was their style of worship.

This “privilege” recovered some historical and generational African jewels, but the loss was apparent and clear. The issues of race, racism, discrimination, prejudice, and racial stereotyping have long dominated the American cultural psyche and have played a significant role in the history of the church.⁴⁹ Rosenior suggests that slaves from Africa were influenced by non-African religions such as Islam and Christianity. To this I would take issue and suggest that it is presumptuous to determine that the gospel of Christ had not reached Africa when its origin was closer to Africa than that of this “newfound land,” America. I would proffer that Africans had a deeper connection with God (in the person of Christ) than what one will ever know because their freedoms were stripped from them and the severity of trauma had them clinging to their sanity for as long as they could.

To that end, there was a greater ease and transition of connection with the institutionalized practice of religion through American Christianity and Islam. They incorporated their means of preserving and transmitting knowledge, values, attitudes, morals, ethics, sacred rituals, dogma, history and the wisdom of the ancestors through narratives, riddles, songs, and proverbs.⁵⁰ It is this same sustaining practice that is seen

⁴⁹ Michael Wilkinson and Steven Studebaker, *A Liberating Spirit: Pentecostals and Social Action in North America* (Oregon: Pickwick Pub, 2010), 55

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 56

within the African American Pentecostal church where the divinity of God is centered to find identity, safety, and reprieve from the injustices of this world. The practice of dance and song from the African heritage is often seen as the celebratory core of the Pentecostal faith for African Americans. For the people of West Africa, drumming, singing, dancing, and other forms of expressive worship were associated with religious rituals in which the possession of the Spirit was made manifest.⁵¹ These practices have been preserved since slavery times and have enhanced the engagement with the Holy Spirit.

The historical generals of Pentecostalism affirmed that religions were primarily about experiencing God in a very real and tangible way as it was a religion of the Spirit first, and of the book second.⁵² The experiential notion of the African American Pentecostal church has historical roots as well. The doctrine of this church remains firm and undisputed however equally the experience of the Spirit stands alongside the biblical text. The Bible was used by many slave holders and white preachers to justify slavery and the denigration of blacks, and this created a deep well of skepticism.⁵³ African American Pentecostals are often times discredited and accused by other African American religions of believing in the “white man’s bible.” The depth of African American Pentecostalism transcends the ugly face of race that has historically and consistently presented itself as an undefeatable hurdle towards theological legitimacy through scholarship and pragmatism in the local ecclesia.

During a speech given at Western Michigan University, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in response to a question about the Christian church being the best place for

⁵¹ Ibid., 56

⁵² Ibid., 57

⁵³ Michael Wilkinson and Steven Studebaker, *A Liberating Spirit: Pentecostals and Social Action in North America* (Oregon: Pickwick Pub, 2010), 57

integration said, "...11:00 am on Sunday morning when we stand and sing, and Christ has no east or west, we stand at the most segregated hour in this nation. This is tragic."⁵⁴

It is critical to state that the systemic ills of social justice that have pervaded Pentecostalism stem from roots that transcend the tenets of the faith. If the church has and continues to face this problem, are we truly living out the crux of the Christian faith? Dr. King goes further to assert that had the church taken a stronger stand all along, many of the problems that were being faced would not exist.⁵⁵ What does it look like for the church to take a stand? Is it possible for the African American church to take such a stand after enduring layers of trauma due to political propaganda and social inequities? Is the experiential nature of the Holy Spirit enough to counter these historical demons that are present day dividers or is the Holy Spirit used as a cave of safety? To be able to adequately explore these questions, it is important to look at the historical consciousness of the African American Christian/Pentecostal.

Before venturing to explore the experiential nature of Pentecostalism for the African American, we will explore the engagement of faith and the historical negro as far back as slavery and how this consciousness has been carried through generations of repeated social injustices and degradations. Hicks references the start of the degenerated consciousness of the African American from the US constitution with the three-fifths compromise. The three-fifths compromise was a clause that stated that slaves were three-fifths of a person and effected the population count of a state; the compromise also contributed to the perception and institutionalized maltreatment of African

⁵⁴ <https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/MLK.pdf>, 22

⁵⁵ <https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/MLK.pdf>, 22

Americans.⁵⁶ African Americans had no choice but to submit themselves to this ideology and this became a pervasive force in the race's perception and overall value of self. This force was not all encompassing as Hick's suggests that it was the black faith that countered the maltreatment of African Americans. A curing agent was required to counter the toxicity of American law (the medium of institutionalized racism and a continued systemic violence against black people) and black faith became the self-amendment which blacks drew from to free themselves to fight for wholeness.⁵⁷ This amendment happens primarily in two ways, religious groundwork and embodiment.

One of the main impacts of slavery, that is often not talked about or unpacked, is the depth of the loss of an identity that cannot ever be adequately recovered for the African American. This innate loss of self that is transferred from generation to generation creates a space for recreation and self-exploration. Further, this loss of indigenous identity sparks a search, a journey to find a whole sense of self, individuality, definition and affirmation. Hicks suggests that this requires an amending of self in which one is able to re-present themselves in a different form or as a whole being in the world.⁵⁸ This is a strategic aim at eradicating the social ill of the 3/5 compromise that sought to hinder the consciousness of the African for generations to come. This pursuit of wholeness is of an existential nature and the groundwork of the black faith provides something better than the hand dealt and permits a transformation offering happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, and immortality.⁵⁹ The exposed dynamic at play is the notion of power. One's assumed power over the other results in marginalization, denigration,

⁵⁶ Derek S. Hicks, *Reclaiming Sprit in the Black Faith Tradition*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 89

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 89-90

⁵⁸ Derek S. Hicks, *Reclaiming Sprit in the Black Faith Tradition*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 91

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 91

and dehumanization. The authoritative power of the law makes it challenging for the African American to be able to resist and redefine said power.

“Historical efforts to amend the self in black faith tradition have often been stymied by the issue of available power sources and group perceptions of liberation...Efforts to amend black life by resetting black identity and raising communal consciousness around justice entail a tapping of any available power source. Whether in the form of biblical appropriate, reinterpretation of the US Constitution, or cultural practices such as worship, dance, sharing stories, or singing songs, early African American drew from a cultural power source to mitigate their crisis of suffering. Power was tied to self-amending practices with every effort by enslaved black to express humanity on their own terms.”⁶⁰

Repurposing power for a race of people is a task of great measure but continues to be attempted by those who have determined their journey to be a marriage between cultural power and the power of faith. The notion of Jesus of the bible and the black tradition affords itself as a liberating presence in lives of those who have been subjugated to injustices and inequities.⁶¹ Hicks references Cone and we will unpack that further in the next chapter but is worth mentioning here as this is where history and theology collide for the African American. Such an agreement requires a belief that becomes all encompassing, one that offers a cultured embodiment. Hicks defines this embodiment as “blackness” which was the outcome of shared experiences that created communal responses in various forms of cultural production that cultivated a vibrant religious community; the black religious communities are formed by the culture they created out of suffering.⁶² This culture and form of embodiment is one that retains depth socially, historically, and theologically.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 93

⁶¹ Ibid., 94

⁶² Derek S. Hicks, *Reclaiming Spirit in the Black Faith Tradition*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 97

Culture gives a religious quality, deep meaning and a sense of being to the whole of something but poses the questions of structure and discipline for the survival and fulfillment of each individual of the group.⁶³ Blackness is diversified when one considers structure and discipline manifested in the array of denominations within the black church and shines a light on the perception of social injustices for the African American Pentecostal. If the power shift of consciousness skips the believer and is directly attributed to God, then at the presence of any ill the obligation of duty is not the believer but rather to the divine power who retains all power. Is it possible that the historical disruption of power and recreated consciousness has displaced the African American's understanding of their moral duty towards social injustices alongside the powerful work of the Spirit?

Defining characteristics of Pentecostalism find their roots in the African culture and often seen in worship services across the globe. American Pentecostalism can be described as a uniquely indigenous religious movement with African American characteristics at its root both nationally and internally; the use of rhythmic hand clapping, expressive dancing, charismatic and highly energetic preaching can be traced back to the "Africanization" of American Christianity.⁶⁴ The history proves the impact and power of engagement of the African with the power of the Spirit, yet the social ills of the time, both then and now, seems to be an ongoing impact on the African American Pentecostal zeal for the work of social justice as it constantly stands in a space in time requiring personal attention to that same need. Yong phrases it in this way in that the

⁶³ Frederick Ware, *African American Theology: An Introduction*, (Kentucky: John Knox Press, 2016), 113

⁶⁴ Michael Wilkinson and Steven Studebaker, *A Liberating Spirit: Pentecostals and Social Action in North America* (Oregon: Pickwick Pub, 2010), 57

theology of Pentecostalism has proceeded with little attention to black Pentecostalism except as “objects” of historical or sociological analysis.⁶⁵ This historical context of African American Pentecostalism is very disturbing and disheartening, as the work of the Spirit as asserted in the theology of Pentecostalism, transcends the frivolous nature of humanity and seeks to work within each person as a willing and yielded vessel for the work of the Lord. Such work is hindered through earthly terrains of racism and degradation causing a chasm in how the African American understands Pentecostalism as a faith of liberation seen in its charismatic worship style. As an unfortunate result of the aforementioned, the moral obligation to fight for and against social injustices remain crippled and off centered in the African American Pentecostal’s theology and practice.

Historical research shows a socialized perception of Pentecostalism on the surface and then there is the not so appealing side that unveils the another side of the faith. In Acts, Paul shows forth a Pentecostal gospel that is not one of duality, but the hope of Christ was to show forth the just acts of Christ in the justified life lived out in the world.

“All the believers were one in heart and mind. NO one claimed that nay of his possession was his own, but they sheared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.” Acts 4: 32-35

One key operative phrase in this text is that all the believers were one in heart and mind. This has historically proved as a major issue for Pentecostalism as the ugly divisive forces of racism and classism have not only caused internal fractions but has impacted the movement of the gospel on the earth. The gospel was not ever to be held

⁶⁵ Amos Yong, “What’s Love Got to Do With It? The Sociology of Godly Love and the Renewal of Modern Pentecostalism,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 21 (2012), 127

hostage within the church but rather as beneficiaries of the just acts of Christ, we are to enact the works of justice to others. On the contrary, the fractions have caused a fractured theology both pedagogically and pragmatically. The focus for many African American Pentecostals has been on the experiential practice of engagement with the Spirit and not the work of the Spirit on earth to those who are in need. In this next chapter, I aim to unpack the theological foundations of Pentecostalism through the lens of it as a denominational whole, its connection with the African American culture, its understanding of social justice as a moral duty of the Christian life.

Is it time for a reframing and a renewal of Pentecostalism? Is it time for the Pentecostal church to revisit its theological framework and re-center core tenets of the work of the Spirit to include social justice? Lee contends that a new Pentecostalism needs to arise but unfortunately it is hardly new. What is longed for is hardly new as its start was on the day of Pentecost and therefore it must once again be the promoter of justice as it was in the days of the apostles.⁶⁶ There does not need to be a new Pentecostalism but rather a revisit to the historical scriptures that ground the believer in the core tenets of the work of justice in the earth. The social injustices, generation after generation, have corrupted the theological framework of the Pentecostal church and this calls for a revival of the Spirit seen in the book of Acts. A reframing of Pentecost that celebrates the diversity of race and cultures and a commitment to social action; this renders a reformed Pentecostalism that is not only experiential or charismatic but that creates agents of change in the earth. The Spirit is at work empowering and fortifying the believer!

⁶⁶ Samuel Lee, *A New King of Pentecostalism: Promoting Dialogue for Change*, (Amsterdam: Foundation University Press, 2011), 107

Chapter 3: Social Justice and the Justified of Christ

Standing on the theological rocks of Matthew 25:35-40, Jesus orchestrates a conversation with the “righteous” and describes the expected work of the Christian on the earth which would be a semblance of His character, His witness on the earth.⁶⁷ Jesus tells the people what they have done to him in times of need, in times of injustice, in times of oppression. These things were not known by the Righteous. They gave an immediate retort and asked Jesus when exactly have those things been done. Jesus lets them know rather simply that when you do these things for others it is the equivalent of having done these things for me. What an honor! What a privilege! What a Spiritual mandate! These verses of Matthew 25 lift a critical part of the Christian life and connection to Christ through tunneled acts of service and justice. This shapes and forms the morality of the Christian life and makes this type of engagement imperative.

The imperative nature of these services and acts of justice on behalf of the disenfranchised, the marginalized, the oppressed is directly connect to the preceding verses (31-34).⁶⁸ The preceding verses give voice to the Son of Man’s actions when he

⁶⁷ Matthew 25: 35-40

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

⁶⁸ Matthew 25: 31-34

returns to the earth and begins the process of judgment and separation. The verses state that he will separate the sheep from the goats and to the sheep on the right, he will offer the riches of the kingdom. The riches of the kingdom are then connected to the works of justice here on the earth. These are clearly not the works done for show and/or for numerical count but rather works done in secret. These doings by those on his right side are due to their active moral imperative causing them to do the selfless works of justice to those who stand in need. The selfless nature of this moral imperative gives direct and divine access to the riches of God's kingdom.

This moral imperative is not a new notion to the Christian church or to the Pentecostal denomination but rather the concern is the quality of its focus and the intentionality of its biblical teaching/understanding to parishioners. The work of justice puts the Pentecostal church in solidarity with the sufferings of Christ and therefore guarantees access to the fruits of the kingdom of God not just in heaven but also here on earth. From Moses to Jesus, the Bible tells us that those who fought for justice, spoke truth to power, refused to accept that injustice and inequality had to exist found themselves hated because they believed in the necessity of speaking and working for the cause of righteousness and building a just community.⁶⁹ The attraction for the work of justice is not appealing to the many because of its suffering and isolation as such a fight requires endurance and resilience.

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world

⁶⁹ William Barber, *Forward Together: A Moral Message For the Nation*, (Missouri: Chalice Press, 2011), 10

For Pentecostals, the belief often times is primarily to endure such suffering through Spiritual warfare and engagement, but I would suggest that puts limitations on the work of the Spirit and the opportunity to be deemed a righteous sheep on the day of the great divide. This resistance and proffering of the Spiritual can be seen in the responses of early Pentecostals on the issue of nonviolence and war. Bartlemann suggests that there is not greater inconsistency than for the church of Jesus Christ to go to war, for her business is to preach, not to murder. War is not God's way for the church, but the calling of the church is different and we have thus failed our enemies; our enemies who we have not shared the good news and are now coming to destroy us.⁷⁰ This is reflective of a very staunch foundational understanding of Pentecostalism that shows a hands off perspective in the social and political ills of the day.

While many wars should not have occurred with American involvement, the stance of the church must remain consistent. In his "Is Christian Civilization Breaking Down", Bartlemann lists the injustices done by the American political system to the Native American and the African American but does not advocate for the equality and equity of those persons.⁷¹ Instead, in this writing he submits the judgment of God and overall demise of the Christian church as a consequence for these injustices. Has Bartlemann missed the key point of Matthew 25? Have many early Pentecostals whose thoughts were in alignment with Bartlemann missed it as well? Some of these theological deficits are due to deprivation theories that bracket the legitimacy of religious encounter as an experience but do not address the roles the Believers have as motivation

⁷⁰ Frank Bartleman, "Christian Preparedness" in *Early Pentecostals on Nonviolence and Social Justice*, ed. Brian Pipkin and Jay Beaman (Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2016), 43

⁷¹ Frank Bartleman, "What will the Harvest be?" in *Early Pentecostals on Nonviolence and Social Justice*, ed. Brian Pipkin and Jay Beaman (Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2016), 56

for engaging and even changing the social structure.⁷² This foundational thought has left a Spiritual imperative that asserts solely the eschatological judgment and existence of the coming kingdom to the negation of justification and preservation of those in the kingdom of this world.

It is important to note here that social theorists tend to argue that early Pentecostalism was a religious sect consisting of poorly educated, immigrant, rural, and lower class workers who were attracted to the otherworldly Spirituality, seeking freedom from the misery of their current life circumstances.⁷³ This foundational thought plants the dismissal for the cares of the world with refuge being found in the experience(s) of the Spirit providing direct connectedness with heaven and disconnection from this world. A Marxist analysis proposes that the Pentecostal movement was born of a radical social discontentment which exchanged its revolutionary impulses with a withdrawal from the social struggle and passive acquiescence with a world they hated and wished to escape.⁷⁴ If there is truth to these theories, it provides the foundational premise for which the pedagogy of social justice and action has been displaced and minimized across the denomination and specifically within the African American church, calling for a need for a justice revival.

There was and is a call to the theology of Christianity to speak truth to power even with its bitter taste. Dr. King was called a troublemaker but he led a call for civil rights and economic justice combatting the evil triples of poverty, racism, and war

⁷² Michael Wilkinson and Steven Studebaker, *A Liberating Spirit: Pentecostals and Social Action in North America* (Oregon: Pickwick Pub, 2010), 113

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 115

⁷⁴ Michael Wilkinson and Steven Studebaker, *A Liberating Spirit: Pentecostals and Social Action in North America* (Oregon: Pickwick Pub, 2010), 122

operating in a vicious interrelated cycle.⁷⁵ It was not and is not enough to identify it and give it an eschatological appropriation but rather what is the moral duty, the moral imperative of the Christian to fight against these unjust ills. One of the present-day movers of justice has enacted a movement in his home state of North Carolina. Rev. Dr. William Barber has asserted that the agenda of the Poor Peoples⁷⁶ movement is justice and that when the economic, social, and Spiritual life of the state moves toward justice the circulation of political blood improves.⁷⁷ This has a great semblance to Jesus' declaration in Matthew 25. If justice is at the core, the crux of all Christian movement, there is a positive correlation to the blood of all movement generating and sustaining life on earth and admission into the kingdom of heaven.

“We are indeed justified by the miracle of Jesus' death, resurrection and Spirit impartation, but this miracle produces not only a just individual but a just community. Justification in Christ is therefore not an individual miracle happening to this person or that person, which each may seek or possess for himself. Rather justification by grace is a joining together of this person and that person, of the near and the far, of the good and the bad, of the high and the low. It is a social event.”⁷⁸

The works of justice is deeply connected to the work of justification by the cross of Jesus Christ in that it is not a work just solely for oneself and for the advancement of one person, but rather this work was done in the grace and hope for those to whom we live and serve in community. The social ills of the day, due to dividing -isms of evil and

⁷⁵ William Barber, *Forward Together: A Moral Message For the Nation*, (Missouri: Chalice Press, 2011), 10

⁷⁶ In 1968, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and many others called for a “revolution of values” in America. They sought to build a broad, fusion movement that could unite poor and impacted communities across the country. Their name was a direct cry from the underside of history: The Poor People's Campaign. www.poorpeoplescampaign.org

⁷⁷ William Barber, *Forward Together: A Moral Message For the Nation*, (Missouri: Chalice Press, 2011), 11

⁷⁸ Frank D. Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit: Creation, Redemption, and the Triune God*, (Michigan: William Eerdsman Publishing, 2010), 261

destruction, are not new to the Christian walk. Barth asserts that God's justification is not impartial and does not render more to the Jew than to the Gentile as God's judgment is equal.⁷⁹ This same notion should be carried out in the life of the Christian church, specifically the Pentecostal church as foundational guides and principles. Instead, we are living out a justified life through the works of the Spirit to the negation of the core of just works, just acts, and just communities. If there is no proffering of Jew over Gentile, then the evil task of racism has created such a divide in Christendom and there lies a differing in theologies. This differing in theologies leads to a difference in practice which breeds an order of pedagogical rungs in the ladder of Pentecostalism in which justice has been dislocated and stands in need of a resurgence, a resurrection.

The works of justice are not just limited to its connection at the cross but rather it is a major running theme in the Old Testament. The Old Testament understanding of social justice is directly connected to the social setting of Israel. Malchow surveys several approaches to the social setting of Israel's origin however the one that best fits the social justice paradigm was proposed by William Steibing. Steibing proposes that a major drought throughout the Mediterranean region caused some cities to be at war with each other over a scarcity of food, they countered the small group of the Exodus, and they formed Israel.⁸⁰ This Israel did not have social classes as they depended heavily upon one another for food, resources, and safety. Israel did not have classes because they were reacting to their former oppression and determined that form of ruling would not exploit them again.⁸¹ The people of Israel maintained their full civil rights until the era of the

⁷⁹ Ibid., 261

⁸⁰ Bruce Malchow, *Social Justice in the Hebrew Bible*, (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 10

⁸¹ Ibid., 10

Kings, specifically Solomon, in which monarchy entered in a more compulsive manner. King Solomon lived in luxury and supported these costs from tax increases and the unreasonable labor of the people. In 1 Kings, it states that King Solomon conscripted forced labor out of all of Israel and this policy lessened the amount of farmers working the land and there was less food.⁸² This policy among others began to create a divide of economic difference among the people and capitalism then created classism among Israel. This injustice continued for years to come and these disparities were only exacerbated during times of war with surrounding nations/cities and created a dynamic in which systemic ills created an unhealthy social justice.

Those who were the recipients of injustice were often referred to as the “poor” in the Hebrew bible described through several words, but all have similar meanings. All of the words (*ani*, *anawim*, *dal*, *ebyon*, and *ras*) refer to those in want, those who are without the means to protect themselves from oppression, and have become poor through injustice.⁸³ Let’s take a deeper look into a few Old Testament examples from the prophetic and wisdom literature that highlights the impact of these injustices and how God perceives and intervenes in times of injustice. Primarily, the Hebrew word used for justice in the old testament is “*mispat*”⁸⁴ which implies that rights are due to every individual in the community and that the implementation of such justice restores the

⁸²1 Kings 5:13-15

“King Solomon raised a levy of forced labor out of all Israel; and the levy numbered thirty thousand men. And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month in relays; they would be a month in Lebanon and two months at home; Adoni’ram was in charge of the levy. Solomon also had seventy thousand burden-bearers and eighty thousand hewers of stone in the hill country.”

⁸³ Bruce Malchow, *Social Justice in the Hebrew Bible*, (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 12

⁸⁴ *Mispat*—translated as “justice” or judgment based on the verb *sapat* that is ordinarily translate “judge” but can also mean “govern” and “intervene to bring a situation to an appropriate resolution.” It is then the decision or action that results when someone judges.

situation or environment which initially promoted equity and harmony in the community.⁸⁵ The prophetic is loaded with examples of the use of “mispat” as prophets were often summoned by kings and rulers of the land to forecast the outcome of pending decisions in times of war or as a means to mitigate communal and/or national issues. More importantly, prophets were advocates for justice and often reminded the people and ruler of the consequences of not enacting the works of justice.

There were several prophets whose times of prophetic authority followed right behind, one after the other. Micah was a prophet whose prophetic timeline was from 742-687 B.C. and his prophetic career followed that of Amos. Micah prophesied during the reign of Ahaz and Hezekiah; a time in which Ahaz created horrible conditions of injustice along with his successors but hope came to the leadership of Judah upon Hezekiah’s reign. Micah had a strong voice against economic inequality. In Micah 2, he gives voice to how the wealthy have more luxury because they have stripped other citizens of their possessions and he pictures the oppressors as wicked individuals who plan the seizing of property from all leaving them poor and destitute.⁸⁶ Micah heralds the injustices of the upper class and gives instructions to the Israelites in the sixth chapter. Micah prophetically utters that God requires the mortal, mere humanity to act justly, love mercy, and to walk humbly with God.⁸⁷ This instruction is followed by a warning of pending doom and destruction. Despite the affluency of the upper class and the deprivation of the lower class, Micah asserts that it is not the sacrifice or power of first

⁸⁵ Bruce Malchow, *Social Justice in the Hebrew Bible*, (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1996) 16

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 41

⁸⁷ Micah 6:8

born that grants access to the divine but rather it is just acts of justice and mercy in humility that grabs the attention of God.

Micah's prophetic oracle is core and central to this writing as it was the scripture verse that reinvigorated my understanding and perspective of justice as a Pentecostal. I am sure I had heard the scripture more than enough, but it was in the context of rules and judgment. This time I heard the scripture under the premise in which it was written, liberation and love. Ironically however, Micah and a number of the other prophets maintained upper class status and educational backgrounds potentially causing a divide in the ability to be heard by all. This wealthy status granted them the ear of the wealthy but was there a disconnect then to the constituents of the disenfranchised, the poor? Micah and a number of the other prophets may have shown how the work of the Spirit transcends the frivolous divides of humanity and his advocacy against injustice was for the poor but ultimately it was for all. These affluent prophets were moved enough to risk trouble with their own class by taking the side of the needy.⁸⁸ In chapter 3, Micah gives a strong rebuke to leaders and rulers while affirming the power of the Spirit and the advocacy of justice. "But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression to Israel his sin. Hear this, you leaders of Jacob, you rulers of Israel who despise justice and distort all that is right."⁸⁹ This is followed up by a prophesy of pending doom. It is critical to note here that the advocacy for social justice and equity for the poor did not remove the Spiritual obligation of the poor to follow the statutes of God. The justice of God was and is for all.

⁸⁸ Bruce Malchow, *Social Justice in the Hebrew Bible*, (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 34

⁸⁹ Micah 3: 8-9

One of the prophets who advocate for social justice and equity for a long time was Jeremiah and he too came from the upper class and was an educated person. Jeremiah began prophesying during the reign of Josiah and came to the forefront during the reign of Jehoiakim and was a victim of the Babylonian captivity. Jeremiah directly addressed a tyrant king reminding him of the seat that he sits in and how his following is not the same following as those who seek the God of the Israelites. Jeremiah told him to act with justice and righteousness and free the oppressed doing no harm to the stranger, the orphan, the widow, or to anyone.⁹⁰ Jeremiah went further and directly attacked Jehoiakim as one who built his house by unrighteousness and his upper rooms by injustice.(v. 13-17).⁹¹ These actions are a blatant disconnect from God and lack and understanding of the expectations and requirements of God due to consumption with greed and evil.

Malchow lifts an interesting observation that is connected to the aforementioned concern of connectedness of affluent prophets with the oppressed beyond political advocacy. In addition to the call for justice, the law codes and Near Eastern texts appeal for gifts to the poor but it is seldom seen in the prophetic books. This is possibly due to the prophets believing it was not a good time to ask for charity from the unjust.⁹² This lifts a theological and pragmatic tension in that contained within the work of social justice is the call for righteousness and advocacy but it is also coupled with the work of those calls. Malchow gives a compelling justification in that the oppressors should give the needy what they need and not what the unjust can simply do without.⁹³ The prophet

⁹⁰ Jer. 22:2-3

⁹¹ Jer. 22: 13-17

⁹² Bruce Malchow, *Social Justice in the Hebrew Bible*, (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 39

⁹³ Bruce Malchow, *Social Justice in the Hebrew Bible*, (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 39

Ezekiel does list out acts of justice likened to that of Matthew 25.⁹⁴ In the New Testament, Jesus specifically tells the people what these acts of justice are but Jesus does it in a way that is directly connected to His deity as an equivalent of sorts to the disenfranchised, the oppressed.

What specifically is the duty of the justified in this work to the other that is equivalent to that which has been done to and in Christ? There have been some theological differences in the location of justification in the life of the Spirit by way of indwelling and filling. I will not unpack all of those here however, it is important to lift that the theological understanding that separates justification from the work of the Spirit which asserts a more legalistic approach to salvation. Such a soteriology does not give full credit and acknowledgement to the holistic work of the Spirit. Modern day Pentecostals fall in alignment with some early Pentecostals in that the work of justification is wrapped within the work of the Spirit. “God washes all the guilt and pollution out of our hearts, and we stand justified like a new babe that never committed sin. We have no condemnation. We can walk with Jesus and live a holy life before the Lord, if we walk in the Spirit.”⁹⁵ The latter end of this quote by an unknown early Pentecostal “if we walk in the Spirit” highlights a contingency in which justification does not stand alone but rather it is connected to the work of the Spirit.

Justification is also interpreted as a source of freedom and liberation. Justification as liberation to a new life and a new birth is indicated as we overcome all the power of the enemy, have no right to live in sin at any time, and affirm the declaration that whom

⁹⁴ Ez. 18:7, 16

⁹⁵ Frank D. Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit: Creation, Redemption, and the Triune God*, (Michigan: William Eerdmans Publishing, 2010), 83

the Son makes free, is free indeed.⁹⁶ This notion of liberation is a clear connection to the freedom of the Spirit at work within the Spirit-filled believer. Justification then lends itself to the Pentecostal as a connected event in the experiential life with God and not one that operates in isolation. E. S. Williams sees justification and regeneration (what he understands as the Spirit's indwelling) as a preparation for the Spirit filling and witness as this new birth of the temple is fitted for the infilling of the Holy Spirit.⁹⁷ For Pentecostals, there is a distinct difference between the indwelling or presence of the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit; a defining theology that separates Pentecostalism from the other denominations in Protestantism.

Soteriology and the work of the Spirit for the Pentecostal is inseparable.

Justification is the pardon and liberation experienced in the embrace of the Spirit which leads to an empowered witness seen in manifestations of the Spirit at work.⁹⁸ How then does this understanding of justification transition from the work of the Spirit to works of justice in the earth? The legalistic understanding of justification is void of the move of the Spirit which has eschatological tones throughout, but when both notions are combined, what ideological implications are there for the here and now? How does this liberation translate to social inequitable and social unjust evils that have pervaded our society and forced us to live in a cultural sickness? Where is the empowerment of the Spirit?

The ongoing work of salvation compels Pentecostal theology to understand what it means to be an individual recipient of the Spirit of Christ and what that looks like lived

⁹⁶ Frank D. Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit: Creation, Redemption, and the Triune God*, (Michigan: William Eerdsman Publishing, 2010), 83

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 84

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 85

out in the community with others. Enmeshed in the work of salvation is the theology of justification in which the justified have an inherent obligation to the work of justice. To be justified in the Spirit is to be justified with many and involves a mutual pardon within the Spirit's embrace and the reality of *koinonia*.⁹⁹ The mutuality of justification conveys an obligation to the Pentecostal, which is as much at its core as the work of salvation in that such justice as lifted by the Old Testament prophets, connect us to the heart and mission of God.

This chapter aims to lift theologically the notion that justice is not an individual experience or a ticket into a righteous relationship with God. Justification of the believer is the right, the responsibility to live out that justice in community with and for others. This notion of repudiation or forgiveness has dominated the understanding of justification and stands to be addressed and re-engaged by the Pentecostal church. Often referred to as social doctrine, Markus Barth builds upon his defense of lost appropriateness of justification in sharing that justification is God's gift of the "other" to the just community and that a rediscovery of the communal nature of justification would help restore this lost ideology.¹⁰⁰ The lost nature plays a major factor and part in the racial and class divide within the Christian church, inclusive of Pentecostalism. A revisit of the justification theology removes individualism which is self-serving and promotes the agenda of one race or class of people and suffocates the work and move of the Spirit. The justified work of Jesus Christ was a miracle of resurrection and Spiritual impartation that produces not a just individual but a just community.¹⁰¹ This community is comprised of diversity

⁹⁹ Frank D. Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit: Creation, Redemption, and the Triune God*, (Michigan: William Eerdmans Publishing, 2010), 258

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 260

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 261

but to get to such a point there has to be a group of people that are able to acknowledge this new understanding and embark upon the process of transformative change. The African American Pentecostal church is a place that I propose could be the front runners for the onset of such a transformation.

As sufferers of injustice who have fought against systemic inequities and political/social/moral ills and are Spirit filled individuals who possess divine access to the power of heaven, African American Pentecostalism stands to see justice in a new and reformed light of understanding justification. Believers should understand themselves as vehicles of the justice of God and this belief stimulates the moral imagination through reading and reflecting upon the Bible.¹⁰² The issues that have plagued the life of the African American should be a stimulating factor in working for the injustices of the “other” even if the “other” is sitting within the pews of the ecclesia of the African American Pentecostal church. This paper is specific to the African American church due to my current church context however this research is applicable to all believers of the gospel of Christ. However, the sensitivity gauge is heightened with those who are in solidarity with the marginalized, the oppressed, the disenfranchised.

The work of justice, through a key understanding of justification, is only effective if the individual(s) work within a community concerned for the transformation of social life, economic relationships, and justice worldwide.¹⁰³ The African American community stands on the precipice of such a powerful movement rather than being a segmented witness that has been historically witnessed for decades. Moreover, the

¹⁰² Walter Houston, *Contending for Justice: Ideologies and Theologies of Social Justice in the Old Testament*, (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 230

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 231

African American Pentecostal community should feel a divine pressing from the Spirit to awaken this moral imperative and focus efforts on social advocacy and social justice not just for the African American community but on the behalf of all. Sadly, the injustices faced and endured by African American Pentecostals within the denomination has lessened the gauge of importance and many have become content within the separate nature of the spirit at work amidst the racial divides; if such a notion is theologically possible.

In Chapter 2, the history of the black and white divide was explored along with highlights of its theological implications. Next in this chapter, I do not want to focus deeper on that divide but rather showcase the theology of the African American Pentecostal as the cultural freedom of blackness that connects with the Spiritual freedom of the Spirit calling forth a greater moral imperative not yet fully recognized. The black experience is inextricably the journey of a people, their God, and their faith and is also one of the most gruesome experiences in human suffering of the world.¹⁰⁴ This black experience highlights a continuous dichotomy between powerful sustaining experiences with God juxtaposed with racial and economic sufferings of this world.

How is it that a marginalized people can sing songs of freedom and march marches of justice while returning home to an unchanged society? The unadulterated power of blackness empowers a culture of people to rest on a strength of duality; the strength of the ancestors stripped from their homelands and the power of the Spirit lifted to the believer from the sufferings of Christ on the cross. This is an intersection of power through the injustice of suffering that compels the African American to center and

¹⁰⁴ Antipas Harris, "Black Pentecostal Hermeneutics? James H. Cone's Theological Sources and Black Pentecostalism," *Pneuma* 41 (2019), 203

forward the charge against injustices and inequities of all kind. Cone asserts that the struggle of black people through the horrors of slavery and Jim Crow is intensely theological and Spiritual, deeply rooted in black identity and faith formation.¹⁰⁵ The sufferings of African American has to be reframed and reclaimed in order to effectively initiate a movement that has justice at its core and the Spirit at work in and throughout.

Blackness is symbolically used to identify the culture of a marginalized people who have endured sufferings and sought out redemption as a means of both liberation and healing. Blackness does not seek to exclude others but rather it is a safe space created for those of African heritage in America. The formation of any community involves the identification of who's in and who's out and these persons find the space to tell the story of their past and shared aspirations for the future.¹⁰⁶ This blackness is often times interpreted through Spirituality as one comes in solidarity with a suffering God who sets out to liberate them from all oppressors. Black liberation theology captures this understanding and sees God as deliverer likened to that of the children of Israel and the captivity in Egypt. God partners with human beings in order to free them as God is free, as God assumes the majority of the responsibility in black liberation theism.¹⁰⁷ This is not the mindset of all black scholars as William Jones offers a different approach of the African American to God.

Jones suggests a conception of God that ascribes higher priority on human agency and responsibility for improving social conditions, humanocentric theism. This pulls God out of the racial divide and bias and centers the argument of justice on humanity and

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 203

¹⁰⁶ Frederick Ware, *African American Theology: An Introduction*, (Kentucky: John Knox Press, 2016), 113

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 113

not history alone. Nuances of both lines of thought and approach to God pervade the missiology of the African American Pentecostal Church and mandates a recalibration to restore justice as a core principle to the work of the Spirit, to the life of the Christian. These pervading thoughts, coupled with the Spirit's filling and powerful embodiment, potentially creates a chasm through which the African American Pentecostal understands a life lived out in the world operating through a lens of both sufferer and bearer of good news and power.

The black American Christian has been able to travail the trenches of injustice due primarily to their faith and trust in God. This has created a fortified lens through which black people interpret and engage all things in life, including the Bible as its frontrunner.

“The religious posture that grew out of their biblical formation thus ‘opened the prison doors’ in the sense that it empowered African American who were depleted of faith. In accordance with their construal of the biblical message, transformative power accompanied a partnership with God, which ushered in a more proactive stance of the slave against oppression. Gaining a better understanding of both their masters and themselves gave enslaved black opportunities to be proactive in assessing the social affairs of the day.”¹⁰⁸

Here is where the African American Pentecostal gets called back to the foundation and renewal of biblical practices of justice in the Bible. Empowerment for the slave came from the biblical message and this message released a transformative power for them while enslaved and suffering injustices daily, hourly.

What advantages and effects could there be if the modern-day African American Pentecostal was to reclaim the hermeneutic of the biblical message of justice and enact revisions within the theology of the experience of the work of the Spirit? The

¹⁰⁸ Derek S. Hicks, *Reclaiming Spirit in the Black Faith Tradition*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 112

hermeneutic of reclamation, coined by D. Hicks, is defined as the process of reclaiming empowering principles from truncated depictions of black life used for an active and continual remapping of a tangible constricted society.¹⁰⁹ Such a reclamation of the African American Pentecostal pulling from the genius of the slave in transformative engagement with the biblical text would lift justice and the fight thereof as a crux of the Christian life, a move of power that embodies liberation and the preservation of the African American life.

The black experience that is entangled within the experiential nature of the Holy Spirit for the African American Pentecostal stands at a limited place of monotony and redundancy without the implication of social justice, a divinely ordained agent of change. Religion for black people is not an opium but it is a tactical mechanism used as an aggressive response to oppression.¹¹⁰ Aggressive responses are seen in the Pentecostal experiences as all ungodly forces are rebuked, resisted, and defeated with the raising of hands, the powerful declarations and screams, and the energetic dances of victory and triumph. Yet, where is the African American Pentecostal in response to, not their survived oppression, but the voice of power advocating for the oppressed and visibly charged against the oppressor? There stands to be reclaiming of the scriptures of justice implemented within not only our pedagogy but manifested within our work, our action. A pneumatological liberation theology involves both the rereading of scripture and the rereading of the human experience in search of the presence of the Spirit, leading, correcting, and liberating [and moving into action.]¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 112

¹¹⁰ Antipas Harris, "Black Pentecostal Hermeneutics? James H. Cone's Theological Sources and Black Pentecostalism," *Pneuma* 41 (2019), 205

¹¹¹ Ibid., 216

The theology of black suffering coupled with the power of the pneuma drenched in the salvific blood of Christ who has justified all by grace is where African American Pentecostals find their start. The task then is to centralize this same justice in the core of the Pentecostal theology that is not solely focused on experiential power or self-fulfilling power. The task then is to channel the victory over the suffering of black people and initiate targeted action for the sake of justice for all. Racial divides and seeds of degradation have crept into our places of worship, our denominational styles, and our theologies and has succeeded in taking us farther and farther away from the biblical mandate. Our focus has then become androcentric and we do a disservice of duality; we hinder the liberating move of the Spirit and we fail to do the work of justice, advocating for the oppressed. The Christian church should be a community committed to the establishment of God's justice in the world as we serve the Lord who came not to be served but to serve; to serve the victim of injustice by putting in practice the Bible's values of justice.¹¹² Service is not possible without proper pedagogy to not only inform but to inspire and instigate one's Christian witness to action for the sake of justice.

In the book of Acts, Chapter 4 when speaking of the movement of the Holy Spirit after Pentecost, the text informs us that there were no needy persons around and as a need arose the needs were met by all. This is the crux of Pentecost. The glossolalia has its place, the charismatic style and gestures of worship has its place, but what really shapes the faith of the Pentecostal is understanding that the release of the Holy Spirit on earth was about justification by grace lived out in the salvific work of Christ with power and authority. The Spirit of that miraculous day was a battle against all forms of racism and

¹¹²Walter Houston, *Contending for Justice: Ideologies and Theologies of Social Justice in the Old Testament*, (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 231

prejudice as Pentecost at its core was about ethnic diversity so that the gospel is not just for Israel but for all.¹¹³ The African American Pentecostal and Pentecostals of all ethnicities could stand to meet again at the day of Pentecost to understand again, to receive again, to ingest again the power of the Holy Spirit that not only transforms for the sake of self-gain, but for the sake of community development and assembly in the name of justice. We stand in need of a cleansing of hearts, major surgery is necessary to rectify these glitches in the faith as they separate us from the Spirit of God.¹¹⁴ The Pentecostal whose theological premise is totally dependent upon the work of the Spirit must connect again the rudiments of that work and join again in the work of Justice with the God of justice.

To pragmatically bring this into greater clarity, I want to highlight Amos Yong's engagement with scholarly Afro/African American Pentecostal voices (Frank Chikane, Cheryl Sanders, and Robert Beckford) on the deprivation and demands of justice. Frank Chikane shares the injustices of South African apartheid and describes the task of the Pentecostal in connection with justice as one of duality, in possible tension one with the other. He shares that Spirit-filled Christians cannot be neutral [in situations of injustices] but are required to take sides with the oppressed and to work toward the liberation of both the oppressed and oppressor.¹¹⁵ Chikane describes his as a deep devotional struggle both against faith and for faith.¹¹⁶ The task mentioned earlier is exemplified here where the Pentecostal cannot simply trust the Spirit to do the work alone but that work requires

¹¹³ Samuel Lee, *A New King of Pentecostalism: Promoting Dialogue for Change*, (Amsterdam: Foundation University Press, 2011), 109

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 109

¹¹⁵ Amos Yong, "Justice Deprived, Justice Demanded: AfroPentecostalism and the Task of World Pentecostal Theology Today," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 15, no. 1 (2006), 131

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 132

the action of the believer. Beckford, on the other hand, shares his perspective on justice and Pentecostalism through a new and forming faith in Britain (inclusive of indigenous Africans and Caribbeans) that demands justice. This is an international movement that promotes and celebrates African difference and the diaspora, the theological focus that seeks out ways to sustain black identity, and one that is fully engaged in the tensions of the world (both other-worldly and this worldly) for the sustenance for personal faith and advocacy for social justice.¹¹⁷ Beckford's goal, according to Yong, is the empowerment of the black church in Britain in the face of socialized and institutional oppression.

Beckford's engagement with the power of Pentecostalism is not one of waiting for the right, but rather demanding the just right to be acknowledged and revered. The last voice lifted in Yong's article is Dr. Cheryl Sanders, who is a female scholar of Pentecostalism trailblazing new thought and engagement for the next generation. Sanders lifts a Pentecostalism of the Sanctified-Holiness Movement who considered themselves explicitly, in the world but not of the world. This creates a form of what she calls, "exilic" people. An exilic people of God will always ride the tension between theology of protest and a theology of engagement; a theology of exile opens up the possibility of a reclamation of biblical motifs of exile and hospitality which are key in advocacy for justice.¹¹⁸ Yong concludes the article by asking questions, one specifically and repeatedly, where are the modern day voices of Pentecost? More specifically, "where are the engaging voice of Afro Pentecostalism, that can inform and enrich the redemption of suffering through the construction of a just and peaceful society? A

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 136

¹¹⁸ Amos Yong, "Justice Deprived, Justice Demanded: AfroPentecostalism and the Task of World Pentecostal Theology Today," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 15, no. 1 (2006), 145

relevant question asked by Yong and the budding pool of Pentecostal scholars in so much as this paper is written to attempt to bring some form of solution to such vital and timely inquiry.

The mark of African American Pentecostalism must transcend the charisma of the external effects of the Spirit and the other-worldly battle, but that same fervor and power must be shown in the fight for justice. True Pentecost is concerned with the poor, the oppressed, orphans, widows, and migrants; a movement that Sam Lee suggests is time for a “new kind of Pentecostalism.” This isn’t new in the sense of a fresh creation but rather revisiting fresh revelation from scripture that makes the fight for justice a mandate which informs and orchestrates our moral duty. Amos 5:24 says, “but let justice roll on like a river; righteousness like a never-failing stream.” These are the true marks of Pentecost that should be the defining tenets of the faith and enhanced by the charisma that celebrates the breaking chains of oppression, the demolition of racism/classism, and the irrevocable death of injustices and inequities of all kind for all humankind. African American Pentecostalism needs a revival toward a redemptive theology bathed in power and social action.

Chapter 4

Social Justice and the Classroom

The immediate climate of my church is to do things along the lines of the norm and the least disruption is best. Pulling a project of this caliber together was not going to be an easy task however, I knew it would be much needed. There are three main ministries in the church that are assigned to outreach in the acts of justice, but those ministries have low numbers of membership and often struggle to obtain participation for the various activities. The three main ministries are “Taking it to the Streets,” “Matthew 25,” and the Missions Team. The latter of the three exists only in the form of renewed hope that the results of this paper will help to revive the ministry again. The first is a ministry specific to spreading the gospel in the urban areas with a personal focus on person to person engagement. Matthew 25 is the overarching ministry umbrella that oversees the last two and its primary focus is on establishing opportunities for parishioners to focus their Christian duties on outreach and engagement.

The formal vision statement of Matthew 25 is “to perfect outreach, through serving beyond the church walls. To plant a seed by providing a need. To reach the unreachable, touch the untouchable, and love the unloved by bringing them the living hope of Jesus Christ.”¹¹⁹ This is supported by a mission that quotes Matthew 25:35-40.¹²⁰ In 2012, the ministry was divided into a number of focus areas that included ministry to homelessness, substance abusers, and the incarcerated and ex-offenders. There are only

¹¹⁹ www.crlministries.com

¹²⁰ Matthew 25: 35-40

two ministry focus areas for outreach/mission and they both struggle with attendance and participation from members of the church.

One of the areas I had to mentally prepare for was the evaluation of these ministries through a doctoral paper. I conversed with church and ministry leads framing the project as one that seeks to bring about viable solutions for regeneration, revitalization, and restoration so that the church as a whole could render a greater impact on the church members, the surrounding community, and the world. This project preparation required some digging and the peeling back of some layers within the current outreach ministry. I discovered that there was great disdain. The outreach ministry was concerned that the church viewed the ministry from a microscopic perspective and that this perception contributed to the lack of support and growth. There were some changes in leadership as a result of this lack of support and the ministry has continued to struggle yet retains its commitment to serve. Additionally, before I could formulate my ministry concern into a project, I had to do some research on performance and participants. Most events are poorly attended and supported unless marketed to the church as a church-wide event. If the event is not marketed as such, the attendance is extremely low for a church that records its membership at 7,000. The members of Matthew 25 are primarily boomers and there lies a generational gap and ultimately a potential deterrent to both growth and participation.

The ministry has also abandoned many of the targeted efforts towards outreach and social justice listed on the ministry chart due to lack of participation, interest, and reliable leadership. After attending the Revolutionary Love Conference in 2018 (in New York sponsored by Dr. Jacqui Lewis and Middle Collegiate Church), I felt an immediate

mandate to be a part of the change needed within my local parish so that the focus of Christianity could be redirected from one of individualism to one of love to others, for others, on the behalf of others. This would render a new understanding of justice lived out in the Christian life beyond the Wednesday night bible study and the Sunday morning worship. These restored opportunities for sacrificial love and moral obligation for the sake of justice in the world would have innumerable benefits to the Christian life and the vitality of one's membership to the local ecclesia. The question was then posed, "is there a deeper reason beyond internal mishaps and minimal marketing that has its foot on the neck of this ministry, hindering its growth and impact?" There are two answers that came to mind that are the foundational rocks of this doctoral paper; intergenerational divides and pedagogical intentionality. These are two major feats to approach but the start towards change is detrimental to the church's overall growth and success. I am reminded of Christ declaration in Matthew where he states, "when I was hungry, you did not feed me...." In my proposing an intentional pedagogy around social justice and the gospel along with intentional incorporation of the millennial and other upcoming generations, I came up with a project that would strategically address both.

The research methodology of the project is a study designed to both explore and elicit institutional knowledge and pragmatic approaches towards the work of justice lived out in the Christian life through outreach through qualitative analysis. The qualitative approach is conceptually concerned with the participants belief and behavior from the researcher's perspective and will be assessed through a pre and post interview/test (given at the beginning and end of a four-week bible study around justice and the church) in order to further guide the study's recommendations. My sample size will be a total of 6-8

parishioners of the local church who will consist of 4-5 young adults and 1-2 adults currently working in the outreach ministry. This pool is being divided in such a way to give real space to the power of succession and impartation.

The participants for this research will be randomly selected based on present or past outreach ministry-based encounters. The age range of participants will be between 18-50, all African American, an even number of male and females from differing socioeconomic backgrounds. This is a slight change from the prospectus to highlight the need for intergenerational discussion and engagement. The participants will be asked to review and sign an "Informed Consent Form." It will be administered in person at the first and last week of the four-week bible small group bible study. The participants will receive the form for review and sign before the test is given and offered an opportunity to ask questions about it once it has been received by them.

The project 4-week bible study, specific to the subject of justice through the lens of the biblical text accompanied by present day current events. It was a bit concerning for me that the attendance would be consistent with only eight people. The bible study was scheduled on consecutive days and times to help alleviate any glitches or errors in the research project. The scriptures were explicated thoroughly then applied to everyday life and situations both within the ecclesia and in the community/world. The current news was a blessed irony as it was during the time of the Guyger/Jean case. The blessed irony included examinations of responses from a white female leader, an African American rather popular male leader in the African American church, and words from Congressman Cummings who was a strong activist in the work of justice.

Of the twelve participants invited and ten accepted and attended the first session, eight finished all four weeks of the project. The participants were a mix of current Matthew 25 members and some that were not. The ones that were not, for the sake of reliability in the project, were individuals who either had an interest in social justice, were professionally employed to do similar work, and/or took initiative in their own personal lives to be a part of external outreach initiatives. The project eight was a perfect split of the classification pool and were able to complete both the pre and post tests. The pre/post tests were set up to not only highlight pedagogy and participation, but to examine how clearly they were able to connect the work of justice to the life of Christianity. This connection to Christianity would alleviate a pull and a tug for membership and participation, it would then be understood as our moral obligation, our just duty as Christian representatives of Christ on the earth.

Each participant was asked to complete the “Informed Consent Form” describing the project, including the type of research being conducted, their role in the research, the expected outcomes, and the name and contact information of the researcher. The consent form advised participants of the confidential nature of the research, the importance of maintaining their anonymity, that their participation is completely voluntary, and that if at any time they felt uncomfortable or changed their minds, they would immediately terminate their participation in the study.

The pre/post-test consisted of thirteen questions and was designed to elicit data associated with their ordination process experience. The collected data was comparatively analyzed taking into consideration, my hypotheses, the responses of the participants, and the literature reviewed for this project. The goals of this study included

(1) the revitalization of the outreach ministry through theological and social pedagogy around the work of justice; (2) the education and empowerment of the youth and young adult population to be the forerunners; and (3) the revival of the work of justice as the Christian duty.

The project in the form of an engaging bible study was implemented over the course of 4 weeks inclusive of four sessions. One of the four sessions was conducted electronically as a webinar and had full attendance and participation. The remaining three sessions were conducted in person in the church's conference room and all persons were present and on time. The conference room included one oblong table that has about 12 chairs surrounding it and each session was supplied with refreshments and drink. The sessions began at 6:30 pm and generally ended on time apart from a few conversations that continued as the group began to pack and exit the room. Conversations were very engaging and extremely insightful respective to generational connectedness and overall church member perception. The first session began with jumping right into an introduction of this doctoral paper and how this may assist the church in the coming months and years since a paradigm shift has already been on the horizon and stated by church leadership. The first session did not include introductions because I wanted to ensure that all persons were able to converse without a bias of any kind. Every participant in the room did not know each other by name but at least knew of the other person, if even by a chance sighting on a few occasions. This level of anonymity made the first session even more engaging and increased the level of transparency and openness.

There were eight participants in the session with ages that range from 29-54 and covered the social generations of Millennials, Gen X, and Boomers. The median age was 37. The occupations of the participants include areas of Health care/management, commercial contracting, musician (“creative”), business owner, financial analyst, and sales. The clergy classifications included lay members, ministers, and elders. The participants are all members of the church and have year-long memberships that range from 12-23 years.

Week One

Participants were asked to begin the session without any pedagogical prompting or introduction and complete the pretest. It was specifically asked of each person to complete the test in its entirety and all additional project information/paperwork was given to each person. After completion of the test, I gave a project presentation and introduction along with an operating definition for “social justice” to be used throughout the project. Social justice was defined as just acts of the church through mission, advocacy, and outreach to combat the social ills and injustices of society with moral sensitivity and obligation. The framework of social injustices stem from the structure of society which favors the rich and disadvantages the poor, racism and implicit bias, and the overall disparity of resources and opportunities governed by a sick and corrupt system. The following rhetorical questions were posed as guiding questions for the next four sessions: Where is the church, the work of the gospel in these social strata? What is our role? What is our commission and how is that lived out from the Pentecostal perspective?

The session topic was specific to each person's perceived role in the church, community, and the world under the context of social justice. The learning objectives (applicable to all four sessions) were to explore the biblical understanding of life in community and its relation to social justice and the church's involvement. The second objective was to engage biblical material to gain a better understanding of social justice and how God views justice. Lastly, to identify one's current role and understanding of the work of social justice lived out in the community and the church. After explaining the project and the "why are we here," we viewed a Ted Talk video by Adam Foss entitled, "Who will lead our next movement?" This was a rather riveting video and one that provoked great conversation. The format of each session included some creative form or use of current events to stimulate dialogue and challenging conversation to dive deeper in one's practical and philosophical understanding of social justice. Adam Foss is a young man on the cusp of the Millennial and Gen X generation lines which quickly engaged the attention of the Millennials in the room. Foss spoke of the injustices that he has endured as a bi-racial man who identifies as African American, and shared his knowledge of justice fighters alongside his experience with politicians and news informants. He shared a grave concern of where our society is headed socially, educationally, and economically and charged the hearers with the question, "who will lead the next civil rights movement?"¹²¹

This simple yet powerfully moving question sent chills around the room as they were already questioning why and how they were selected to be in this room and additionally, they were forced to do some intrinsic work and ponder what their role was

¹²¹ Adam Foss, "Who will lead our next civil rights movement?," Youtube Video, March 1, 2018, <https://youtu.be/4a584G2YXuY>

or would be in the next movement. Powerful is the best way to describe this question because to the hearer it seems to have an automatic declaration of their worthiness to be a part of the movement if by way of follower or leader. In a world where the goal through technology and social media appears to force everyone to follow the trend, there are power-packed agents of change that have the potential to be new trend setters across the church, the community, and the world. When asked, “who will lead the next movement?” some of the eyes in the room went down, some roamed to their neighbor, and some were very contemplative. This was a perfect segue into the biblical material.

The exegetical scripture methodology used to implement the bible study series included both old and new testament scriptures that would assist in providing additional context to the moral and Christian imperative to show that the work of social justice. The first session included the following scripture texts; Matthew 25: 31-40 and Acts 10: 34-38.¹²² It was critical to begin with Matthew 25 as that is the current name of our outreach ministry. There was a different level of engagement and understanding as we walked through the scriptures unpacking its riches and making them applicable to everyday life. The familiar title of the outreach ministry retained greater impact and significance as the scriptural fortitude of its name came alive. Matthew 25 no longer appeared as a ministry that you could join but it now rendered itself as a biblical mandate that every believer was a part of by default. If the individuals in the room took on the task of becoming trailblazers for this project, there would be no need to pull and tug for membership to the outreach ministry. Membership would be an automatic as it would no longer be

¹²² Matthew 25: 31-40 and Acts 10: 34-38

something to join but rather an innate part of one's moral duty as a Christian, as a believer, as an African American Pentecostal.

As a counter new testament witness, we moved to explore Acts 10: 34-38. This setting of scripture occurs after the onset of Pentecost and Peter begins to release the amazing news that the Spirit of God is not only for the Jews but for everyone. In the work of social justice led through by the Spirit, there is no respecter of persons and that the power of Christ is offered to all who believe in Him. What is particularly key, and was highlighted in the bible study is the diverse nature and breadth of scripture. This was followed up by Peter's declaration in verse 38 that Christ did good and brought healing to those who were oppressed. Not only did Christ do these things but the text says that He did them with power. The class begin to discuss the Spirit at work in our just acts in our everyday occurrences, and in our intentional service one to the other through mission and outreach. The additional plus of the Lord's power allowed us to have a modified perception to the work of justice in that not only is it our moral duty, but it is our Spiritual inclination to do the work of the Spirit on the earth. It is our earthly commission, after the release of the Spirit on the earth, to continue the work of Christ in the fight against any and all oppressive forces both Spiritually and socially.

The bible study session ended with a time of pause and reflection on the Adam Foss video and two scripture references. Here are a few of the contemplative questions put to the project group: is there anything about the scripture that has jolted or provoked your thinking/understanding of social justice? Often, we are always aware of the need, but does this review of scripture spark a light of interest or compulsion to learn more about how the bible views justice? Do you have a better understanding of the biblical

mandate for the work of social justice? Why has this focus been misplaced in our theological pedagogy and work within the ecclesia? As African Americans, have we lost focus on our moral duty and obligation to the other, to the next, to our neighbor? What role has the new generational cultures played in such a powerful tenet of the faith being moved to bottom of the to-do list? It is this postmodern culture of the African American church, no longer exclusively the white churches, where the Pentecostal church is on the sideline of truth and justice allowing the struggles of underrepresented and oppressed groups to continue but it is also the African American church filled with this same underrepresented group allowing injustice and inequality to prevail.¹²³ Here lies an interesting conundrum, not only does the African American Pentecostal church possess the power mentioned in Acts and the commission given in Matthew 25, but the very people who need the service of just acts are sitting right in our congregations and receiving little to no services. There is church attendance at services but there is no intentional service to the church attendees. The bible study ended with a charge to ponder those thoughts through their everyday interactions and doings so that mandate of justice comes to the forefront of their minds daily.

Week Two

The next session occurred on the following Tuesday at the same time and the participants received two articles earlier in the week. The two articles were specific to the Guyger/Jean case which flooded and challenged Christians, particularly African American Christians, to wrestle with the notion of forgiveness and injustice. What is the Christian response to injustice? The first article was titled, "Both Jean's Brother's Offer

¹²³ R. S. Harvey, "Restoring the Social Justice Identity of the Black Church," *Inquiries Journal/Student Pulse*, 2, no. 2 (2010): <http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/a?id=162>

of Forgiveness Went Viral. His Mother’s Calls for Justice Should Too” and the second article was, “Dear White People: About Botham Jean, Forgiveness, Justice, and Cheap Grace.”¹²⁴ The temptation to begin the session with unpacking and addressing the articles was very tempting however, I wanted to ensure for project consistency that the foundation of scripture was set before diving into any current news for the sake of application. This session began with a quick recap of the last class and transitioned into the biblical text assigned from the wisdom literature, Proverbs 21:1-3, 7, 15 and Psalm 82: 1-4.¹²⁵

In the texts stated above, we looked at justice from a proverbial perspective as a means of enhancing our biblical pedagogy on justice, before looking at the two controversial articles. Proverbs lifts that the heart of a man is weighed by the Lord and to do justice and righteousness is more acceptable to God than sacrifice. This stands in equal weight to the scripture that renders that “obedience is better than sacrifice.”¹²⁶ To do the work of justice, to be righteous, is more important than any form of sacrifice that could be offered to God. The intervention of good on the part of the oppressed and destitute gives greater reward than that of sacrifice and is deemed of greater acceptance in the sight of the Lord. The importance, therefore, of the work of justice in the life of the believer is a core tenet likened to that of righteousness. This is not a core tenet to be documented or listed in a church’s by laws but rather this is life in action.

¹²⁴ karyncarlo.net/2019/10/03/dear-white-people-about-botham-jean-forgiveness-justice-and-cheap-grace/

www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2019/october-web-only/botham-jean-forgiveness-amber-guyger.html

¹²⁵ Proverbs 21:1-3, 7, 15 and Psalm 82: 1-4

¹²⁶ 1 Samuel 15:22

Psalm 82 highlights God as judge in which the request is for justice to be given to the weak and the fatherless and to sustain the rights of those who have endured denigration and degradation. The author includes an additional request for the weak and needy to be rescued from the hand of the wicked, the societal ills of systemic oppression. The participants in the class were moved with enlightenment and conviction. The Pentecostal experience often focuses on the empowerment of one's self through the power of the Spirit, but to what end and for what purpose? To only win in Spiritual warfare? I would submit that the work of justice is a part of said warfare and equal pedagogical attention and emphasis needs to be placed in our churches so the empowered can empower effectively and holistically. With these biblical truths at the foundation, we moved into the articles to put these abstract principles into real life application.

By this time, this Guyger-Jean has taken over the Christian social media world and the responses of many believers were both intriguing and jarring. I believe this is due to a lack of pedagogical understanding of the biblical stance on social justice juxtaposed with the African American experience of being continuous recipients of those systemic ills racially, economically, politically, and socially. There are many layers here and the class was raised to another level of challenge in their perceptions and understandings. The class engaged the two articles and lifted the following questions: what is the Christian response to injustice? What is the line between forgiveness and passivity? What is the appropriate blend of the oppression of the African American and the liberating power of the Spirit? Are Christians too accepting and accommodating when the fight for justice should be at an all-time high? Is there justice in forgiveness? What is the church's current response? How do we understand God in light of

forgiveness as a moral duty vs. justice in light of moral obligation? Is there a juxtaposition? A correlation? An interconnectedness?

These among many other questions lifted, created a very healthy and lucrative dialogue which had some opposing sides. Most often the opposing sides coincided with generational differences, but there were those who were in the generational middle trying to reconcile the two sides. One of the more difficult articles to engage was the second, wherein the white Christian woman is writing an open letter to white people about the same case, forgiveness, and cheap grace. The class shared that often the difficulty is due to a break in a socialized mindset. How do you know that this woman is genuine? A white woman who affirms privilege yet understands costly grace; is she able to speak to cheap grace? Do we provide the space to hear from this person as a fellow believer, but has the physical classification of a past oppressor? How does the African American Pentecostal hear these writers and what lens have to be deactivated to hear clearly? This class did not end with reflection, but rather I thought it best to end with these questions pervading their thoughts as they carried them through the next week.

Week Three

The third session began with a recap of the second session and included a response by a prominent African American Christian leader. Jamal Bryant, whose mother introduced the theology of the Holy Spirit to the AME church, shared that such a stance of forgiveness stems from an enslaved mindset of passiveness and that injustice anywhere at any time should be addressed with fervency and rigor.¹²⁷ He reposted the picture of Botham Jean's brother embracing A. Guyger and placed "this is what slave

¹²⁷ Jamal Bryant (@jamalbryant)

conditioning looks like” over the picture. This caused a major stir on twitter, but specifically within the African American community. Have we become so numb to the social liberties afforded that we have consequently resorted back into an enslaved mentality when faced with injustices? Where has the pedagogy of justice through the power of Spirit been in our churches, bible studies, Sunday morning preaching platforms? Have we resorted to the silence of enslavement? The class began to unpack their perspectives, and some sat in a liminal place of contemplation.

We moved to 2 Samuel 8 accompanied by a video by Congressman Elijah Cummings who had passed away not more than a few days prior to the third class.¹²⁸ In 2 Samuel 8, David and his army are avenging the children of Israel against their enemies. This scripture text shows justice in action for the sake of a people who were oppressed and in bondage. Verse 14 ends with “and the Lord gave victory to David wherever he went.” So likewise, on this journey to rediscover social justice in the life of the African American Pentecostal, the Lord will be with us to triumph over the adversities and trials that will come. Congressman Elijah Cummings followed the tenacity of David and asked the participants, “What will you do?” Two hundred years from now people will ask the question, what did you do about the injustices in the world?

Week Four

The last session began with recapping the previous session and moved into a dialogue about the full bible study series. We lifted the question, what are you moved to do next and how does this bible study series impact your perception of your role in the church in light of social justice? There was adequate space given for participants to share

¹²⁸ Jackie Hicks, “Video of Elijah Cummings.,” Facebook Video, November 2019, <https://www.facebook.com/jackie.hicks.106/posts/10221505049801093>

any reflections and new thoughts in the room. Fruitful conversation spurred from the question of what will “I” do next and what do “we” need to do next in the church? There was blended engagement and aligned conversation between the mixed generations as the participants sought to troubleshoot and identify ways in which the work of social justice could be implemented and better sustained within our congregation and opportunities consistently offered to the congregants. The session culminated with the completion of the post test, but the conversations ensued. There were pockets of participants out on the parking lot discussing next steps long after the bible study session was over. In the following days and weeks, I received texts from a few of the participants identifying specific times in the worship services where justice was highlighted as an imperative of the believer by our Bishop and leader. This is not to assume that this message was not lifted before, but rather the intentional pedagogy brought the urgency to the forefront of the believer’s consciousness. If it is at the forefront of one’s consciousness, then it will be quicker to manifest in the actions of the believer.

Chapter 5:

Social Justice and the Millennial Baton

The research project conducted was a qualitative analysis study designed to both explore and elicit institutional knowledge and pragmatic approaches towards the work of justice lived out in the Pentecostal life through mission and outreach. The qualitative approach is conceptually concerned with the participants belief and behavior from the researcher's perspective and it is assessed through a pre and post interview/test (given at the beginning and end of a four-week bible study around justice and the church—see appendix A) in order to further guide the study's recommendations. My sample size was a total of eight parishioners of the local church who consisted of four young adults (millennials) and four adults currently working in the outreach ministry. This pool was divided in such a way to give real space to the power of succession and impartation, a strong suggestion in the next steps phase of this paper.

Each participant was asked to complete the “Informed Consent Form” describing the project, including the type of research being conducted, their role in the research, the expected outcomes, and the name and contact information of the researcher (see appendix B). The consent form advised participants of the confidential nature of the research, the importance of maintaining their anonymity, that their participation was completely voluntary, and that if at any time they felt uncomfortable or changed their

minds, they may immediately terminate their participation in the study. All eight participants completed the form and remained committed to the project until its end.

The interview (pre/post-test) consisted of thirteen questions and was designed to elicit data associated with their knowledge of, experience in, and desire to work in the area of outreach ministry. Both tests included ten questions soliciting answers according to the Likert scale followed by three anecdotal questions seeking details on the participants personal experience in relation to the research subject. There were several interesting outcomes to the research project and one specifically does not deal with data but rather demographics. One of the identifiers asked was denomination. All participants either identified themselves as Apostolic or Holiness on the pre-test but in comparison to the post test, 37% listed themselves as Pentecostal, 25% identified as Christian, and 12% identified as Believer. The other participants maintained the same classification. Additionally, all persons have been members of the church for more than ten years with an average membership of 17 years. It is interesting here to note that a four-week bible study intensive permitted the space for over 50% of the participants to better understand who they are and how they identify in Christendom. These percentages have implications to potential changes in pre and post test data as the theological lens through which they understand justice, or how any Christian principle has been impacted in a positive trajectory.

Another general inquiry of the demographic section asked if the participants had any experience working in outreach or in any social justice capacity. A large disparity was unveiled as the millennial group averaged about three years' experience or engagement. Of the four individuals only one who replied having no experience.

The older group of individuals, boomers, averaged about 17 years of experience will all persons reporting a minimum of seven to ten years of experience. This set the tone for a rather compelling conversation and an opportunity to venture further into the discussion of intergenerational connectedness or lack thereof. The last general inquiry that I want to highlight is the question about past training or teaching in social justice. Of all participants, only 12% (1 person) had received any form or type of training or teaching in social justice. The one person who did receive training is the actual leader of the outreach ministry of the church. This highlights three major areas of concern; millennials are potentially completely disconnected from the work of justice within my church setting; the individuals on the team have not been trained or received teaching on social justice; or they do not understand the work they do and the services they provide as a form of social justice. These initial findings lend themselves as a great starting point for internal dialogue and revision on how the church both understands and conveys the work of social justice.

The Likert scale of the first ten questions reflected a scale of 1-5 (1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree). The first statement of the pre-test and post-tests asked about a general knowledge of social justice. Seventy-five percent (75%) of participants replied with either a neutral or disagree statement indicating that they had a fair or no general knowledge of social justice. The post-test however revealed a 100% indicator from participants agreeing that they have a better understanding of social justice (2-agree responses, 6-strongly agree responses). This displays a clear need for pedagogical intentionality on the part of church leadership and education to ensure that the parishioners are aware of their just duty to serve others and

those in need, it is their moral obligation. The next statement says, “the issue of social justice affects my church, my community, and my family.” Initial responses were primarily on the agreement side but there are two indicators I would like to lift from the data. Those who were initially neutral to this question in the pre-test answered with a definitive 5 (strongly agree) in the post test. There was one outlier, a millennial, who disagreed to the statement but in the post test strongly agreed.

The next set of questions were specific to social justice engagement within the church and community. Question #3 states, “I have learned about the connection between social justice and the work of the gospel here at my church.” Seventy-five percent (75%) of participants answered either neutral or disagree. After the completion of the study, 75% replied they had learned about the connection here at the church. This is a compelling outcome because in such a short 4-week time period that is a clear difference in pedagogy, one can only imagine the possible outcome of growth and social justice activity if it was a running fiber through the doctrinal tenets of the church. When asked about opportunities to do the work of social justice in the church and/or in the community (2 separate questions), over 60% stated either they did not receive those opportunities or were not aware of the opportunities (hence a neutral classification). This showcases a huge disparity in either interest or exposure for both the millennial and the older group of participants.

The church itself stands to do a better job of sharing and marketing opportunities to assist those in need and connecting with younger generations. Likewise, the younger generations can seek out those opportunities if there was a real interest. Interest is often stemmed from knowledge and inspiration and such is the goal

of pedagogical engagement within the church. The questions from the post-test asked if they were now looking forward to do the work of social justice in both the church and community. There was a unanimous agreement across generations and calibers of experience in looking forward to doing the work of social justice in both the community and the church. This response is a huge one as this paper seeks to move forward with a revitalization and restoration of outreach endeavors in the name of social justice. Additionally, it creates a core of front runner millennials to potentially lead the charge.

The questions transitioned to a more theological context in which the participants were asked about their belief system with regards to justice and the Christian life. Participants were asked in the pre test if they believed that social justice is the key to the life of a Christian. Sixty-two percent (62%) stated that it was the key (that percentage includes all millennials) and the rest either gave a neutral rating or strongly disagreed. This is an interesting perspective as the older generation are those who are currently active in the outreach ministry but three of the four do not believe social justice is key to the Christian life. It is interesting to consider if their duty towards justice is obligatory by way of church dogma, if they have not been exposed to the value of such work, or if they are facing symptoms of burn out and disconnection. When asked the same question in the post-test, there was a 100% response in agreement that it is the key to Christian life, further displaying the impact of intentional pedagogy and rich discussion. A similar question was asked with a small caveat, “I believe the work of outreach is the duty of all Christians.” In both the pretest and posttest, there was unanimous agreement primarily proffering a strong agreement.

Here is the interesting thing about language and pedagogy. When asked using the language of “social justice” there was a significant change in response but when using the language of “outreach,” the agreement remained consistent in both pre and posttests. One of the powerful outcomes of the bible study was an introduction and clarification of language so that participants are clear that the work of outreach/mission are forms of social justice.

The Matthew 25 outreach ministry has some work to do in clarifying and articulating the vision in order to capture the church audience by way of participation and support. Fifty percent of the participants were either neutral or in disagreement that the ministry had a clear vision and strong support by the church. There was no significant change or difference in response from the pre and post tests. The hope is that from the results, implications, and next steps of this project instructions for re-establishing a clear vision and marketing will foster stronger support as the work of social justice should not be relegated to a ministry but rather it is a church-wide initiative always. To further establish the need for pedagogy around social justice, when asked if the participants had more information and training, would they be more committed to the work of justice, there was a significant change in responses in the pre and post. The pretest showed only 37% in agreement but after the 4-week session, 100% of the participants were in agreement. The desire to learn more about social justice as a critical piece to the Christian life is a consistent thread throughout the results of the pre/posttests. The last question of the Likert scale asks if they would like to learn more about social justice and its biblical implications to the Christian Life. The pretest rendered agreement with agreement and strong agreement. The post test,

however, showed that after the bible study series 100% of participants strongly agreed that they had a desire, a thirst to learn more about social justice and the life of Christian Pentecostal.

The test moved to more open-ended questions and the responses were very similar in nature across generations. All participants agreed that the work of justice in the bible speaks to the Christian life and they feel motivated/connected to work in the church and community in the post test. This agreement came with detailed explication and was not limited solely to one generation. A significant difference seen from the response of the pretest which included responses like, “I agree, but the connection is weak, and emphasis seems to be in the four walls of the church.” Rainer supports this as most millennial Christians see local churches as business as usual primarily concerned with about the needs of the members to the negation of the needs of the community and the world.¹²⁹ Another participant shared, “I slightly agree, in the church there are a small group of those who want to work at all and if they do its very little. We need more community engagement, outreach, exposure, and knowledge.” Both statements above were made by Millennials of the group but those sentiments were not limited to just that generation. Two of the older generation participants replied, “how does social justice tie in a biblical text?” “I cannot answer because I need a clear definition of social justice.” These responses show not only a similitude across generation but a desire for both knowledge of and opportunity for the work of social justice.

¹²⁹ Thom S. Rainer and Jess W. Rainer, *The Millennials: Connecting to America’s Largest Generation*, (Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), 257

The data clearly shows a direct correlation between the interest in social justice by millennials inspired through teaching alongside their willingness to embrace any and all opportunities. CRL is a church that is currently in the process of evaluating and conducting some internal assessments to develop the best way to enact several paradigm shifts, that will be beneficial to the ministry and the community at large. One of the key areas that suffers from participation and membership is the outreach ministry and the mission's ministry is practically nonexistent. This paper proposes that one of the paradigm shifts entail intentional pedagogy around social justice as a core tenet of the faith for the Pentecostal and speak to all generations, specifically targeting the millennials generation. In a study conducted by Rainer & Rainer, it showed that from a pool of 12,000 millennials 65% affirmed their Christian status, but only 34% identified as "born again" believers.¹³⁰ Millennials know enough to identify association but that is not the extent of the goal and the aim for justice work. The goal is to equip them with the necessary information to be the front runners of the restoration and revitalization of the current ministry responsible for social action.

The church is not void of the work of social justice as there are some pretty impactful endeavors occurring within the church. One major endeavor full of invigorating power that has branched city-wide and has linked forces with other churches and religions is called "Men's Call to Action." The Men's ministry of a large number of churches and mosques around the city go to certain areas in the city on scheduled days/times each week and meet the needs of men in their paths. This endeavor began in June 2019 and to date they have 300 men engaging each week. There have been over 70

¹³⁰ Ibid., 233

gainfully employed, more than 50 have entered substance abuse programs, and it has fostered an interfaith engagement of leaders across Baltimore city. These men have taken on this initiative to combat the murder rate in Baltimore city and not rely solely on the law enforcement officers. I got the chance to speak to one of the leaders of this mission from CRL and this was his response, "I've seen the real lack of churches being out in the community. I was embarrassed to see how many churches we have in the city that have no effect on the communities surrounding their specific church. Somewhere along the way the church dropped the ball." I went further to inquire about the presence of young men during these walks and to this his reply was a disappointed face. I am inclined to assert that if the church would be intentional on focusing on the real issues in a real way to a real people the missional millennials will come to the forefront.

The current Matthew 25 ministry is presently engaged in a few opportunities to feed the hungry at several Baltimore shelters and non-profit organizations. Within many of these opportunities are incorporated windows of time allotted for bible study and Spiritual engagement. One of the more recent opportunities offered by the Matthew 25 ministry is visitation and prayer with young women of the Ulman Cancer House. Another relatively recent opportunity offered is in direct connection with the public-school system of Baltimore City, in that an initiative has started that allots time after school for religious groups to come in and have bible study/activities with high school youth. These are two rather amazing opportunities for youth and young adults to engage youth and young adults under the auspices of service, but the primary problem is that only members of the Matthew 25 auxiliary know about them.

When transitioning into this phase of what's next, it is critical that we approach the Millennial group in a way that connects with them and creates a space for their own development and creativity. For black Millennials, the most effective way to pull them in is through personal invitation and life changing experience.¹³¹ Matthew 25 suffers from the deficit of younger support but must make the uncomfortable leap to engage the Millennials through personal engagement and real dialogue. This real dialogue includes scripture. Millennials deeply desire to know the word of God and have a connection with God; they just require a presentation that is authentic, compelling, relevant, and clear.¹³² The mantle of service inclusive of the work of social justice will fall through the gaps if there is no connection, if there is no real pedagogical engagement. The data of a small yet critical pool of individuals makes it clear that once there is knowledge and connection, the desire and drive for change is automatic.

This inquiry of next steps in the restoration, revitalization, and expansion process of the social justice initiative requires three components: intergenerational connectedness, pedagogical engagement focused on the work of justice, and inspiration for a generation to feel affirmed in creative yet compelling leadership. Intergenerational connectedness is going to require the release of judgmental biases on all sides. Churches that are serious about reaching this generation must become serious missional churches that seek them out for connection and engagement.¹³³ This is key for the generations before Millennials in taking the intentional time to understand the lens of judgment through which they look

¹³¹ Joshua Mitchell, *Black Millennials & the Church: Meet Me Where I Am*, (Pennsylvania: Judson Press, 2018), 127

¹³² *Ibid.*, 130

¹³³ Thom S. Rainer and Jess W. Rainer, *The Millennials: Connecting to America's Largest Generation*, (Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), 237

and to render the revolution of change over to the Millennial group, for it is speculated that they will take it at all cost.

Generations are limited by their inability to see beyond their era, they assume the future generation will be a linear extension of the recent past, and consequently they believe the next generation will lose the capacity to reinterpret the world and forge its own new path.¹³⁴ I recall meeting with a group of young adults (who decidedly remain in a teens class in what is classically known as “children’s church”) and when asked why they feel more comfortable in the class than in church, the response was “they judge us.” This generational judgment creates a divide that deepens by the day and makes the work of ministry much harder. As a result, there is often an uprising of a Millennial group doing it their way and another generational group adamant about doing it their way, thus creating a chasm in worship, in the church, repeating the unjust divides of historic times.

I am reminded of the relationship between Moses and Joshua. The church must seek to foster this generational connectedness for the sake of legacy, impartation, and a successful aim to continue the work. Millennials will rebel and reveal themselves as the answer and render the solution of high standards, organization, team work, and civic deeds.¹³⁵ If the church creates this space for the Millennial under the social justice lens as front runners, the previous generations are able to connect both in word and in deed as legacy is affirmed and the acquired knowledge has created a sure foundation.

The intentional task of social justice pedagogy requires an on-going engagement with scripture, primarily Matthew 25. The church has its connection by name, but needs

¹³⁴ Neil Howe and William Strauss, *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), 60

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 66

its revelation in action through the work manifested on a larger and more impactful scale. This pedagogy can be lifted in a bible study series, incorporated within the preaching moment, and lifted in the marketing of opportunities within the church on weekly basis. Social justice retains a necessary mandate and compassion that must be interwoven within the fiber of the church's doctrine even if it becomes disruptive. Matthew 25 encompasses three parables and the latter is the one that speaks specifically to Jesus' mandate of the Believer for kingdom access. The first two parables speak about the importance of wisdom and having the Spirit of God, and how to be a good steward over your increase. This falls directly in line with the life of the Pentecostal as the filling of the Holy Spirit is vital and is the key to a life of abundance. This abundance must be managed with wisdom and stewardship. Matthew 25 goes further to highlight that these are essential but the key to the kingdom is in service. The parables of the sheep and the goats is used to explain the kingdom mandate of ministry to serve human needs without respect of persons.¹³⁶ How does such a critical text become relegated to an auxiliary of a committed 15-20 people in a church of thousands? In Christendom, we have fallen prey to focusing so much on the person of Christianity and not the service of the faith to those who are in need.

It is critical here to posture this pedagogy to youth and Millennials of the church as they are still in place of development and understanding the faith. Social justice taught to them and laid as a foundational rock of their faith paves the way for a reformation in the Pentecostal faith to not only be known for an experience with the Spirit but an example of the Spirit in the world to the world. The society in which we live today

¹³⁶ Cheryl Sanders, *Ministry at the Margins: The Prophetic Mission of Women, Youth, & the Poor*, (Oregon: WIPF & Stock, 1997), 27

focuses on putting youth at the center of commotion and if they can be at the center of the problem, they can by faith become the center of the solution.¹³⁷ Many churches are scratching their heads trying to figure out how to keep up with the movement of the postmodern church and resort to dimming the lights, inserting LED screens, and fashioning a worship experience that emulates entertainment.

I would submit that the truth of how to keep the attendance and interest across generations is to come back to the basics of scripture and purpose for life in community. The greatest reward is reserved for those who have a track record of responding to human suffering in honor of the image of God in all human beings; thereby accepting Christ who came into the world as a suffering servant.¹³⁸ This is what keeps the Millennials and the youth in the church; when they can be taught and connect to something that they believe and can see the earthly benefits of service. There is a different level of honor and engagement that is lifted in service as it moves God and puts us in solidarity with the God of the suffering, as Jesus suffered. To feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, take in the stranger, visit the sick and incarcerated is to be in sync with the move of God; to disregard this is to deny allegiance to the King and the kingdom.¹³⁹ One participant suggested that a Millennial and youth outreach team be created to address the need and jump start this much needed movement. Most of the other participants, who all notably shared the current membership, consisted of those 45 years of age and older had a different perspective at the end of the project and proffered that there should be intergenerational membership. Additionally, the leaders of the movement should reflect

¹³⁷ Cheryl Sanders, *Ministry at the Margins: The Prophetic Mission of Women, Youth, & the Poor*, (Oregon: WIPF & Stock, 1997), 83

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 28

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 28

that of the upcoming generation supported by the previous generation in the sharing of wisdom and teaching.

It will be proposed to the church to have a social justice bible series in which opportunities for education, participation, and leadership are offered to the entire congregation. Additionally, there will be ongoing marketing opportunities so that the work of social justice stays at the forefront of the congregant and be gradually woven into the worship experience both in the church and outside of the church. Intentional marketing, specifically for Millennials, will be incorporated as the educating before promoting is critical. What many do not understand about Millennials is that they are not a group of radical rambunctious rebels, but rather they are seeking real truth and opportunities that are beneficial to others and themselves. Millennials need help distinguishing between charity work and solidarity, in that their tasks involve a deeper and more intimate understanding of the lives of the people that they will help.¹⁴⁰ Fox goes further to state that they need a kind of education that sharpens their understanding of power relations that takes the side of the oppressed and humanizes their struggle for physical and Spiritual survival.¹⁴¹ The movement of engagement for Millennials as frontrunners of this charge, before forcing them into the throws of leadership, must start with pedagogy around justice both biblical and social.

The current church context is experiencing a vacillating shift in attendance of Millennials but a deficit in participation in the work of the church. One of the issues here is that previous generations become deeply wedded to their positions in the church and

¹⁴⁰ Helen Fox, *Their Highest Vocation: Social Justice and the Millennial Generation*, (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2012), 38

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 38

retain occupancy until death. Our leader has shared his progressive mindset, in that, he is no longer interested in seniority but rather effectiveness. This education for Millennials would jump start an influx, a return of Millennials to the church, and present opportunities for new faces to be a part of a Pentecostal social justice initiative. Black millennials continue to express a strong interest in teachings that would address the intersectionality of Spiritual and social justice.¹⁴² It is the meeting of these two prominent areas that creates an open door and free space for deep dialogue and transformative engagement with not only the church but the community, and the world.

“Congregations who intentionally display to black millennials a desire to “stay woke” --fearlessly and frequently engaging in teaching and conversation at the intersection of faith, racial identity, and social justice—model a prophetic witness that echoes in the hearts of this emerging generation.”¹⁴³

An African American Pentecostal church that lacks the prophetic voice of justice stands in contradiction to the biblical mandate of Matthew 25 and hinders the generational movement of the gospel. To Sanders, the prophetic utterance of Joel postures youth and Millennials as direct beneficiaries of the prophetic promise and further affirmed in Acts where the Holy Spirit is given to all of us and our children presents what she calls a children’s Pentecost.¹⁴⁴ The scriptures and this project, leaves no room to question and/or second guess the need for the African American Pentecostal church at this time. This time is due time in which the paradigm shift is not an antiquated debated and deflected initiative but one that breeds life, love, and labor on behalf of those who are oppressed, disenfranchised, and marginalized.

¹⁴² Joshua Mitchell, *Black Millennials & the Church: Meet Me Where I Am*, (Pennsylvania: Judson Press, 2018), 89

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 90

¹⁴⁴ Cheryl Sanders, *Ministry at the Margins: The Prophetic Mission of Women, Youth, & the Poor*, (Oregon: WIPF & Stock, 1997), 75

If we are able to shift the paradigm from a disconnected framework to an intergenerational church and provide systemic pedagogy on justice as a biblical mandate that provokes one's moral imperative to action, the last step would be to position the Millennials in positions of leadership or co-leadership to deepen connectedness and foster an intentionality around the exchange in legacy. This preparation and venture towards leadership requires an investment on behalf of the church that renders great reward. Connecting with black millennials requires time, talent, treasure, and training to effectively play a critical role in the formation of their Spiritual lives and this requires an investment on the part of the church's leadership and congregation.¹⁴⁵ This church has struggled for years with obtaining yearly budget, specifically allocated towards youth and young adults and thus the deficit has finally caught up with the church as the pressure of the postmodern style of worship along with its congregants ensues.

Recently, there was a directors meeting in which I strongly suggested there be a Leadership Residency created so that we are not solely moving individuals into positions because they check the box of the typical church indicators of a leader; perceived strength and availability. Likewise, for this movement, there must be intentionality around leadership training and fortification. I strongly suggested for current leaders to be mandated to go through this training as well so that the intergenerational connectedness is fortified throughout.

The intentionality around leadership training rounds out this holistic approach to revitalizing the social justice endeavors of the outreach ministry paving the way for compelling and refreshing leadership. Millennials are the generation of Christians that

¹⁴⁵ Joshua Mitchell, *Black Millennials & the Church: Meet Me Where I Am*, (Pennsylvania: Judson Press, 2018), 141

will take the mandate of missions and social justice by storm that promises a transformative outcome for the congregation as whole.¹⁴⁶ We have been operating church to the negation of low hanging fruit in the personhood of the Millennial group, who have been ostracized, due to a lack of engagement and pedagogical connection in which they were forced to silent attendance or membership resignation to a place that attends to their needs. There is a major misconception in the perception of the Millennial in that they are not looking for a changed church, but rather a return to the transformative tenets of the biblical church. They have a keen desire to practice the Christianity of the Bible and radically return to a fierce devotion to Bible study, intense prayer life, and a commitment to social justice in their communities and nations.¹⁴⁷ We have missed this by focusing on aesthetics instead of ascertaining their needs and connecting to their person, valuing their presence and their calls to the mission of the gospel.

If this methodology works, the church would become a very thriving intergenerational church. One of the major concerns that has plagued the church, the church's attendance, and perception of morale is that the millennials are leaving the church. I vividly remember telling my Pastor that they would all come back, as he was panicking one day in conversation about what was described as a "mass exodus." Everyone is on a Spiritual journey and they would find their way back. It is pertinent however to be sure that the areas that can be refined and reformed are touched to ensure that when they return, they come back to something that is different and transformational

¹⁴⁶ Thom S. Rainer and Jess W. Rainer, *The Millennials: Connecting to America's Largest Generation*, (Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), 266

¹⁴⁷ Thom S. Rainer and Jess W. Rainer, *The Millennials: Connecting to America's Largest Generation*, (Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), 259

but remaining true to foundation of the Holy Spirit. Not only would attendance increase through this methodology, but I also believe that giving will increase as well.

The church has a rather large pool of person on the higher end of the socio-economic strata and there has been a major decrease in the church's offering. I strongly believe that people will give to what they believe in. When the church deepens its roots in mission and reconnects itself to the premise of the gospel of Christ, parishioners will give endlessly when they are able to seed the abundance of seed planted and the fruit of transformation in lives changed, families assisted, and the love of God spread without reproach. Lastly, if this approach works, it will strengthen the baton of mission to the next generation. It will strengthen and revitalize the core of why we "do church" and assist many in identifying and implementing their Godly purpose in the earth.

In Romans 8, Paul lays out the Spiritual logistics of the Christian life and interjects interrogative contemplation by asking those who have been justified in the previous verse, "what shall we say to these things?" Using this same contemplative approach, I use this paper to proffer the question to my local church context, "what shall we say to these things?" There is a problem that exists within our local assembly and pedagogy. The suggested next steps should not be viewed as an interruption, but rather a positive disruption for the sake of transformation and revitalization. Channeling the voices of the justice fighters of the past, the ones of today, and the up and coming social justice advocates, I am compelled to conclude that even within the African American Pentecostal church, we are in a moral crisis that has created a chasm between the gospel of our Spirituality and the pragmatic nature of that same gospel. Dr. Barber contends:

"I believe that deep within our being is a longing for a moral compass. For those of us who are moved by the cries of our sisters and brothers, we know that, like

justice, the acts of caring for the vulnerable, embracing the stranger, healing the sick, protecting workers, welcoming and being fair to all members of the human family, and educating all children should never be relegated to the margins of our social consciousness. ... They are the center pieces of our deepest traditions of our faiths, of our values, of our sense of morality and righteousness.”¹⁴⁸

The African American Pentecostal stands to revisit this in review of its theological doctrine, its pedagogy, and its generational connectedness. The work of justice is the earthly salute of the justified to the just King in heaven. This paper does not aim to critique, or to condemn but rather to call the African American Pentecostals of my local church context back to the same altar in which we have been justified by grace and sanctified daily by the love of Christ. Here is where we will be able to restore and revive the call of Christ in Matthew 25. In a time of postmodernism, it is critical that the trailblazers of this movement are equipped not only for mobilization, but given sustaining principles of wisdom, advocacy, love, humility, and justice through a compelling pedagogy that sends us back to the Pentecost of Acts, the prophetic voices of the Old Testament prophets, to the earthly commission of Christ to the believer.

There is and has been a Pentecostal stigma that exists even within the black Pentecostal church that this paper refutes and calls for a revival, a revolution in theology and leadership that defies those historical barriers in the faith's social development. Vondey suggests that Pentecostalism essentially flourishes as a religion of the poor while moving its appeal toward the mass which has defined the perception of the faith as one of upward mobility in socio-economic terms.¹⁴⁹ It is precisely this mindset that has caused the essential nature of social justice to have fallen through the gaps and now displaced

¹⁴⁸ William Barber, *Forward Together: A Moral Message For the Nation*, (Missouri: Chalice Press, 2011), 159

¹⁴⁹ Wolfgang Vondey, "The Impact of Culture and Social Justice on Christian Formation in Pentecostalism," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 24 (2015), 203

within our worship, theology, pedagogy, and overall practices as a believers. This paper calls for a refreshing of the premise by which we understand God through the guise of the Holy Spirit and fall with assurance on the scriptures that affirm service to the other as primary within the Christian life. There are no selfish motives or upward aims outside of service to those in need which incites its own reward from the heavens and in the heavens.

A reentering of this kingdom mandate within our theology, our doctrine, our teachings will spark a revival of restoration and reconnection for the anticipated trailblazers of this upcoming generation. Millennials and youth have the desire and the drive, but the church has to equip them with the teaching, the wisdom, and the support to ensure that we are able to do for Jesus, as we do for those to whom we have been called; as we come further into solidarity with the suffering servant and serve alongside this suffering the namesake of He who lives and reigns in the lives of generations before and generations to come. There is call, a divine invitation likened to the one given to the slaves who held on to God during harsh conditions, to the call given to the young adult advocates of the civil rights movement, to those who have continued the Poor People's movement, and to those who have given their lives to service every day. There is a kingdom mandate to the Millennial of the African American Pentecostal church to take up the prophetic mantle and carry forth with grace the fight against injustices and inequities, to seek justice, love mercy, and walk humbly before our God to echo endlessly the prophetic voice of Micah.

Appendix A

Informed Consent Form

Introduction:

My name is Chanel Speaks-Green and I am a student at Drew University Theological School conducting a qualitative analysis study for the completion of the Doctor of Ministry program. You re invited to be a participant in a research study about the impact of social justice on the area of outreach in Pentecostalism. We ask that you read this document and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. My email address is cspeaks@drew.edu. My project advisor is Dr. Kevin Miller and his email address is kmiller@drew.edu. You may contact either of us at any time if you have any questions about this study.

Purpose:

The purpose of this research study is to identify the pedagogical and pragmatic impact of social justice in Pentecostalism, particularly within the ministry of outreach and evangelism. This research aims to explore opportunities to build and implement an educational tool that results in practical application and the overall restoration of the outreach ministry across generations. There is intentional focus upon the millennial generation as trailblazers in this study juxtaposed with the support of elder generations.

Procedure:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things:

A pre-test will be given to each participant at the start of the study followed by a post test at the end of the study. The pre/post-tests, with clear instructions, will be hand delivered in person (by this writer) to the participating subjects no later than 10/1/19 with a request to have it completed by the first session, 10/8/19. For those to whom postal mail is necessary, the pre/post test will be manually mailed, a stamped self-addressed envelope will be provided. This mailing will include instructions to freely contact me via phone (443-310-8514) or email (cspeaks@drew.edu) should you have any questions or concerns.

You will be asked to participate in four 1-hour teaching sessions around the project's subject matter. The sessions will be consecutively held in a series of four weeks.

Duration:

It is estimated that it will take no longer than 30 min.-1 hour to complete the pre test and the post test. Each test taker timeframe is contingent upon the respective person. The

time frame of the actual study includes four 1-hr. session. Each participant will have at least one week to return the post -test to this writer.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide to participate in this study, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without affecting any relationship without penalty. You may also choose to participate and still refuse to answer any questions that may cause you discomfort.

Risks/Benefits:

There are no known physical risks associated with the pre or post-test. If you experience any anxiety from the process of taking a test, you may stop the test at any time. The benefits of participation are the opportunity to be a participant in the transformation and revitalization of a key component of the ministry that seeks to serve the needs of others and seek justice. I believe that this study will catapult a movement in which the tenets of social justice move to the core of the Christian faith of the Pentecostal and forces those individuals to become more visible advocates for others both in the church and in the world as a whole. I believe this study will enlighten the faith of the Pentecostal to charge the fire of the spirit to the advocacy of justice for all.

Confidentiality:

Each test will be numbered and the records of the study are anonymous/confidential to the research. A correlating number will be assigned to each subject's demographic information. I will be the only person who will have access to the demographic information and correlated number. In this research study, your name will be not be collected, used, or associated with any data obtained thereby ensuring the confidentiality of the research. When the data is reported and included in the writing phase, your information will not be identifiable and will remain in strictest of confidence.

Sharing the results:

Upon the completion of my research through a qualitative analysis, the results in a project format will be submitted to my academic advisors. There is future anticipation to present the study to the ministry's leadership for ministry review and implementation.

Publication:

If there is a possibility that this study will be published or that I refer to it in a published writing, I will continue to maintain confidentiality.

Before you sign:

Understand that by signing below, you agree to complete a pre/post test that has been constructed to extract pertinent data specific to the research study. Be sure that any questions you may have are answered to your satisfaction. If you agree to participate in this study, a copy of this document will be given to you after you sign.

Statement of Consent:

The procedures of this study have been explained to me and my questions have been addressed. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without penalty. If I have any concerns about my experience in this study (e.g., that I was treated unfairly or felt unnecessarily threatened), I may contact the Chair of the Drew Institutional Review Board regarding my concerns.

Participant's signature _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B

Social Justice and Pentecostalism—Pre-Test

NOTE: Thank you for participating in my Doctor of Ministry final project. Please answer all questions completely and as honestly as possible. All information will be held in full confidence. Your anonymity is assured. Only the principal investigator, C. Speaks-Green, will know your identity. Your name will not be associated with any of the data that I collect from this test.

Please print/circle your responses to the questions below:

General Information

Assigned participant number: _____

Age: _____ Denomination: _____

Professional Occupation: _____

Parish Classification (e.g., Pastor, Elder, Minister, Missionary, Director, Leader, Lay member): _____

How many years have you attended CRL? _____

Have you worked in outreach or in any social justice capacity? _____

If so, for how long? _____

Have you received any formal training in social justice? _____

If so, where and for how long? _____

Answer the next five statements using the following: 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree.

1-5	Statements
	1. I have a general knowledge base of social justice.
	2. The issue of social justice effects my church, my community, and my family.
	3. I have learned about the connection between social justice and the work of the gospel here at my church.
	4. I have received a number of opportunities to do the work of social justice in my church.
	5. I have received a number of opportunities to do the work of social justice in my community.
	6. I believe the work of social justice is key to the life of a Christian.

	7. I believe the work of outreach is the duty of all Christians.
	8. The outreach ministry has a clear vision and a strong membership/support by the church.
	9. If I had more information and training, I would be more committed to the work of outreach.
	10. I would like to learn more about social justice and its biblical implications to the Christian life.

The next set of questions are open ended. Please answer them honestly and to the best of your ability.

What age groups primarily serve on the outreach ministry? Why do you think that is?_____

Social justice is important to the life of the Christian lived out. Agree or disagree. Why or why not?_____

The work of justice in the bible speaks to the Christian life and I feel connected to work in my church/community. Agree or disagree? Why or why not?

Appendix C

Social Justice and Pentecostalism—Post-Test

NOTE: Thank you for participating in my Doctor of Ministry final project. Please answer all questions completely and as honestly as possible. All information will be held in full confidence. Your anonymity is assured. Only the principal investigator, C. Speaks-Green, will know your identity. Your name will not be associated with any of the data that I collect from this test.

Please print/circle your responses to the questions below:

General Information

Assigned participant number: _____

Age: _____ Denomination: _____

Professional Occupation: _____

Parish Classification (e.g., Pastor, Elder, Minister, Missionary, Director, Leader, Lay member): _____

How many years have you attended CRL? _____

Have you worked in outreach or in any social justice capacity? _____

If so, for how long? _____

Have you received any formal training in social justice? _____

If so, where and for how long? _____

Answer the next five statements using the following: 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree.

1-5	Statements
	1. I have a better understanding of social justice.
	2. The issue of social justice effects my church, my community, and my family.
	3. I have learned about the connection between social justice and the work of the gospel here at my church.
	4. I look forward to opportunities to do the work of social justice in my church.
	5. I look forward to opportunities to do the work of social justice in my community.

	6. I believe the work of social justice is key to the life of a Christian.
	7. I believe the work of outreach is the active duty of all Christians.
	8. The outreach ministry has a clear vision and a strong membership/support by the church.
	9. After this 4-week bible study training, I would be more committed to the work of outreach.
	10. I would like to learn more about social justice and its biblical implications to the Christian life.

The next set of questions are open ended. Please answer them honestly and to the best of your ability.

What age groups primarily should serve on the outreach ministry? Why? _____

Social justice is critical to the life of the Christian lived out. Agree or disagree. Why or why not? _____

The work of justice in the bible speaks to the Christian life and I feel connected and motivated to work in my church/community. Agree or disagree? Why or why not?

Appendix D

Debriefing Form

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this research study is to identify the pedagogical and pragmatic impact of social justice in Pentecostalism, particularly within the ministry of outreach and evangelism. This research aims to explore opportunities to build and implement an educational tool that results in practical application and the overall restoration of the outreach ministry across generations. There is intentional focus upon the millennial generation as trailblazers in this study juxtaposed with the enhanced education and support of elder generations.

Methodology:

This is a qualitative analysis study designed to both explore and elicit institutional knowledge and pragmatic approaches towards the work of justice lived out in the Christian life through outreach. The qualitative approach is conceptually concerned with the participants belief and behavior from the researcher's perspective and it is assessed through a pre and post interview/test (given at the beginning and end of a four-week bible study around justice and the church) in order to further guide the study's recommendations. My sample size will be a total of 6-8 parishioners of the local church who will consist of 4-5 young adults and 1-2 adults currently working in the outreach ministry. This pool is being divided in such a way to give real space to the power of succession and impartation.

Additional Resources:

If you are interested in learning more information about social justice and its place in the church (inclusive of Pentecostalism), I recommend the following resources:

Contact Information:

If you are interested in obtaining more information or learning more about this research, please feel free to contact me, Chanel Speaks-Green at cspeaks@drew.edu or my Project Advisor, Dr. Kevin Miller at kmiller@drew.edu.

Thank you for your participation in this research study.

Appendix E

Bible Study Curriculum: Week 1

Operative definition “social justice:” Just acts of the church through mission, advocacy, and outreach to combat the social ills and injustices of society with moral sensitivity and obligation. The framework of social injustices stem from the structure of society which favors the rich and disadvantages the poor, racism and implicit bias, and the overall disparity of resources and opportunities governed by a sick and corrupt system. Where is the church, the work of the gospel in these social strata? What is our role? What is our commission and how is that lived out, specifically from this Pentecostal ministry perspective?

Session Topic:	My role in community with the church, my neighbor, and the world in light of social justice.
Learning Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. To explore the biblical understanding of life in community and its relation to social justice and the church’s involvement. b. To engage biblical material to gain a better understanding of social justice and how God views justice. c. To identify one’s current role and understanding of the work of social justice lived out in the church/community.
Methodology	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use of video material from Adam Foss titled, “who will lead our next movement?” b. Creative use of current events to stimulate up to date conversation and engagement. The Guyger-Jean recent situation and the act of forgiveness vs the pulse of justice. c. Biblical engagement from the new testament Matthew 25:31-40 and Acts 10: 34-38 d. Guided discussion and questions
Learning activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Participants will begin the session without any pedagogical prompting or introduction, and complete the pretest. b. After completion of the test, there will be a project presentation/introduction along with an operative definition for “social justice” to be used throughout the project. c. Participants will watch the video (Ted talk by Adam Foss) and will be asked to take notes as one deems necessary. d. Participants will review the selected scriptures and be able to converse about their respective role as a Christian in its current state and the bible’s duty of action.

	<p>e. After participants gain a clear understanding of their current role in community with the other, we will open discussion led by the recent current event article of Guyer-Jean and answer a few questions related to the news event.</p> <p>f. What role in this event do I closely relate? What is the church's role in this situation? Had this been a member of this church, what would/should have been our response? What is the church's current response? Does this only grab attention at the day of justice or during the act of injustice in Oct. 2018? How do we understand God in light of forgiveness as a moral duty vs. justice in light of moral obligation? Is there a juxtaposition? A correlation? An interconnectedness?</p> <p>g. What are you moved to do next? How does this impact your perception of your role in the church in light of social justice? What preventive measures can be put in place to avoid this happening again? Is that a spiritual advocacy or one of practical advocacy? Where is/what is the work of the spirit?</p>
Instructional aids	<p>Gods Justice Bible Adam Foss, "Who will lead our next movement?" https://youtu.be/4a584G2YXuY CNN Article on Guyer-Jean trial</p>
Time	60-75 minutes

Week 2

Session Topic:	Social Justice in the World
Learning Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. To explore the biblical understanding of social justice in light of oppression and forgiveness. e. To explore the social constructions of privilege and marginalization in understanding justice. f. To engage biblical material in determining the Christian's response to injustice. g. To identify what connection does forgiveness, justice, and grace have in the context of social justice.
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. Use of two news articles from the Guyger/Jean titled: "Botham Jean's Brother offer of Forgiveness Went Viral. His Mother's Calls for Justice Should Too" and "Dear White People: About Botham Jean, Forgiveness, Justice, and Cheap Grace." f. Prompt discussion around the following questions: What is the Christian response to injustice? Is there justice in forgiveness? How do we understand God in light of forgiveness as a moral duty versus justice in light of moral obligation? g. Biblical engagement from wisdom literature: Proverbs 21: 10-3, 7, 15 and Psalm 82:1-4 h. Additional guided discussion and questions
Learning activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> h. Begin session with review and explication of Proverbs 21 and Psalm 82 highlighting the subject of justice from a proverbial perspective and in the light of instruction. i. Participants will be given the space to share their understanding of the specific scriptures and share feedback on it's connection to justice lived out in the world. j. Participants will review the two articles emailed prior to class to be updated on all information for pertinent discussion. k. Guiding questions will be asked to lead participants into a healthy dialogue. l. What is cheap grace? What is costly grace? Do we provide space to hear from a person who is connected by way of belief but race is that of the oppressor? How does Pentecostalism impact how an individual both hears and interprets this information? What feelings are in the room? What areas of clarity need to be explored?
Instructional aids	<p>Gods Justice Bible News Articles</p>
Time	60-75 minutes

Week 3

Session Topic:	Social Justice, the Church, the World, and Me
Learning Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To explore the biblical understanding of social justice in action as one's moral duty and obligation. To engage biblical material to determine the just acts of those who do the work of justice. To start the conversation of determining steps for understanding and renewal within one's personal life.
Methodology	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Use of two social media resources: a tweet from Rev. Jamal Bryant and a video from Congressman Elijah Cummings. Prompt discussion around the following questions: Have we become so passive to the ills of justice that we have revived an enslaved mentality? Where is the pedagogy of justice in our churches? What is the justice mandate of Christian church leadership? Have we retreated to the silence of enslavement? Biblical engagement: 2 Samuel 8 Additional guided discussion and questions
Learning activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Begin session with review of the previous session making space for any questions and/or concerns. Direct all participants to the Bryant tweet and open the floor of conversation through the guided questions listed above. Discuss the church's responsibility in unjust social situations internally within the church and externally. Explore historical connections of trauma for the African American and its present day potential impact. Share the biblical focus of 2 Samuel 8 and give participants the space to share their understanding. They will be permitted to share feedback on it's connection to justice lived out in the world. Participants will view the video clip of the late Elijah Cummings and wrestle with some of the challenging questions proffered. Guiding questions will be asked to lead participants into a healthy dialogue. What will you do? Where will God be along this journey toward the work of justice? In two hundred years, what would you have contributed to the fight against the injustice in the world?
Instructional aids	<p>Gods Justice Bible</p> <p>Social Media Tweet: Rev. Jamal Bryant</p> <p>Social Media Video Clip: Congressman Elijah Cummings</p>
Time	60-75 minutes

Week 4

Session Topic:	Social Justice and next steps...
Learning Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To review the previous sessions and discuss the biblical understanding of social justice and the church's involvement. b. To develop practical next steps as an individual and as a member of CRL to better fulfill the moral obligation of social justice in the world through a Pentecostal African American lens. c. To identify areas of improvement and new ventures to assist in the revitalization and renewal of mission and outreach within CRL and the community.
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Biblical Review of the past three sessions b. Guided questions and conversation c. What are you moved to do next? How does this bible study series impact your perception of your role in the church in light of social justice? What can we do next to incite a renewal within the church and community?
Learning activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Participants will begin the session reviewing all biblical sources used in the past three session. b. Participants will review past media/news information used in past three sessions and discuss any new current events relevant to social justice. c. Participants will engage in conversation guided by reflections of the series and culminate with identifying next steps for the individual, the church, and the community. d. Participants will be thanked, given the debrief form, and given the post test. e. After completion of the test, participants are given the Micha 6:8 charge.
Time	60-75 minutes

Appendix F

Glossary

Social Justice	Justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society. Operational definition for this paper-- Just acts of the church through mission, advocacy, and outreach to combat the social ills and injustices of society with moral sensitivity and obligation. The framework of social injustices stem from the structure of society which favors the rich and disadvantages the poor, racism and implicit bias, and the overall disparity of resources and opportunities governed by a sick and corrupt system.
Moral obligation/integrity	An obligation arising out of considerations of right and wrong. It is an obligation arising from ethical motives, or a mer conscientious duty unconnected with any legal obligation, perfect or imperfect, or with the receipt of benefit by the promisor of a material nature.
Outreach	a standard way for groups such as social service agencies, nonprofit groups, and church or other religious groups to identify a certain specific need in its community and provide services to the people who need it.
Community	a group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, share common perspectives, and engage in joint action in geographical locations or settings.
Christian	A believer in and a follower of Jesus Christ the Messiah. This name is more widely employed than any other designation of those who believe unto salvation. One who becomes an adherent of Christ, whose daily life and behavior facing adversity is like Christ.
Millennial	The generational span of those born between 1981-2000. Like any other generation, they present with a variety of characteristics and personalities. The Millennial generation is a generation with a strong desire to make a difference (a consistent finding among the research).
Transformation	An act, process, or instance of change of the moral character for the better through the renewal of the thinking power. (Rom. 12:2—D not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God-what is good and acceptable and perfect.)
Revitalization	To give new life or vigor to
Prophetic Books	These books record God's messages to the people in the form of speeches or sermons, visions, and life experiences of prophets. Some of the messages are of judgment and warning, while others focus on forgiveness and renewal.

Power	Ability to act or produce an effect; the possession of authority over others. Because God has revealed His power in the act of creation, He has authority to assign dominion to whomever He wills. (Jer. 10:12)
Injustice	Absence of justice; violation of right or of the rights of another; an unjust act.
Marginalization	To relegate to an unimportant or powerless position within a society or group. To perceive one or a group as less than both in word and in deed.
Disadvantage	an unfavorable, inferior, or prejudicial condition
Pentecostalism	Charismatic religious movement that gave rise to a number of Protestant churches in the United States in the 20th century and that is unique in its belief that all Christians should seek a post-conversion religious experience called baptism with the Holy Spirit. Recalling the Holy Spirit's descent upon the first Christians in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.
Holy Spirit	Third person of the Trinity through whom God acts, reveals His will, empowers individuals, and discloses His personal presence in the Old Testament and New Testament.
Gospel	Literally meaning "good news" or "proclaiming good news."
Law	Biblical interpreters apply the word to specific commandments, customs, legal judgments, and collections of regulations/ordinances.
Justice	Order that God seeks to reestablish in His creation where all people receive the benefits of life with Him.
Oppression	The state of being subject to unjust treatment or control.
Justification	Divine, forensic act of God, based on the work of Christ upon the cross, whereby a sinner is pronounced righteous by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ. Without this divine truth, there can be no unity in the body of Christ, hence its centrality to Paul's theology of the Church and salvation.
Micro-aggression	A comment or action that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalized group (such as a racial minority)
Azusa Mission	The Azusa Street Revival was a historic Pentecostal revival meeting that took place in Los Angeles, California and is the origin of the Pentecostal movement. It was led by William J. Seymour, an African American preacher. It began with a meeting on April 14, 1906, and continued until roughly 1915. The revival was characterized by ecstatic spiritual experiences accompanied by miracles, dramatic worship services, speaking in tongues, and inter-racial mingling.

Holiness Movement	religious movement that arose in the 19th century among Protestant churches in the United States, characterized by a doctrine of sanctification centered on a post conversion experience. The numerous Holiness churches that arose during this period vary from quasi-Methodist sects to groups that are similar to Pentecostal churches.
Righteous	Those who have committed themselves to a purity of heard and rectitude of life; being and doing right. The righteousness or justice of God is the divine holiness applied in moral government of the domain of law.
Divine Access	Entry or accessibility to God for matters of the heart and the earth referencing Hebrews 4:16, "Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
Indwelling of the Spirit	The indwelling of the spirit occurs when we first believe, it is the seed of the Holy Spirit. It occurs one time and is for all believers. (1 Cor. 6:19-20) The indwelling is a promise until the time of filling. (Eph. 1:13-14)
Being filled with the Spirit	A repeated experience of seeking after the Spirit of God which results in the power of the Spirit at work in the life of the Believer.
Glossolalia	The phenomenon of speaking in an unknown language, especially in religious worship. It is practiced especially by Pentecostal and charismatic Christians.
Impartation	The transmission of information. Rom. 1:11-12
Guyger/Jean Case	Amber Guyger, the former Dallas police officer convicted of murder for fatally shooting her unarmed neighbor, Botham Jean in his apartment, was sentenced to 10 years in prison. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/02/us/amber-guyger-sentencing.html
Likert Scale	A five (or seven) point scale which is used to allow the individual to express how much they agree or disagree with a particular statement. A Likert scale assumes that the strength/intensity of an attitude is linear on a continuum from strongly agree to strongly disagree, and makes the assumption that attitudes can be measured.

Appendix F

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