

Nazarene Theological Seminary

ADDRESSING THE DECLINE IN THE HOLINESS CHURCH:

THE HERITAGE, THEOLOGY, MISSIOLOGY, AND PRAXIS OF THE BLACK CHURCH

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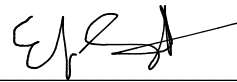
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We, the undersigned, determined that this dissertation has met the academic requirements and standards of Nazarene Theological Seminary for the Doctor of Ministry program.



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DEDICATION

I offer this project to God as a humble expression of gratitude for the wisdom, grace, and love He has poured into my life through my ancestors, my parents, and both my natural and spiritual families. I am especially grateful to Dr. Efrem Smith and Dr. Robert Owens, whose belief in me, mentorship, and challenge pushed me to explore heights, places, and ideas I could never have imagined on my own. It has been a true blessing to be part of the inaugural Doctor of Ministry in Black Leadership and Ministry cohort at Nazarene Theological Seminary. I owe a profound debt of gratitude to Dr. Charles Wesley Thurman, Jr. (Director of Black Church Studies), whose care, dedication, and support sustained me throughout this journey.

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ABSTRACT

Holiness seminaries in America need new teaching models to address the decline of the Church today. Statistical research and a literature review indicate that the Church in the United States is facing declining attendance, the need to serve an increasingly diverse community, and a lack of a transformative focus.

A well-designed curriculum centered on African American religious pedagogy and student engagement can better equip Holiness seminarians for their ministries. To aid in teaching students, this curriculum is drawn from the effective church model of the historic Black Holiness Church and highlights the contributions of African American men and women to the Holiness Movement in America. By doing so, it will help fill the lack of multiculturalism in seminary classrooms. Additionally, students will attend Black Holiness Churches to experience the transformative power of God, which will shape their ministry in a multicultural America. The Black Holiness Church will serve as a source of renewal for the flourishing of the Holiness Church in America.

CHAPTER 1
THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

CHAPTER 1: THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

This chapter discusses the challenges faced by Holiness seminaries, including preparing students to lead churches experiencing decline, addressing a lack of diversity in the curriculum, and focusing on the transformative role of the church. Section One demonstrates how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted church closures, the racial divide within the church, and changing community dynamics, making it more crucial for seminaries to prepare leaders who can revitalize the church. Section Two will investigate current seminary curricula to highlight gaps in training for cultural awareness, which leaves local churches unprepared to minister to diverse communities. Section Three will demonstrate that, over time, the expectation of experiencing the manifestation of God's presence has faded within Holiness churches. Section Four discusses why this intersection between the Holiness church, seminaries, and equipping the next generation to strengthen the church is important to me. This discourse lays out the groundwork for the proposal presented in Chapter 3.

Section 1

Closing Churches and Increasing Dechurched Individuals: An Ecclesiastical Concern

Churches across America are facing closure, regardless of their denomination. The decline in worship attendance and the subsequent shutdown of churches signal a troubling issue. In this section, we will explore the ongoing decline of churches in America, influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, racial issues, and the changing demographics of the communities served by Holiness churches.

Statistics show that churches are closing across America.¹ Declining church attendance and the closure of churches is true even for Holiness Churches in the United States.² The Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies (ASARB) is an organization committed to providing access to the best data on religion, including American and international collections submitted by the foremost religious scholars and research centers in the world. ASARB provides specific data concerning Holiness Churches in the United States. According to ASARB's most recent 2020 survey, Holiness church membership has decreased by 2.7% from 2010 to 2020.³ Not only is overall church attendance declining in the United States, but Holiness Churches are closing, and there are fewer Holiness congregations. Another ASARB survey reports a loss of 1,275 Holiness congregations between 2010 and 2020.⁴

Jim Davis and Micheal Graham refer to those who no longer attend church as the “dechurched.” In their book, *The Great Dechurching*, they define the “dechurched” as “...someone who used to go to church at least once per month but now goes less than once a year.”⁵ Their research concluded that we live in the “largest and fastest religious shift” in our

¹ Jeffrey M. Jones, “Church Attendance Has Declined in Most U.S. Religious Groups,” *Gallup.com*, April 4, 2024, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/642548/church-attendance-declined-religious-groups.aspx>.

² Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies (ASARB), “Holiness Family,” The Association of Religion Data Archives, *accessed August 15, 2024*, <https://www.thearda.com/us-religion/group-profiles/families?F=93>.

³ ASARB, “Holiness Family.”

⁴ ASARB, “U.S. Membership Report (2010 - 2020),” The Association of Religion Data Archives, *accessed August 15, 2024*, <https://www.thearda.com/us-religion/census/congregational-membership?y=2010&y2=2020&t=4&c=99>.

⁵ Jim Davis et al., *The Great Dechurching: Who’s Leaving, Why Are They Going, and What Will It Take to Bring Them Back?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Reflective, 2023).

nation.⁶ Unfortunately, this shift indicates that people are moving away from the church. They found that “about 15 percent of American adults living today (around 40 million people) have effectively stopped going to church, and most of this dechurched has happened in the past twenty-five years.”⁷ This raises a logical question: “Why are people no longer attending church?” Through our literature review, we identified at least three contributing factors: the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, issues of race, and changes in the communities surrounding churches.

One reason for declining church attendance is the COVID-19 pandemic, which research shows had adverse effects on in-person church attendance in the United States. A March 28, 2023, PEW Research Center report (a nonpartisan, nonadvocacy organization that informs the public about the issues, attitudes, and trends shaping the world) clearly shows that when places of worship reopened after the pandemic ended, some people did not return.⁸ Of course, low attendance is concerning because one of the important functions of the local church, gathering, is not happening. John Wesley is recognized for revolutionizing church gatherings into what we now commonly call “small groups.”⁹ Wesley emphasized that these “band societies” honor all “ordinances of God,” including “public worship.”¹⁰ Furthermore, the writer of the letter to the

6 Davis et al., xxii.

7 Davis et al., xxii.

8 Justin Nortey, “How the Pandemic Has Affected Attendance at U.S. Religious Services,” Pew Research Center, March 28, 2023, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2023/03/28/how-the-pandemic-has-affected-attendance-at-u-s-religious-services/>.

9 Good Shepherd United Methodist Church, “John Wesley’s Small Groups: Models of Christian Community,” Good Shepherd United Methodist Church, December 6, 2019, <https://belongsumc.com/john-wesleys-small-groups-models-of-christian-community/>.

10 John Wesley, *The Works of Reverend John Wesley A.M.*, vol. 5, 7 vols. (New York, New York: J. Emory and B. Waugh, 1831).

Hebrews encouraged early Christians to fellowship together. Hebrews 10:24-25 states, “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” It is not enough to merely acknowledge that people are not returning to church after the pandemic; we must learn the underlying causes of this phenomenon.

Aaron Earls, a senior writer at Lifeway Research,¹¹ warns us not to ignore the decline in church attendance. If any people are not returning to church, he advises that “wise church leaders will seek to understand better why some from their congregations are no longer involved.”¹² In his article, Earls outlines several reasons for the decline in church attendance. The first reason is that COVID-19 continues to pose health risks, making individuals concerned about attending crowded gatherings for fear of infection. The second reason is that some churchgoers have shifted to participating in online worship. The other reason is that people with certain disabilities and diseases find it physically difficult to come back through the churches’ doors. Finally, many people have discovered alternative ways to fulfill their spiritual needs outside of traditional church settings.¹³ Therefore, the pandemic is not the sole reason for the decline in church attendance; there is also a growing desire for more diverse church environments.

Another reason people do not attend church is that most churches in the United States are homogenous. Dr. Efrem Smith argues that churches in America are segmented by ethnicity:

There are many ethnic forms of church in the United States: Asian, Hispanic, and first-generation African immigrant churches. And certainly, these types of ethnic-specific

¹¹ An organization that conducts frequent surveys on today’s church and culture to demonstrate our knowledge of the dynamics of ministry today and our understanding of the realities of the culture.

¹² Aaron Earls, “4 Reasons People Haven’t Come Back to Church,” Lifeway Research, June 27, 2023, <https://research.lifeway.com/2023/06/07/4-reasons-people-havent-come-back-to-church/>.

¹³ Earls.

churches move us beyond the church in Black and White as we have known it. But the most visible pictures of the church in the United States are the White church and the Black church.”¹⁴

In a country where, historically, churches have been divided by race, young people are now looking for multicultural environments. Young people are not interested in attending churches that are not multicultural. As noted in Smith and Kreiss’s book, the church is losing young people because young people desire to be in inclusive environments where diverse people come together. The authors assert that young people are leaving “monocultural” congregations but are more likely to remain in churches where they feel that everyone is welcomed. They see these “monocultural” churches as exclusive instead of inclusive.¹⁵ Young people's thinking on this issue often emphasizes inclusivity and creating environments where everyone feels welcome and represented. This might manifest in numerous ways, such as multilingual services, community outreach programs that address specific local needs, and initiatives that promote social justice and equality.

The third reason churches are closing is because “monocultural” congregations do not reflect the changing communities around them. As has already been stated, churches in America are traditionally divided by race. The evolving demographics within communities in the United States have led to instances where White churches are situated within predominantly Black communities, and conversely, Black churches are found within predominantly White communities. The National Community Reinvestment Coalition identifies cities like San

¹⁴ Efrem Smith and Curtiss Paul DeYoung, *The Post-Black and Post-White Church: Becoming the Beloved Community in a Multi-Ethnic World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2020), 3.

¹⁵ Daniel Kreiss and Efrem Smith, *Church for Everyone: Building a Multi-Inclusive Community for Emerging Generations* (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2024), 234.

Francisco, Denver, Boston, and Washington, D.C., as leading U.S. locations for gentrification. These gentrifying neighborhoods were once overwhelmingly populated by people of color, resulting in churches that predominantly served congregations of color.¹⁶ Conversely, people of color are moving to rural areas, which have historically been where White people lived.¹⁷ Therefore, these White congregations now find themselves in more diverse communities. Unfortunately, with the traditional mindset of racially divided churches, many new residents do not see themselves reflected in the congregation, leaving them feeling disconnected from the local congregations, as the churches do not reflect the diversity of the community. Most churches are racially divided, leading to closures as established congregations do not reflect the diversity of new community members.

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic, issues of race, and the changing of communities around churches have contributed to a decline in church attendance and the closure of churches. We propose that the decline in attendance and interest is due to a lack of understanding of the changing demographics in America. These American societal challenges are adversely affecting the growth of Holiness seminaries in the United States. Seminaries are one of the formal institutions where people are trained for ministry in their community. However, many seminaries often do not champion diversity. In Section 2, we will discuss how seminaries fail to prepare students to engage with the multicultural communities they will serve and the challenges posed by multiethnic churches.

¹⁶ Jason Richardson, Bruce Mitchell, and Jae Edlebi, “Gentrification and Disinvestment 2020,” National Community Reinvestment Coalition, June, 2020, <https://ncrc.org/gentrification20/>.

¹⁷ Kenneth Johnson and Daniel Lichter, “Growing Racial Diversity in Rural America: Results from the 2020 Census,” Carsey School of Public Policy, June 25, 2024, <https://carsey.unh.edu/publication/growing-racial-diversity-rural-america-results-2020-census>

Section 2

The Lacuna of Seminary Curricula: An Academic Concern

In this section, we demonstrate that seminary curricula often lack diversity and multicultural perspectives, which is producing church leaders who are ill-equipped to serve their communities. This section furthers the discussion of the church's lack of preparedness to respond to changing demographics by reviewing scholars' assessments of the state of diversity in seminaries and examining how this deficiency affects church growth in an increasingly diverse America.

Seminaries are not adequately preparing their students to serve in the diversifying mission field in the United States. There are major initiatives aimed at minimizing discussions about different cultures in American colleges, including seminaries. Rohini Anand, in his book *Leading Global Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*, defines diversity, equity, and inclusion as follows:

Diversity is a demographic mix of people, including those from marginalized or underrepresented groups; equity refers to eliminating systemic barriers that inhibit full participation and equal access to opportunities; and inclusion is the act of creating a work culture in which individuals can participate fully because systemic barriers have been removed. The outcome of an inclusive culture is one in which employees experience a sense of belonging and their uniqueness is embraced.¹⁸

Anand further explains, "The ultimate goal is to embed DEI at all levels within organizations and society to ensure social justice."¹⁹ This desire to be more inclusive in the areas of race, color, sex, national origin, gender identity, or sexual orientation has been a political

¹⁸ Rohini Anand, *Leading Global Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: A Guide for Systemic Change in Multinational Organizations* (Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc, 2022), 11.

¹⁹ Anand, 11.

lightning rod used to divide Americans. Broad studies indicate a need for more exploration of diversity in seminaries. A recent study by the Association of Theological Schools found that faculty and students feel that there needs to be more diversity and justice in spiritual formation at seminaries.²⁰ The study also reported that those surveyed thought that dealing with issues of diversity and justice in a meaningful, practical manner would benefit the learning process.²¹ In addition, we reviewed Holiness seminaries and noted a gap in the teaching of diversity within their curricula. The following section will share our findings regarding how Holiness seminaries study and address diversity.

The Association of Theological Schools lists 20 member schools as Holiness seminaries as of 2024.²² We reviewed the graduate-level coursework of these institutions, reached out to professors of courses that deal with the history of the Holiness movement in America, and reviewed curricula for issues related to diversity, including the representation of diverse authors and the mention of diverse ethnicities in course materials. A review of Holiness seminaries' curricula for diversity and inclusion showed that only eight schools included any diversity in their programs, with concerns remaining even within those offerings. The offering of courses dealing with diversity can be summarized in three categories: 1) diversity is not discussed at all; 2) the diverse scholars and/or leaders are mentioned in course materials but not discussed in the lectures; or 3) a study in diversity and inclusion is offered as a separate school, track, or elective

²⁰ Steven J. Sandage, Kristen R. Hydinger, and David C. Wang, "New study explores diversity, justice among seminary faculty and students from spiritual formation view," September 2023, <https://www.ats.edu/files/galleries/study-finds-faculty-and-students-committed-to-social-justice-have-more-humility-compassion.pdf>.

²¹ Sandage et al.

²² "Denominational Search," Association of Theological Schools, accessed September 12, 2024, <https://www.ats.edu/Denominational-Search>.

course (see Appendix B). In sum, our evaluation focused on graduate-level curricula to determine whether they addressed diversity, featured diverse scholars and Holiness leaders, or included at least one course or program dedicated to diversity.²³

Our findings indicated that some schools did not discuss diversity at all in the curricula. Other schools mentioned the contributions of diverse individuals, but this was only reflected in the course material, as in the case of the Horizon College and Seminary, which is affiliated with Brethren in Christ Church.²⁴ Their Survey of Church History course includes a reference book written by Douglas Jacobsen titled *Thinking in the Spirit: Theologies of the Early Pentecostal Movement*. In the book, Jacobsen describes the interracial congregations of the early 1900s.²⁵ Although this book is not required reading for students, it is used as a resource to help develop the course.

Dr. Robin Johnston at the International Urshan Graduate School of Theology reports that in his “Pentecostal Movements” class, he emphasizes the contributions of the Holiness Movement. He points out, “In telling the Pentecostal story, it is necessary to do some exploration of the Holiness Movement. This is principally done through Holiness doctrine, but some through personality. Amanda Berry Smith might be mentioned. I usually do a piece on C.H. Mason and C. P. Jones and the struggle for the Church of God in Christ. William Seymour and Lucy Farrow are key Black Pentecostal pioneers. They both come from the Holiness Movement, so it is

²³ See Appendix B.

²⁴ Dr. Mykhaylo Khromyak, “TS5101 Survey of Church History Syllabus - Fall 2024 Module,” Horizon Seminary, 2024. <https://www.horizon.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/TS5101-Survey-of-Church-History-SYLLABUS-Fall-2017-Module-Horizon.pdf>.

²⁵ Douglas Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003), <https://books.google.com/books?id=sMih7IBW2x8C&lpg=PP1&dq=Jacobsen%2C+Douglas.+Thinking+in+the+Spirit&pg=PR15#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

necessary to explore their background.”²⁶ While it is fitting to mention the contributions of African Americans to the Holiness Movement, a deeper understanding is necessary for a more comprehensive perspective. Finally, some schools have established entirely separate schools or separate tracks and/or electives that allow students to explore the history, contributions, and activities of the diverse people in the Holiness Church. Charles H. Mason Theological Seminary claims to be the only fully accredited African American Pentecostal seminary. While the school addresses contemporary issues and is built on the principles of the Church of God in Christ, it is narrowly focused on that denomination's teaching.²⁷

Another method of sharing the contributions of diverse people in the Holiness Movement is through separate tracks and/or electives. While this approach benefits students who choose to take these courses, it limits exposure for all Holiness seminarians to the rich heritage of diversity within the Holiness Church. We see this implemented at Nazarene Theological Seminary in their course that focuses on “Black Life.”²⁸ All students can enroll in this course, but since it is not mandatory, they are not obligated to learn about the people who were instrumental in the Holiness church; they are learning to lead. While the existence of such courses is valuable, restricting the focus to “Black life in America” is limiting. The heritage of the Black Holiness Church encompasses more than just Black life; it is about broader life in America. Restricting the application of the Holiness Church to specific groups of people or specific ways of life fails to demonstrate how other Holiness seminarians can apply the richness of the Holiness Church’s

²⁶ Robin Johnston, “Pentecostal Movement” (presentation, International Urshan Graduate School of Theology, Wentzville, MO, September 12, 2024).

²⁷ “Charles H. Mason Theological Seminary,” Interdenominational Theological Center, February 14, 2018, <https://www.itc.edu/seminaries/charles-h-mason-theological-seminary/>.

²⁸ Nazarene Theological Seminary.

experience to their ministries in a manner that aligns with the Bible's affirmation of diversity.

The Bible celebrates diversity, and God often expresses how coming together with our differences makes us better. Revelation 7:9 says that God's kingdom is made up of "every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb." Seminaries must be the places where Christian leaders are challenged and provoked to be prepared for the work of ministry. Ignoring and refusing to deal with diversity in the academic setting hampers seminarians' understanding of the possibilities, opportunities, and challenges they will face when ministering to others. The Apostle Paul demonstrates his ability to engage with various types of people for the Gospel's sake in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23:

Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

Paul was an effective minister who was skilled at reaching a broad audience. He understood different types of people so well that he could connect with them on their level. If the significance of engaging with diverse individuals is emphasized in scripture and serves as a proven model for ministry, why do some seminaries overlook this importance? Next, we will explore why some seminaries often ignore diversity and inclusion.

Why are many seminaries not addressing diversity and inclusion? One of the reasons diversity and inclusion are not considered important in United States seminaries is because these institutions are predominantly White institutions.²⁹ An August 2024 Association of Theological

²⁹ ATS, "2023 - 2024 Annual Data Tables," *Total School Profile*, August 29, 2024,

Schools student enrollment survey revealed that White students comprise 57% of their member schools' student bodies. In other words, there is a lack of diversity. This lack of diversity often results in the exclusion of diverse perspectives and ideas, as those in the majority may not recognize the importance of other voices. Dr. Daryl G. Smith, in his book *Diversity's Promise for Higher Education: Making It Work*, offers transformative actions identified in a study of higher education. He suggests the need to “name and address forms of privilege embedded in institutional norms and practices—forms of privilege that may be invisible to some but are very visible to those on the margins of that experience.”³⁰ The research highlights that privileges related to race, class, gender, or sex must be addressed through open, uncomfortable conversations. These conversations should be about forms of privilege. Robin DiAngelo, in the New York Times best-seller *White Fragility*, explains how this privilege plays out, saying that individuals confronted with “white privilege” often respond emotionally (fragilely). They become argumentative, silent, angry, fearful, and guilty.³¹ DiAngelo argues that these emotional responses perpetuate the “white racial equilibrium” and discourage productive conversations about race cross-culturally.³² As can be seen in the review of Holiness seminaries, many choose to remain silent about diversity issues and avoid addressing race specifically in coursework.

The lack of teaching diversity in seminary because of low minority representation, unconscious bias, and the complexity of ethnic and cultural diversity, as well as its potential to

<https://www.ats.edu/files/galleries/2023-2024-annual-data-tables.pdf>.

³⁰ Daryl G. Smith, *Diversity's Promise for Higher Education: Making It Work* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2024).

³¹ Robin J. DiAngelo, *White Fragility: Why It's so Hard for White People to Talk about Racism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2020).

³² DiAngelo.

cause discomfort, is doing our future church leaders a disservice. This lack of preparation does not equip them to serve their communities in the Holiness traditional manner. Rather than providing a comprehensive education for Holiness seminarians, seminaries fail to prepare them for ministry in an ever-diversifying America. Carter G. Woodson sees this lack of diversity in higher education (especially when it comes to understanding African Americans) and labels it “miseducation.” Examining how Woodson characterizes the lack of diversity in higher education in relation to African Americans allows us to understand better the risks associated with the diversity gap.

Woodson, scholar and founder of Black History Month, views the lack of diversity in academia as “mis-education.” In his book, *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, originally printed in 1933, Woodson outlines some misleading concepts that Holiness seminaries are making today.³³ As he openly discusses his concerns with the church, it is vital to keep in mind that Woodson was a Christian, taught Sunday School, and served as president of the board of deacons of the First Baptist Church in Winona, Minnesota. He argues that during his era, higher education in America did not educate Black students but rather socially indoctrinated them. This miseducation fostered dependency rather than independence, leading Black individuals to consciously accept lower social positions. This indoctrination rested on the myth of Black inferiority, the promotion of white supremacy, and the erasure of Black contributions—ideas that sometimes still surface in contemporary seminary instruction.

During Woodson’s time, prevailing societal views deemed Black people inferior. Woodson was concerned by how Black individuals were taught to prioritize the value of others

³³ Carter Godwin Woodson, Jarvis R. Givens, and Henry Louis Gates, *The Mis-Education of the Negro* (New York: Penguin Books, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, 2023).

over their own. Even within Black religious expression, he observed a strong influence from concepts of whiteness and Black inferiority.³⁴ Taught to see themselves as inferior, Black seminarians were instructed to interpret the Bible in ways that “justified segregation and winked at the economic debasement of the Negro sometimes almost to the point of starvation.”³⁵ Woodson argues that these misguided preachers did little to help the spiritual development of their people: “Most of such mis-educated ministers, therefore, preach to benches while illiterate Negro preachers do the best they can in supplying the spiritual needs of the masses.”³⁶ This erroneous notion of Black inferiority, which diminishes the value of Black stories, has persisted throughout the history of Christian teaching.

Even within American religious institutions, the idea of African American inferiority was commonly taught. Religiously sanctioned books like *The Slave Bible* and religious teachings like “The Curse of Ham” were used to justify enslaving Africans and indoctrinating them with a sense of inferiority. These beliefs shaped how Black people were perceived in religious circles (including Holiness Churches). Joseph Lumpkin, in his summary of *The Negro Bible - The Slave Bible*, believes, “The Slave Bible, also called The Negro Bible, is one of the most powerful examples ever witnessed of manipulation using a controlled narrative. The Christian faith, a religion one-third of the world relied on to bring comfort, spiritual rest, peace, and salvation, was the narrative being controlled, making the Slave Bible the ultimate propaganda tool and the greatest lie ever told.”³⁷ Dr. Lumpkin offers an introduction to the “The Slave Bible” that

³⁴ Woodson et al., 70.

³⁵ Woodson et al., 4-5.

³⁶ Woodson et al., 4-5.

³⁷ Joseph Lumpkin, Dennis Logan, and Wanda Adam. *The Negro Bible - The Slave Bible: Select*

provides context and history. He states that “The Slave Bible,” published in 1807, was to be used to teach and convert enslaved Africans. It was commissioned by the Society for the Conversion of Negro Slaves in England. It was also used to teach enslaved Africans to read.³⁸

Lumpkin highlights what he believes to be the primary purpose. He states that “the goal first and foremost was to tend to the spiritual needs of the slaves in the way the missionaries and slave owners saw fit.”³⁹ We further understand why Lumpkin argues that “The Slave Bible” was a tool of missionaries and slave owners as we examine how it was commissioned and what it contains. The Anglican Bishop of London at the time of its publication, Beilby Porteus (founder of the Society for the Conversion of Negro Slaves), is claimed to have ensured the book was “edited down to a simple and understandable volume, devoid of any verse that could inspire insurrection.”⁴⁰ He also requested the book contain short prayers that reminded the enslaved of their responsibilities to their masters.⁴¹ While the standard Bible contains 1,189 chapters, this Bible contains 232 chapters (90 percent of the Old Testament and 50 percent of the New Testament were deleted).⁴² Removed from the text were the parts of the Psalms that mentioned God delivering the oppressed, the Book of Revelation in its entirety, and the rescue of the Israelites from slavery in the Book of Exodus.⁴³ Yet they retained the story of Joseph's

Parts of the Holy Bible, Selected for the Use of the Negro Slaves, in the British West-India Islands. (Blountsville, AL: Fifth Estate Publishers, 2019), i.

³⁸ Lumpkin et al., v-vii.

³⁹ Lumpkin et al., v.

⁴⁰ Lumpkin et al., vii.

⁴¹ Lumpkin et al., vii.

⁴² Lumpkin et al., vii.

⁴³ Lumpkin et al., vii.

enslavement in Egypt. On this, Lumpkin remarks, “It provided an example of someone who could accept his lot in life and work to the best of his abilities within those circumstances and was rewarded for his efforts.”⁴⁴

All this was perpetrated under the ideology of white supremacy, which deemed Africans inferior. Lumpkin argues that this belief was not merely understood, but the Christian missionaries actively taught it. He asserts, “It was falsely taught the black man was spiritually inferior.”⁴⁵ Based on their belief system that blacks were spiritually inferior, whites used the scriptures to uphold their values, behaviors, laws, and social norms.⁴⁶ “The Slave Bible” was a way to bring the enslaved a Christianity removed from the message of freedom.⁴⁷ The missionaries could bring the enslaved Africans a Christianity that kept them enslaved and did not encourage rebellion, keeping the slave owners satisfied.⁴⁸ Lumpkin concludes, “In a misguided attempt to save the souls of the people they deemed ‘savages’ while preventing their exposure to messages of struggle, hope, and freedom found within the Bible, a group of white Christian missionaries and slave owners parsed the Bible itself, cutting out and removing all chapters and verses that may have led the slaves to consider the concepts of resistance, escape, and freedom.”⁴⁹ Woodson's concern extended beyond the perception of Black inferiority to the miseducation promoting white superiority, which often resulted in the erasure of African

⁴⁴ Lumpkin et al., vii.

⁴⁵ Lumpkin et al., xiv.

⁴⁶ Lumpkin et al., xiii.

⁴⁷ Lumpkin et al., xiii.

⁴⁸ Lumpkin et al., vi.

⁴⁹ Lumpkin et al., vii.

American contributions within religious spaces.

Woodson asserts that Black people have become so enamored by the ideal of white supremacy that they often fail to examine white people's immoral actions against the Black community. He warns of the danger of uncritically accepting religion from White people, saying, "It is very clear, then, that if Negroes got their conception of religion from slaveholders, libertines, and murderers, there may be something wrong about it, and it would not hurt to investigate it. It has been said that the Negroes do not connect morals with religion. The historian would like to know what race or nation does such a thing. Certainly, the whites with whom the Negroes have come into contact have not done so."⁵⁰ This uncritical acceptance of religion, without examining its practices and meaning, is a consequence of white supremacy's influence on Black people. Woodson warns against divorcing the cruel, evil acts of the whites from the version of Christianity they imparted to Black communities:

The Negroes have never seen any striking examples among the whites to help them in matters of religion. Even during the colonial period, the whites claimed that their ministers sent to the colonies by the Anglican Church, the progenitor of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, were a degenerate class that exploited the people for money to waste it in racing horses and drinking liquor. Some of these ministers were known to have illicit relations with women and, therefore, winked at the sins of the officers of their churches, who sold their own offspring by slave women.⁵¹

Many educated Blacks of Woodson's time were leaving the Black Church for the White church, where they were mistreated and marginalized. He submits that there is something wrong with this mindset. He states, "How an 'educated Negro' can thus leave the church of his people and accept such Jim Crowism has always been a puzzle. He cannot be a thinking man. It may be

⁵⁰ Lumpkin et al., 73.

⁵¹ Lumpkin et al., 71.

a sort of slave psychology which causes this preference for the leadership of the oppressor.”⁵²

We also see some biblical interpretations that support Woodson’s argument that whites were considered superior in the Church.

The Bible was used to promote white supremacy in Christianity. While some argue that this is far from the truth, Dr. Theron D. Williams, in his book *The Bible Is Black History*, uses scholarship to prove that the Bible has been whitewashed and consciously interpreted to lift whiteness. *The Bible Is Black History* challenges how people look at the racial makeup of the characters of the Bible. Using science and scholarship, Williams presents that Black people are a part of the Israelites. He also shares how white supremacy is used to define the people in the Bible. He underscores this point by noting that Jesus's dark complexion is a fact rarely shared, precisely because it challenges the promotion of whiteness: “This image did not come about because of an innocent historical mistake, but it is a calculated plan designed to persuade people of color to submit to their assigned subordinate roles in the White Male Supremacy System by ascribing deity to a White man, thus bowing down in the worship of him.”⁵³

Williams points out that the Bible is an Afro-Asiatic sacred text that spawned four great religions, yet many people do not accept the characters described in the text as people of color. He states plainly, “Modern images of biblical characters are not Black Africans or dark-skinned Asians; they are all White Europeans. It is astounding how this has been accepted as factual by most of the world since the 1500s, given the fact that neither Judaism nor Christianity was

⁵² Lumpkin et al., 55.

⁵³ Theron D. Williams and Tyrus Goshay. *The Bible is Black History*, (Indianapolis: The Bible is Black History Institute, 2020), 66.

founded in Europe. In truth, no major religion was ever founded on the continent of Europe.”⁵⁴

When Europeans were conquering lands around the world in the sixteenth century, they brought a white Jesus with them. The Jesuit missionaries even set up art schools that taught the newly converted Christians to paint biblical figures in a European way, i.e., as white.⁵⁵ Williams discusses how, after the Spanish conquest in South America, a “white” Jesus was employed to continue to enforce a caste system with Christian Europeans at the top and darker-skinned people on the lower levels. Edward J. Blum, Professor of History at San Diego State University, is quoted as saying: “The centuries after European colonization of the Americas, the image of a white Christ associated him with the logic of the empire and could be used to justify the oppression of Native and African Americans.”⁵⁶ Depicting the people in the Bible as white and God as white supports the ideal that the ruling class of whites is justified.⁵⁷ Williams asserts that chattel slavery and the caste system in America made it essential to label races. He points out, “Prior to American colonization, Europeans never identified themselves as the White race; they distinguished themselves according to nationality-- Dutch, Scottish, English, Irish, Italian, and other European nationalities. It was not until the colonization of America that skin color, or race, became important. Race was made an issue for psychological, economic, political, religious and, later, social purposes.”⁵⁸

The system of white supremacy put enslaved Africans at the bottom and whites at the top.

⁵⁴ Williams and Goshay, 107.

⁵⁵ Williams and Goshay, 67.

⁵⁶ Williams and Goshay, 67-68.

⁵⁷ Williams and Goshay, 108.

⁵⁸ Williams and Goshay, 110.

Elite whites used the system to elevate poor whites over blacks, giving status just for being white. Williams calls this “the invention of American racism.”⁵⁹ American racism was, and still is, pervasive. It affects every activity in the country, even religion. Williams shares, “The notion of white superiority influences every sphere of American life. Whether it is science, religion, education, economics, sports, politics, entertainment, labor, law, etc., it is twisted, stretched, redacted, or altered to support this narrative; no matter how ludicrous.”⁶⁰ Seeing Blacks as inferior and whites as superior leads to the downplaying or ignoring of the contributions of African Americans, as Woodson described, thereby creating a diversity gap in higher-level educational institutions of learning.

Institutions too often encourage Black individuals to appreciate other cultures and their contributions while neglecting to value African culture or African American culture. Woodson asserted that not only were blacks taught to value other cultures, but they were also taught to devalue their own culture. Woodson notes, “The ‘educated Negroes’ have the attitude of contempt toward their own people because in their own as well as in their mixed schools Negroes are taught to admire the Hebrew, the Greek, the Latin, and the Teuton and to despise the African.”⁶¹ The Black church and its leaders have made significant contributions to this country and the church, yet these contributions are rarely discussed. Despite his criticisms, Woodson viewed the church as “a part of the capital that the race must invest to make its future.”⁶²

African American church leaders have developed schools and businesses and led social

⁵⁹ Williams and Goshay, 111.

⁶⁰ Williams and Goshay, 111.

⁶¹ Woodson et al., 1.

⁶² Woodson et al., 53.

change. Woodson highlights, “The Negro church has taken the lead in education in the schools of the race, it has supplied a forum for the thought of the ‘highly educated’ Negro, it has originated a large portion of the business controlled by Negroes, and in many cases, it has made it possible for Negro professional men to exist.”⁶³ While Holiness seminaries today may be, as Woodson would say, “miseducating” students by failing to discuss the contributions of diverse people, including African Americans, John Wesley was a strong advocate for recognizing God in all people and opposed the racist system of slavery. In Wesley’s pamphlet *Thoughts upon Slavery*, he presents arguments against the institution of slavery.⁶⁴ He discusses that Africans are not savages needing to be controlled and explains how Europeans came into Africa, creating discord that then offered a reason to enslave the African people.⁶⁵ He also declares that there was no economic need for slavery.⁶⁶ He argues that slavery is an injustice, merciless, and ungodly.⁶⁷ Wesley’s inclusion-focused and justice-oriented perspective, reflected in his writings, should be recaptured in seminaries. Woodson’s concerns regarding learning in institutions of higher education are evident in our review of Holiness seminaries’ coursework, which revealed an overwhelming lack of diversity and, more specifically, a failure to acknowledge the contributions of African Americans to the Holiness Movement.

Our review of course syllabi, materials, and lectures highlight the diversity gap in the Holiness seminaries. The diversity gap occurs for many reasons, and failing to instill an

⁶³ Woodson et al., 53.

⁶⁴ John Wesley, *Thoughts upon Slavery: The Third Edition* (London: R. Hawes, 1774), 17

⁶⁵ Wesley, *Thoughts upon Slavery*, 17.

⁶⁶ Wesley, *Thoughts upon Slavery*, 39.

⁶⁷ Wesley, *Thoughts upon Slavery*, 13, 14, 39.

understanding of the contributions and needs of diverse people constitutes miseducation. The Holiness Movement has a rich history filled with the contributions of African Americans, but they are often left out, overlooked, or dismissed. There is little discussion in “white spaces” about the roles of African Americans in the early stages of the Holiness Movement. Ignoring that Blacks were influential in the forming of the Holiness Movement, along with the impact of their contributions to American culture today, distorts history and robs African Americans of recognition of their work. American Christians do not value the contributions of blacks as much as they value the contributions of their white counterparts.

In many instances, what is called Black Theology, Negro Spirituals, or the other variations of how Black people worship, are considered uncivilized even today. Dr. Daryl Grigsby suggests that White Christians who want to have honest conversations with their African American fellow Christians should be willing to appreciate the gifts of the Black church and its contributions. He further warns them, “The failure of white Christianity to learn from its Black partners in faith has serious consequences, for it robs white Christians of wisdom derived from centuries of experience where believers depended not on political power, economic security, or racial privilege, but instead on God alone.”⁶⁸ These Black church leaders sowed seeds for international missionaries and demonstrated God's undeniable presence through revivals, evangelistic meetings, healings, signs, and wonders.

The impact of these Black missionaries profoundly shaped Christianity in ways still felt today. However, the pervasive influence of white supremacy has historically silenced the voices, stories, and contributions of non-white individuals in America. This is often an attempt to

⁶⁸ Daryl Grigsby, “The Black Church: A Gift for All,” *New Horizons- Scholars Commons* 5, no. 1 (2021).

prevent people from discovering the truth about a situation. This is commonly called “whitewashing.” We find whitewashing in everyday life, but it is also (unfortunately) seen in the church.

In his book, *the Whitewashing of Christianity: A Hidden Past, a Hurtful Present, and a Hopeful Future*, Jerome Gray, the pastor and president of The Urban Perspective, explains what he calls “Whitewashed Christianity.” He states, “Whitewashed Christianity refers to the affinity of white Christian scholars to dominate the Bible, Christian art, literature, and history with white people at the expense of authentic ethnicity and true scholarship in order to resonate most deeply with white audiences, primarily based on their experiences, presuppositions, and worldviews.”⁶⁹ Gray criticizes this whitewashing as disingenuous, pointing out that even a cursory internet search for the church's founders implies their universal whiteness.⁷⁰ Furthermore, even when people of color like Saint Augustine are mentioned, they are portrayed as white in most institutions of higher learning, including seminaries. Gray also argues that this whitewashing is destructive, as it perpetuates false Biblical narratives, such as the “curse” narrative, to justify the dehumanization and enslavement of Africans, falsely portraying them as dark, dumb, and deserving of chattel enslavement.⁷¹

In conclusion, there is a significant gap in the teaching of diversity within seminaries. This shortcoming at the seminarian level arises from several factors: 1) Many seminaries are often resistant to including diversity in their curriculum, resulting in insufficient training in multiculturalism for students; 2) Seminaries tend to be predominantly populated by white

⁶⁹ Jerome Gay, *The Whitewashing of Christianity: A Hidden Past, a Hurtful Present, and a Hopeful Future* (Chicago: 13th & Joan, 2021), 19.

⁷⁰ Gay, 20.

⁷¹ Gay, 21.

individuals, which further contributes to the lack of diversity; and 3) There is a general aversion to change within these institutions, making it challenging to incorporate new perspectives on diversity and inclusion. This failure to learn about diversity is in stark contrast to the historical Holiness Movement, which has traditionally embraced individuals from various races and cultures. To effectively engage with diverse communities and plant multicultural churches, it is essential to be open-minded and build relationships with people who have different backgrounds for the church of God to be manifested. This church represents the presence of God among us, which is one of the main pillars of the Holiness Church. The subsequent section discusses how the current church has lost the vision of the importance of God's presence.

Section 3

The Loss of the Transformative Holiness Vision: A Theological Concern

For the Holiness Church to grow, it must return to its mission and multicultural beginnings. Returning to the mission of transformation, the theology of imago dei, and social justice derived from social holiness can make the church relevant to the changing cultural landscape in the United States. However, this shift would require seminaries to promote discussions and studies on diversity and the contributions of Black people. In this section, we illustrate how the Holiness Church has strayed from its roots in the Holiness Movement in America and, as a result, has drifted away from its transforming, multicultural, justice-oriented identity. By refocusing on its mission, the Holiness Church can experience growth, revival, and reconciliation.

Transformation

As individuals center their lives in God, a transformation occurs through faith and grace, with God as the source of change. In Wesley's message entitled "On Zeal," he outlines the

connection between a person's inner and outer selves based on the person's relationship with God (transformation).

In a Christian believer, love sits upon the throne erected in the inmost soul, namely, the love of God and man, which fills the whole heart and reigns without a rival. In a circle near the throne are all holy tempers: longsuffering, gentleness, meekness, fidelity, temperance, and if any other were comprised in "the mind which was in Christ Jesus." In an exterior circle are all the works of mercy, whether to the souls or bodies of men. By these, we exercise all holy tempers- by these, we continually improve them so that all these are real means of grace, although this is not commonly adverted to. Next to these are those that are usually termed works of piety - reading and hearing the word, public, family, private prayer, receiving the Lord's supper, fasting or abstinence. Lastly, that his followers may the more effectually provoke one another to love, holy tempers, and good works, our blessed Lord has united them together in one body, the church, dispersed all over the earth- a little emblem of which, of the church universal, we have in every Christian congregation.⁷²

To get a clear understanding of Wesley's vision, Dr. Susan B. Carole explains in her book, *Called into Communion*, what Wesley referred to concerning what she calls "inward and outward transformation."⁷³ In summary, Carole translates Wesley's description of transformation into four stages: 1) the overwhelming presence of the Holy Spirit, stemming from the love that believers hold in their hearts; 2) this dominant holy love continuously influences believers' mindsets; 3) this inward change is expressed outwardly through actions of love; and 4) "works of

⁷² John Wesley, *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology*, ed. Albert C. Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991).

⁷³ Susan B. Carole, *Called into Communion: A Paradigm Shift in Holiness Theology* (Eugene, Or: Pickwick Publications, 2013), 111.

piety” strengthen relationships with God and others. While this vision is accepted as one of the tenets of the mission of the Holiness tradition, some scholars argue that the modern-day Holiness Church has strayed from transforming lives.

The present-day Holiness Church’s lack of focus on human transformation is concerning to some Holiness scholars. The multicultural congregations of the early Holiness Movement in the United States are an example of transformation. The Holiness tradition has embraced the understanding that holiness involves both internal and external change; however, some scholars caution that today’s Holiness Churches have shifted away from this emphasis. Instead of focusing on shepherding the change within an individual when they accept the love of God into their life, Holiness Churches invested in establishing a Holiness community that is inclusive of race, creed, or color.⁷⁴ To regain the essence of the Holiness tradition, it is essential to return to its mission of transforming individuals. This focus on personal transformation signifies reconciliation and the unification of all people. Acknowledging that every person is made in God's image fosters a deeper connection with the community and reinforces the foundational principles of the Holiness tradition.

The Theology of Imago Dei

Imago Dei, which means “image of God” in Latin, is a phrase Christians use to describe how humans are unique in God’s order.⁷⁵ This concept suggests that the church’s role is to be the light to the world: Humanity, created in God's image, and the church, as the renewed imago Dei, is called and empowered to be God's multi-sided prism in the world, reflecting and refracting the

⁷⁴ Keith Drury, “The Holiness Movement: Dead or Alive?” Christian Resource Institute, 2018, <https://www.crivoice.org/hmovement.html>.

⁷⁵ J. Richard Middleton, “The Liberating Image? Interpreting the Imago Dei in Context,” *Christian Scholars Review*, 24, no. 1 (1994): 8–25.

Creator's brilliant light into a rainbow of cultural activity and socio-political patterns that scintillate with the glory of God's presence and manifests his reign of justice.⁷⁶ As the summary shows, Richard illustrates the Holiness Church serving as the reflection of God's light in the world.

The imago Dei encompasses not only seeing God in the individual but also in the collective body of Christ, irrespective of race, creed, or color. Richard also explains that this expression of God through the church does not stay within a building, allowing God's justice to influence the earthly structures of society. We see this in the Bible when God created human beings in his image and entrusted them with the responsibility of stewarding the earth. We see this commission in Genesis 1:27-28 (NIV): "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'" In this scripture, we learn that God created people in his likeness and gave them specific tasks to accomplish. This blessing includes the responsibility to multiply, create, conquer, and rule over the matters of the earth. Richard explains that God desires his people to reign in his image. What is God's image? Richard explains that it embodies a reign of "justice."

Psalms 89:14 (NIV) states, "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you." In this verse, the psalmist reveals a view of God as inherently just. In his commentary, Evans says, "He is God alone, known for his righteousness and justice, for his faithful love and truth."⁷⁷ Evans submits that the reign of God is established

⁷⁶ Middleton.

⁷⁷ Tony Evans and CSB Bibles by Holman, *The Tony Evans Bible Commentary* (Nashville: B &

on the throne of the principles of righteousness and justice. Similarly, Richard emphasizes that the church must embody these principles of just governance here on earth. This aligns with Jesus' prayer: "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."⁷⁸ Both Richard and Evans suggest that because people are made in God's image, the church is called to advocate for justice on earth.

Unfortunately, some Holiness Churches have fashioned God in their own image. The Holiness Church tradition holds that humanity is created in the image of God, but some scholars argue that this understanding has been inverted. They contend that the churches now act as if God reflects humanity instead. Dr. Robb Brunansky, in his article "Forgetting the Holiness of God," argues that the church has "trivialized Jesus; they have created a Jesus in their own image; they have invented their own savior and rejected Jesus who is the Holy One of God."⁷⁹ By creating God in their image, they have created division and monocultural churches that do not represent the kingdom of God on earth. Placing self in the center contradicts the theological concept of *imago Dei*, the core beliefs of the Holiness tradition, and the teachings of Christ.

In Luke 18:9-11, Jesus tells a story that warns us about putting ourselves at the center while treating God and others as an afterthought. In other words, Jesus reminds us that we are created in the image of God and that self-righteousness (or putting our righteousness first and God and others second) is ungodly. In the parable, a Pharisee and a tax collector went into the temple to pray. One would assume that if anyone deserved to be in the temple and understood

H Publishing Group, 2019), 553.

⁷⁸ Matthew 6:9.

⁷⁹ Hannah Ascol, "Forgetting the Holiness of God," Founders Ministries, June 25, 2024, <https://founders.org/articles/forgetting-the-holiness-of-god/>.

what it meant to be created in the image of God, it would be the Pharisee. However, as often happens with Jesus's parables, there was a more profound lesson to learn about appearances and first impressions. The Pharisee compared himself to others and believed he was better than them. In contrast, the tax collector compared himself to God and asked for mercy. The grace that the tax collector sought is the holy love that John Wesley describes as entering one's heart when connecting with God. Brunansky's idea of God is reflected in earthly systems through preaching.

Holiness seminarians must be prepared to engage in social holiness by serving communities within a multicultural context. Davis and Graham describe how the American church previously supported the poor, how that support has changed, and how these changes have made people feel unwelcome:

The early church that used to cheerfully bring the poor and destitute into their lives now (at least in the US) often serves them at a distance through benevolence programs without fully embracing them in their church family. Modern American churches are financially incentivized to target the wealthy and create a space where those on track feel comfortable. Biblical hospitality, though, is so much more than just throwing money at a problem, and the net result is that the average American church is not truly hospitable to the less fortunate, making them feel like outsiders in our midst.⁸⁰

Social Justice

As we have already demonstrated, the Holiness tradition emphasizes the transformation of human beings, which includes fostering godly and loving relationships with others. We have also demonstrated that as beings created in the image of God, our expressions of godly love should reflect the justice of God in earthly systems. In fact, Davis and Graham's research indicates that many individuals have become "disappointed" with the church's failure to

⁸⁰ Davis et al., 27.

advocate for “biblical equality or against in justice.”⁸¹ This desire for the church to address justice issues is both a moral issue and a significant reason why people express a willingness to return to church. Social holiness is simply defined as the engagement with social ills from a biblical perspective. In contrast, social justice often relies on the world’s cultural norms to determine what is right and wrong. Evan W. Rohrs-Dodge, in his article “Social Justice Is Not Social Holiness,” further clarifies the difference between social justice and social holiness:

Social holiness is fundamentally different from social justice because inherent in social holiness is the salvation of the individual as the recipient of prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace, in whom the Imago Dei has been restored, enabling the move toward entire sanctification in community. Without this understanding of God’s gracious activity, social holiness lapses into a sort of vapid social justice, where concern for societal structure and rights is preeminent, where the individual, not God, is the primary actor.⁸²

The ongoing political debates can distract us from the crucial task of transforming lives and helping people understand that they are created in the image of God to fulfill His work on earth. Preaching the grace of God and how it influences our response to the injustices of this world is key. In fact, Dr. Roger L. Walton suggests that there is an interconnection between social holiness and social justice that is rooted in the Holiness tradition, which is important for the growth of the church. He writes:

Social holiness and social justice are not the same, but engagement in social justice, as a key component of mission, flows from social holiness; and growth in holiness depends upon a continuing openness to and experience of grace. Grace is to be found in acts of piety and also in acts of mercy and we have no option to neglect the latter. Rather we are compelled to participate in such merciful acts for the good of all and for our own growth.

⁸¹ Davis et al., 128.

⁸² Evan W. Rohrs-Dodge, “Social Justice Is Not Social Holiness,” Ministry Matters, April 23, 2014, <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/4966/social-justice-is-not-social-holiness#:~:text=Social%20holiness%20is%20fundamentally%20different,whom%20we%20find%20fundamental%20disagreement?>

These are deep Wesleyan convictions.⁸³

Walton argues that the engagement of Holiness Churches in social justice is rooted in the concept of social holiness, which presents an opportunity for church growth and revival. There have been numerous debates within the church about presidential politics, and these discussions have occasionally escalated into public spats, leading to division.⁸⁴ Walton notes that combining social holiness with social justice offers a chance to demonstrate the love of Christ to those who are different from us or to engage with diverse individuals. He suggests that we miss out on grace when we are unwilling or unprepared to interact with people different from us. In fact, this “encounter with ‘the other’ ... is simultaneously an encounter with God.”⁸⁵

Walton's connection between social holiness and social justice can be understood through Jesus's inaugural address in Luke 4:16-21:

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day, he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.” Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

Christ's public reading of the book of Isaiah shows his engagement in social holiness and social justice. First, we see that Jesus is led by the Holy Spirit to enter the temple. When we are transformed, we should seek to allow the Holy Spirit to lead us daily, which inspires action. We

⁸³ Roger Walton, “Holiness: The Journal of Wesley House Cambridge,” *Holiness* 5, no. 1 (2019): 25–36.

⁸⁴ Leonardo Blair, “Pastor Donnie Swaggart Rebukes Black Church for Endorsing Kamala Harris,” *The Christian Post*, October 25, 2024.

⁸⁵ Walton, 25-36.

then see the piety of Christ as he goes to the temple and reads the scripture. These actions reflect the rhythms of one who has been transformed. As transformed people, we find ourselves in church, cultivating the habit of reading scripture and gathering with fellow believers. Moreover, the scripture outlines the actions of those who are transformed and their approach to social justice. Jesus declares that he is the fulfillment of the scripture. Those who have been transformed not only study the scriptures but also strive to fulfill them, motivated by social holiness to ensure that God's justice is realized in social systems. Preaching the understanding of social holiness rooted in the holiness of God rather than fighting over worldly social justice issues can unify the Holiness Church and reflect the life of Christ. We see that social holiness and social justice can work in harmony, allowing the church to grow as it serves diverse people.

In conclusion, a renewed focus on the mission of the Holiness Church—grounded in transformation, *imago dei*, and social justice—holds the potential for significant growth and revival. The Holiness Church can reclaim its identity and relevance in an ever-changing cultural landscape by embracing its multicultural beginnings and recognizing the integral role of diverse voices. Holiness seminaries can guide students on this journey back to the church's roots, revitalizing it and empowering future leaders to fulfill their divine calling in today's world.

Section 4

The intersection of the Holiness tradition, theological education, and the formation of emerging church leaders represents a critical area of inquiry and praxis within contemporary ecclesial and academic discourse. This subject holds both personal and professional significance for me, particularly considering my role as Senior Associate of the Joseph Factor Group, an organization dedicated to partnering with churches, seminaries, and denominational leaders to

advance ecclesial health and effectiveness. In collaboration with Influential Global Ministries, our consultancy focuses specifically on supporting the development of thriving congregations within urban, multiethnic, and African American contexts. Through this work, I have observed firsthand the revitalizing impact that engagement with the heritage and historic practices of the Black Church can have on congregational life. By reclaiming theological narratives, liturgical traditions, and community-centered mission integral to the Black Church tradition, many leaders and congregations have experienced renewed spiritual vitality and have been reenergized in their commitment to holistic, transformative ministry within their communities.

Finally, my formative years were spent in a Holiness household, where both of my parents served as ministers and, during our time at home, as pastors. The theological and spiritual ethos of the Holiness tradition has deeply shaped my understanding of church life, community engagement, and broader worldview. Engaging in this dissertation research has provided me with a meaningful opportunity to deepen my knowledge of—and further reflect upon—the church tradition that has profoundly influenced my life and vocation.

Conclusion

Holiness seminaries are charged with ensuring students value the Holiness tradition. This tradition is fundamentally based on the belief that holiness is transformational, that all people are made in the image of God, and that the principles of social holiness can be effectively conveyed through preaching. The current Holiness Church in the United States is in decline, mainly because it is not fully equipped to reach the changing demographics in various communities. Many churches are closing; there is a notable gap in the training provided by Holiness seminaries regarding how to engage with diverse cultures, and the Holiness Church is straying from its mission. If the Holiness church in America does not return to a multicultural approach to bring

people into a relationship with God, it will likely continue to shrink and become less relevant.

Although this presents a major challenge for the American Holiness Church, Chapter 3 proposes a solution. The proposal in this dissertation for the revival of the Holiness Church in America emphasizes the importance of understanding the heritage and traditions of the Black Holiness Church.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review examines prominent literature, practices, and approaches used in the Black Holiness Church to address issues of decline in the church. An understanding of the Black Holiness tradition can significantly enrich the broader Holiness tradition today, particularly in the areas of theology, ministry, and practice. This is especially relevant given the current decline in church attendance and the lack of diversity in seminary instruction. A deeper appreciation of this tradition can also reinforce the Holiness Church's commitment to transforming lives—helping individuals find the love of God in their hearts, which inspires them to do His will on earth. The literature review explores the contributions of African Americans to the Holiness Movement, church planting models within the Black Holiness Church, the multicultural traditions of the Black Holiness Church, and the fellowshiping power of the Black Holiness Church. The structure of the literature review is as follows: (1) each section identifies key themes that emerged from the reviewed literature; (2) each section provides a summary of significant scholarly contributions; and (3) each section includes relevant citations to support and contextualize the identified themes.

To enlighten the reader on how the ministry, theology, and praxis of the Black Holiness Church can enrich the Holiness Church today, Section One of this chapter defines what the Black Holiness Church is and the contributions it has made to the Holiness Church Movement in America. The books reviewed in this section are: *Saints in Exile* by Dr. Cheryl J. Sanders, *Afro-Pentecostalism* by Amos Yong and Estrela Alexander, *A Short History of Methodism* by John Wesley, and *A Black Theology of Liberation* by Dr. James Cone.

Section Two highlights the evangelistic or church-planting ministry practices of the Black Holiness Church, which serve as models for church growth today. The books reviewed in

this section are: *Moving Forward on God's Highway* by Willenham Castilla and *History of Church of Christ (Holiness) U.S.A.* by Otho B. Cobbins, *William J. Seymour* and *The Origins of Global Pentecostalist* by Gastón Espinosa, *Effective Small Churches in the Twenty-first Century* by Carl S. Dudley, and *Empowerment Ethics for a Liberated People* by Dr. Cheryl J. Sanders.

Section Three addresses the challenge of diversity in Holiness seminaries, suggesting that insights from the biblical reconciliation exemplified in the early Black Holiness Church can equip Holiness seminarians to engage with multiculturalism in today's context. The books reviewed in this section are: *Teaching African American Religion* by Carolyn M. Jones and Theodore Louis Trost, *If It Wasn't for the Women* by Dr. Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, and *The Black Church in the African American Experience* by C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya.

Finally, Section Four explores how the Black Holiness Church's theology of engaging people and communities can be a galvanizing force, bringing focus, togetherness, and growth to the Holiness Church. The books reviewed in this section are: *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology* written by John Wesley and edited by Albert C. Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater, *After Redemption: Jim Crow and the Transformation of African American Religion in the Delta, 1875-1915* by John Michael Giggie, *The Tony Evans Bible Commentary* by Dr. Tony Evans, *Practical Theology for Black Churches: Bridging Black Theology and African Folk Religion* by Dale P. Andrews, *From Classism to Community* by Jini Kilgore Cockroft, and *Just a Sister Away* by Renita J. Weems.

Section 1

The Black Holiness Church and Its Contributions

Saints in Exile: The Holiness-Pentecostal Experience in African American Religion and Culture

by Dr. Cheryl J. Sanders

The significance of the Black Holiness Church and its ability to address some of the challenges in the Holiness Church today become apparent when one considers its background and contributions to the Holiness Church Movement in America. In her book *Saints in Exile: The Holiness-Pentecostal Experience in African American Religion and Culture*, Dr. Cheryl J. Sanders provides an extensive study of the Black Holiness Church. Using the term “sanctified church” (another name used for the Black Holiness Church), she outlines the Black Holiness Church’s characteristics.¹ The Black Church began in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century during a time of change in the United States. America was coming out of Reconstruction.² According to Sanders, the Black Holiness Church represents a blend of three different religious traditions that were both old and new at the time: African rituals and religion, white reformist Protestantism, and Haitian spirituality.³ She explores what distinguishes the Black Holiness Church from other worship traditions in the Black community. She concludes it is its “adherence to the traditions of oral music and ecstatic praise associated with slave religion.”⁴

¹ Cheryl Jeanne Sanders, *Saints in Exile: The Holiness-Pentecostal Experience in African American Religion and Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 5.

² Sanders, *Saints in Exile*, 3.

³ Sanders, *Saints in Exile*, 3.

⁴ Sanders, *Saints in Exile*, 3.

Afro-Pentecostalism by Amos Yong and Estrela Alexander

When looking at Holiness from an African American perspective, it is important to recognize how expressions of the Movement have evolved over time and the labels that have been used to describe the differences. The Pentecostal church was born out of the Holiness Movement. While they share similarities, distinct differences exist between Holiness and Pentecostalism. In their book, *Afro-Pentecostalism*, Amos Yong and Estrela Alexander focus on the impact of the Black Church and the Afro-Pentecostalism Movement. Written to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Movement, a diverse group of authors reflects on the significant contributions of the Black Church and Afro-Pentecostalism to its founding as well as the evolution of Pentecostal and charismatic styles of worship. Yong and Alexander provide a brief history of Holiness and explain how it differs from Pentecostalism:

The nineteenth-century Holiness Movement, which focused on calling the church back to personal piety through the experience of sanctification, produced such black leaders as the evangelists Jarena Lee and Amanda Berry Smith, and pastors like Charles Price Jones and William Christian, and saw the founding of several black denominations including the Church of Christ Holiness and the Church of the Living God (Christian Workers for Fellowship). Members of this movement laid the foundations for twentieth-century Pentecostalism by reincorporating John Wesley's concept of entire sanctification into a personal spirituality and piety, which they sensed was missing in their churches. These Holiness folk, who were already employing camp-meeting style revivalism and language of Holy Spirit "Fire" baptism, as endowment with power for service and piety, eventually made their way into the Pentecostal movement. For their part, the Pentecostals incorporated the initial sign of speaking in tongues as an indication that one had truly received the Spirit, and by doing so, made a significant shift in Holiness beliefs about practices regarding the Holy Spirit. A number of denominations that had roots in the black Holiness movement, including the United Holy Church of America and the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of America, would ultimately become Pentecostal.⁵

⁵ Amos Yong and Estrela Alexander, *Afro-Pentecostalism: Black Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in History and Culture* (New York, New York: New York University Press, 2016), 2.

According to Yong and Alexander, there are three expressions of the Black Holiness Church: Classical Apostolic, Charismatic, and Neo-Pentecostal. Classical Apostolic (Jesus' name or "Oneness") believe in the necessity of baptism by immersion "in the name of Jesus." They reject the Trinitarian conception of the Godhead. Instead, they view God as one person who is expressed in three modes. Notable churches in this category include the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, the Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, and Bible Way Church worldwide.⁶

Charismatic, independent congregations or networks emerged in the 1960s and incorporated an expanded pneumatology and a distinctive appreciation for the operation of spiritual gifts in the life of the individual and in corporate worship. They do this without the strict emphasis on personal piety or rigid insistence on speaking in tongues as necessary evidence of Holy Spirit baptism. These churches include mainline congregations and independent networks, such as the Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship International and World Changers Church International.⁷ Neo-Pentecostals have heavily influenced many classically Black denominations, including large segments of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. Black neo-Pentecostals have generally remained within the classical denominational churches and may not even identify with the neo-Pentecostal label. However, they have incorporated Pentecostal style worship practices without making major changes to their theology.⁸

In this dissertation, the terms "Holiness," "Pentecostal," and "Sanctified" church will be used interchangeably. However, there is a key difference between "Holiness" and

⁶ Yong and Alexander, 3.

⁷ Yong and Alexander, 3-4.

⁸ Yong and Alexander, 4.

“Pentecostalism.” As Sanders explains, Holiness emphasizes “personal holiness,” and Pentecostalism emphasizes “spiritual power.” These different emphases wane and surge during different times of the Holiness Movement. Still, as they are both part of the Movement, this dissertation includes both when discussing the Black Holiness Church, which refers to African American-led and/or predominately Black congregations that are part of the Holiness Movement. Sanders defines the “Sanctified church” as “an African American Christian reform movement that seeks to bring its standards of worship, personal morality, and social concern into conformity with a biblical hermeneutic of holiness and spiritual empowerment.”⁹ While Sanders presents a more American historical perspective on the Black Holiness Church, there is also a religious theistical perspective. The following section will examine the Black Holiness Church’s significance to the Holiness Movement in America through a religious history lens. To better understand the importance of the Black Holiness Church in the Holiness Movement in the United States, one should examine its connection to the broader Holiness tradition.

A Short History of Methodism by John Wesley

The Holiness Movement in the United States is tied to the teachings of John Wesley, whose doctrine of salvation and the relationship between grace, faith, and holiness of heart and life is the undergirding of the Holiness Church. *A Short History of Methodism* offers insights into the historical development of Methodism, particularly its transition into the Holiness movement, thereby achieving one of its main objectives. Emerging in the 19th century as a renewal movement within Methodism, the Holiness tradition emphasized sanctification, the experience of

⁹ Sanders, *Saints in Exile*, 5.

Christian perfection, and the transformative power of the Holy Spirit. These theological distinctives, rooted in the teachings of John Wesley, became foundational to the identity of the Holiness Church and later influenced the development of Pentecostalism and other expressions of American evangelicalism. By inspiring a renewed appreciation for the Church and its theological heritage, this work seeks not only to inform but also to encourage contemporary engagement with the spiritual vitality and ecclesial commitments that have historically characterized the Holiness tradition. In this book published in 1765, Wesley outlines the three fundamentals of the Methodist and Wesleyan-Holiness teachings:

- 1) Original sin and the absolute inability of human beings to save themselves through virtuous works.
- 2) Salvation, or justification as it is termed, comes by faith alone.
- 3) Faith produces inward and outward holiness.¹⁰

Upon these Wesleyan beliefs, the Holiness Church in America was founded.

Because history is not often told from a Black perspective, there is limited discussion about the African Americans involved in the founding of the Holiness Movement in America. Three prominent African Americans took these Wesleyan principles and established what we see now as the Holiness Movement. These men are Charles H. Mason (Church of God in Christ), Charles P. Jones (Church of Christ Holiness U.S.A.), and William J. Seymour (Azusa Street Revival) (we will discuss these men further in the church-planting discussion in section 2 of this chapter). All were or had been Baptist ministers, and they preached the need for Blacks to recapture the spirit of early Christianity. They emphasized “holiness” and criticized the church for being too focused on money, placing an inappropriately high esteem on scholarship, and

¹⁰ John Wesley, *A Short History of Methodism* (London: Foundery, 1965).

shunning the operation of the Holy Spirit in worship, healing, dancing, and preaching.¹¹ These African American men (and many other women and men) planted churches, conducted revivals, and started worldwide missions that are a part of the religious history of the Holiness Movement in America. Next, we will discuss the liberation theology of the Black Holiness Church.

A Black Theology of Liberation by Dr. James Cone

The Black Holiness Church was a liberating church that believed God saved African Americans from slavery in a manner similar to His deliverance of the children of Israel in the Bible. By reading Exodus 6:6-8, they understood God as one who literally freed them from the bonds of chattel slavery, granting them freedom and a new life. Exodus 6:6-8 reads as follows:

Therefore, say to the Israelites: “I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the Lord.”

This would later be established as Liberation Theology or Black Theology of Liberation. The Black Theology of Liberation holds the belief that God is actively involved in the daily struggles of believers, liberating them not only from sin but also from social injustice. Dr. James Cone, a prominent figure in Liberation Theology, articulates in his book, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, that theologians who fail to distance themselves from the oppressive system of white supremacy risk becoming irrelevant to society, particularly to the oppressed. He asserts that the gospel must center on the oppressed and given that Black individuals are among the most

¹¹ John M. Giggie, *After Redemption: Jim Crow and the Transformation of African American Religion in the Delta, 1875-1915* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), 187.

oppressed, there is a necessity for a Black liberation theology rooted in the Black experience. Cone also states in the book that “Black theology is a theology of liberation because it is a theology which arises from an identification with the oppressed blacks of America, seeking to interpret the gospel of Jesus in the light of the black condition. It believes that the liberation of the black community is God’s liberation.”¹² The theology stating that God stands with the oppressed fueled the Holiness Movement in America as these Black saints of God led efforts to spread the gospel.

Now that we have established the definition, historical context, and theological underpinning of the Black Holiness Church, section two will explore how the history of church planting in the Black Holiness Church can serve as a model for revival amidst the current church decline in the United States.

Section 2

The Black Holiness Church: An Effective Church Model

Holiness seminarians are ministering during a time of church closure and changing demographics. The existing methods are ineffective in addressing these issues, and it is time to look for new models of engagement and church effectiveness. This section will review the Black Holiness Church’s role in church planting during the early Holiness Movement in the United States. After examining how the Black Holiness Church contributed to the growth of the Holiness Movement, we will discuss an effective church ministry model. In addition, we will explore how the Black Holiness Church’s empowerment ethics, spiritual formation, and worldwide missions demonstrate how the model can be applied today.

Church planting is crucial today due to the increasing number of church closures. As

¹² James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2023), 5.

discussed in the problem section of this dissertation, in their book, *The Great Dechurching*, Davis and Graham propose church planting as a model to counteract this trend. In a broad sense, the book offers an exploration of what the authors call the “dechurched” phenomenon. They explain who the dechurched are (including their demographics, scale, reasons for leaving the church, and historical background). One of the solutions to dechurching the authors present is church planting. They posit that “for every three churches that closed in 2019, a new one started. That may seem like losing math to many, but new churches have new life. Church plants are often much more effective at reaching the lost than older churches.”¹³

The Black Holiness Church was at the forefront of church planting during the early days of the Holiness Movement in America. This discussion will focus on Charles P. Jones, Charles H. Mason, and William J. Seymour because of the significance of their church-planting contributions to the Holiness Church in America. Leaders of the Holiness Movement in America often had relationships with one another, as seen in the connections among Jones, Mason, and Seymour. Seymour was invited to Los Angeles by Neely Terry, a Holiness woman who asked him to be the pastor of a Church of the Nazarene congregation.¹⁴ Seymour was acquainted with Jones and Mason. Mason also eventually moved to Los Angeles, which played a key role in shaping his Pentecostal experience.¹⁵ These connections and mutual honoring of each other’s gifts benefited the Movement as the three traveled, ran revival meetings, and ministered together across the country. While the split between Jones and Mason was contentious, one cannot

¹³ Jim Davis et al., *The Great Dechurching: Who’s Leaving, Why Are They Going, and What Will It Take to Bring Them Back?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Reflective, 2023), 130.

¹⁴ Sanders, *Saints in Exile*, 28-29.

¹⁵ Willenham Castilla, *Moving Forward on God's Highway: A Textbook History of the Church of Christ (Holiness) U.S.A.* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2007), 24-25.

overlook the contributions made by all three men and their churches to the Holiness Movement.

Moving Forward on God's Highway by Willenham Castilla and *History of Church of Christ (Holiness) U.S.A.* by Otho B. Cobbins

Bishop Charles Price Jones founded the Church of Christ (Holiness) USA (COCHUSA). The official history of the church celebrates its services as places where “sins were confessed openly and privately forsaken, tears shed, sinful living given up, crutches thrown away, secret order pins thrown out the church windows and many souls were added to the church.”¹⁶ Jones was called to preach in 1885 in the Baptist Church. However, he disagreed with the teachings of the Baptist Church, believing that they brought little to no transformation in one's life. Historians of COCHUSA elaborate, “Bishop Jones was not satisfied with a religion that had none of the signs spoken in the Bible and began to seek the blessedness and usefulness of real Bible religion. He believed that God was calling people to holy living.”¹⁷ Jones himself challenged believers to “not be satisfied with the attitude that holiness is right, to get the experience, and to get saved.”¹⁸

Despite all his work, Jones did not hold his first Holiness Convention in Jackson, Mississippi, until 1897. During this convention, he urged attendees to live holy and sanctified lives, which led to the establishment of the Church of Christ (Holiness) USA.¹⁹ COCHUSA

¹⁶ Otho B. Cobbins, ed., *History of Church of Christ (Holiness) U.S.A.* (New York, NY: Vantage Press, 1966), 18.

¹⁷ Church of Christ (Holiness), “Bishop Charles Price Jones, D.D., L.L.D.,” accessed November 5, 2022, <https://cochusa.org/about-cochusa/bishop-charles-price-jones/>.

¹⁸ Church of Christ (Holiness).

¹⁹ Cobbins, 28.

describes its doctrine as “very close to the Church of the Nazarene.”²⁰ They follow the Methodist Articles of Religion and stress the second blessing as part of the holiness credo. They profess “One God who is triune, being revealed as the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. We further believe that Jesus is the Son of God and manifested in the flesh, died, and rose again for our salvation. We believe that the Holy Bible is the eternal, inerrant word of God, and it contains all necessary truth pertaining to salvation and to Christian living. We believe and are fully persuaded that ‘without holiness no man shall see the Lord.’”²¹ Next, we will discuss Bishop Charles Harrison Mason, who was a follower, partner, and later a critic of Jones.

Bishop Charles Harrison Mason founded the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) in 1907. Mason was ordained as a minister in the Baptist church. Jones mentored him. According to an article in the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, “They [Jones and Mason] preached and taught the Wesleyan view of entire sanctification as the second work of grace. They taught Perfectionist doctrines and believed those receiving the sanctification experience were holy and known as ‘saints.’ The people who followed their teachings did not smoke or drink, worked hard, and paid their bills. They praised the Lord by shouting and dancing.”²²

Mason was one of the many who went to the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles and came home believing that “speaking in tongues” was the unquestionable sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit. This tenet of Pentecostalism asserts that the act of speaking in tongues happens after “conversion and sanctification.”²³ Pentecostals believe that speaking in tongues is necessary

²⁰ Church of Christ (Holiness).

²¹ Church of Christ (Holiness).

²² Mike Mayton, “Washing Away the Color Line,” *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, July 11, 2021.

²³ Giggie, 175.

for the Christian's life and that this "third blessing" is the key to heaven after death.²⁴ Mason's revelation caused him to separate from the Baptist Church. The experience also caused a split between Mason and Jones, which resulted in a very contentious ideological rift and legal fight over the name "Church of God in Christ."²⁵ After returning from California and his experience at Azusa, Mason shared his new understanding of the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. However, Jones did not accept what Mason explained. Eventually, they parted ways, and Jones started what would eventually be called COCHUSA (which we have already discussed), while Mason founded the Church of God in Christ (COGIC). COGIC is considered the "first Black Pentecostal church" because it embraces speaking in tongues, as demonstrated by the New Testament church on the day of Pentecost.²⁶

In November of 1907, Mason, along with others, formed COGIC. At its formation, it was one of the most integrated denominations in the country because it ordained hundreds of white preachers.²⁷ However, in 1914, a group of white Pentecostal preachers (many of whom Mason had ordained) met, broke away from COGIC and formed The Assemblies of God.²⁸ COGIC is recognized as one of the longest-standing Pentecostal churches in the world and the largest Black church in America. The church continues to promote teachings of holiness, sanctification, and the presence of God through speaking in tongues, ensuring that the church remains very active in the United States. At one point, COGIC was reported to have 3.7 million members, exceeding

²⁴ Giggie, 175.

²⁵ Mayton.

²⁶ Giggie, 175.

²⁷ Sanders, *Saints in Exile*, 19-21.

²⁸ Cobbins, 50.

the membership of its Protestant counterparts in the United States, including Presbyterian, Episcopal, and the United Church of Christ.²⁹ COGIC is also known for its worldwide missions, which will be discussed later in this section as crucial to effective church outreach.³⁰ In the next section, we will discuss the contributions of William Seymour, who led the Azusa Street Revival.

William J. Seymour and the Origins of Global Pentecostalism by Gastón Espinosa

There is considerable controversy surrounding the origins of Pentecostalism, but most experts agree that William Seymour and Charles Fox Parham are its founders. One reason for the controversy over the founding figures is the challenge in defining “Pentecostalism.” Gastón Espinosa, in his book *William J. Seymour and the Origins of Global Pentecostalism: A Biography and Documentary History*, attempts to explain the makeup of Pentecostalism. This book serves as both a biography of William J. Seymour and a retrospective exploration of the Pentecostal revival he played a pivotal role in shaping. It delves into the era of the Pentecostal revival at the Azusa Street mission in Los Angeles, addressing the racial tensions that ultimately contributed to the end of the revival. The author discusses various elements, including "slave religion, revivalism, theologies of black and white Holiness, the Keswick Movement, the reformed concept of empowerment for Christian living, dispensational premillennialism, and Divine Healing Movements.”³¹

²⁹ Sanders, *Saints in Exile*, 62.

³⁰ Yong and Alexander, 221.

³¹ Gastón Espinosa, *William J. Seymour and the Origins of Global Pentecostalism: A Biography and Documentary History*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 42.

Seymour, born to enslaved Africans, was baptized in the Roman Catholic Church, but he soon started attending a Baptist Church with his brothers and sisters close to his home. He grew up in the Jim Crow Area of the South and could hardly read or write. He would later move to Houston, Texas, with relatives and join a Holiness church. While in Houston, Seymour became acquainted with Parham. Parham asked Seymour to join him in conducting services among Blacks. Parham hosted services that welcomed and taught Blacks, whites, Indians, and Mexicans. During his time with Parham, Seymour gained a greater knowledge and appreciation for the outpouring and baptism of the Holy Spirit as well as divine healing. Although Parham taught and embraced all races, he held strong views regarding racial segregation. Espinosa explains, “Parham taught racial separation, eighth-day creationism, white supremacy, and the idea that miscegenation caused Noah’s flood.

Parham also promoted British Israelism, which posited that the Anglo-Saxon race were the lineal descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel and, therefore, God’s chosen race.”³² Seymour and Parham parted ways when Seymour was called to a Holiness Mission in Los Angeles. On February 22, 1906, Seymour arrived in Los Angeles to lead the Mission. By mid-March, whites began to join an all-black Holiness band. The revival started drawing more and more people, and Seymour began to send missionaries around the world. Most historians agree that the birth of the Azusa Street Revival and Pentecostalism occurred on April 9, 1906, when Seymour laid hands on a white believer, prayed for him, and he began to speak in tongues. Word of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit began to spread throughout the world. Because of the growing crowds, he moved the revival to the former Stevens African American Methodist

³² Espinosa, *William J. Seymour*, 42, 51.

Episcopal (AME) Church at 312 Azusa Street. Back then, his work was called the Apostolic Faith Movement, characterized by speaking in tongues and integrated worship.

The Apostolic Faith Movement, The Azusa Street Revival, and Seymour's leadership are credited with birthing many of the major Pentecostal denominations.³³ Seymour's ability to attract diverse groups of people contributed to the spiritual formation of the Black Holiness Church, which will be discussed later in this section as being necessary for an effective church. Having examined three significant church planters in the Holiness Movement in America, let us now explore how they offer models for maintaining an effective church.

Effective Small Churches in the Twenty-first Century by Carl S. Dudley

The Black Holiness Church provides strategies for developing effective churches in empowerment ethics, missions, and spiritual formation. Carl S. Dudley, in his book *Effective Small Churches in the Twenty-first Century*, asserts that the church must care for people, give people a sense of broad contribution, and create a sense of belonging.³⁴ In the book, Dudley uncovers a nuanced understanding of the dynamics inherent in small congregational life. By examining the developments within the church over the past two decades, he poses questions influenced by notable cultural and institutional transformations. Among the most critical developments are declining institutional loyalty and changing conceptions of individual identity in relation to larger social structures. Dudley systematically examines the foundational elements that sustain cohesion within small congregations and considers the factors that motivate members

³³ Espinosa, *William J. Seymour*, 56-57.

³⁴ Carl S. Dudley, *Effective Small Churches in the Twenty-First Century* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2010), 11.

toward deeper expressions of faith and communal engagement. Dudley focuses on small congregations based on the assumption that 50% of the churches in the United States have memberships of less than 100 people.³⁵ The three key components of caring, sharing, and belonging are essential for the unity and motivation of small church members to live out their faith. Dudley explains the three key components, namely, caring, sharing, and belonging, in detail.

Regarding sharing, Dudley explains that members demonstrate the care they have received by extending it to others. They strive to live in a world of harmony and give beyond their small church community, even engaging with individuals of different faiths.³⁶ Regarding belonging, Dudley emphasizes that members view the church as a place that engenders fond memories and positive mental images. Current members cherish their memories of people and places as well as the relationships formed in the past, valuing their history while remaining open to change.³⁷ These three components are crucial for small churches to thrive and maintain a vibrant community.

Empowerment Ethics for a Liberated People by Dr. Cheryl J. Sanders

The heritage of the Black Holiness Church aligns well with Dudley's three-part framework for an effective church. The Black Holiness Church demonstrates caring through the empowerment ethics we see in the history of COCHUSA. Dr. Cheryl J. Sanders explains what "empowerment ethics" means in her book *Empowerment Ethics for a Liberated People*. In this

³⁵ Dudley, 11.

³⁶ Dudley, 134.

³⁷ Dudley, 85.

work, Sanders advances the discussion of Black Liberation theology in relation to historical Black religious tradition alongside Christian ethics. She contends that the lived experience of oppression has served to develop African American moral consciousness and ethical praxis. In the book, she explains that empowerment ethics are “the norms, values, and principles that have guided this people’s journey from slavery to liberation and from victimization to moral agency.”³⁸ One of her seven approaches to empowerment is ministry. She defines ministry as “the professional work of clergy who serve the needs of the church by preaching, teaching, counseling, leading worship, and church administration.”³⁹

Furthermore, Sanders expands on the meaning of ministry within the African American context: “The historical prominence of these churches as institutions of prophetic engagement and communal empowerment is largely the fruit of efforts undertaken by African American ministers and their parishioners to extend the realm of ministry ‘beyond the four walls of the church’ to include response to the social problems of the people.”⁴⁰ We offer this as the “empowerment ethic,” which embodies a commitment to fostering an effective church within the community. This principle is unique to the Black Holiness Church. This approach goes beyond simply doing for others; it emphasizes genuinely caring for others and collectively sacrificing to establish institutions of the church that meet the needs of the people. Sanders summarizes this empowering ethic and ministry as focusing on care, sacrifice, and equality, stating:

The ethics of empowerment challenges religious leaders to embody creative approaches to personal growth and collective resourcefulness for meeting human needs, and to resist the temptation to follow the path of “cheap justice” that demands repentance and

³⁸ Cheryl J. Sanders, *Empowerment Ethics for a Liberated People: A Path to African American Social Transformation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), ix.

³⁹ Sanders, *Empowerment Ethics*, 115.

⁴⁰ Sanders, *Empowerment Ethics*, 115.

restitution from the oppressing group on behalf of the poor without engaging in a self-critical assessment of the full cost of the equitable sharing of one's own power and resources.⁴¹

COCHUSA demonstrated its commitment to empowerment ethics by addressing the challenges its members face. The organization collectively sacrificed and established programs that ensured safety for members of the Black Holiness Church while providing equal opportunity for upward mobility through education. In 1908, COCHUSA incorporated Christ's Missionary and Industrial College in Jackson, Mississippi.⁴² Before becoming a college, it was a grade school known as "Christ Holiness School."⁴³ The school was started at the prompting of Sister Alice Brown, who believed "the Lord wanted among us a school where the students could be taught the Bible as well as the regular school textbooks."⁴⁴ Also, the severe beating of one of the Elders' daughters at the public school because she "testified to a holy life" caused the church to start an institution of its own.⁴⁵ The church set up a "Christian Education Fund," established a board, and purchased 142 acres of land for the school. Over its lifetime, the institution served various educational purposes, including a daycare, a preschool/kindergarten, an elementary school, a high school, and a Bible college.⁴⁶ Unfortunately, the school was also terrorized by arsonists, with at least four fires on campus set by angry white mobs at various points in its history.⁴⁷ We see COCHUSA caring for its members by setting up a school where the children

⁴¹ Sanders, *Empowerment Ethics*, 124.

⁴² Castilla, 26.

⁴³ Castilla, 28.

⁴⁴ Castilla, 27.

⁴⁵ Castilla, 27-28.

⁴⁶ Castilla, 33.

⁴⁷ Castilla, 26-35.

could receive a standard education and learn about holiness in a safe environment. This initiative exemplifies the caring approach described by Dudley, which is crucial for an effective church, as well as Sanders's concept of empowerment ethics. Through acts of care, the church actively engages in the safety and education of its members. We also see the principles of empowerment ethics reflected in COCHUSA's decision to fund the school, set up advisory boards with its members, and integrate the school into the church's framework.⁴⁸

Dudley suggests that an effective church cares for its members and shares with others. This idea of sharing with others is expressed in what churches traditionally refer to as "missions." In his book, *Red Brown Yellow Black White Who's More Precious in God's Sight?* Leroy Barber defines "missions" and challenges those choosing to engage in mission work. According to Barber, "The Latin term *Missio Dei* means 'mission of God' or 'the sending of God' in Christian theology. Missions are part of the very nature of God. The true missionary idea comes only from God."⁴⁹ More broadly in the book, Barber examines the persistent racial divisions within Christian ministries, situating them within broader historical and systemic patterns that have shaped inequities in mission work. He traces the origins and ongoing manifestations of racial disparities in Christian outreach and ecclesial structures. The work not only interrogates these entrenched dynamics but also offers practical, theologically grounded strategies for fostering authentic diversity and inclusion within ministry contexts. He challenges Christians to move beyond church walls and gain a deeper understanding of the lives of others. He states, "Missionaries and mission supporters who sit in church every Sunday, reducing

⁴⁸ Castilla, 26-35.

⁴⁹ Leroy Barber and Velma Maia Thomas, *Red, Brown, Yellow, Black, White: Who's More Precious in God's Sight? -- A Call for Diversity in Christian Missions and Ministry* (New York: Jericho Books, 2014). 3.

missions to evangelism, lessen the depth of who God is and who God can be in somebody's life. These often-well-meaning Christians say they know God, but they don't know the devastation of lives — children in foster care, parents who sell their children to the sex trade, families who go hungry while seeing others dine lavishly.”⁵⁰ Members of an effective church share beyond the church and go wherever God leads. We see an example of this in the foreign ministry work of the Church of God in Christ (COGIC), where those oppressed in the United States chose to share their blessings overseas.

Yong and Alexander documented how the Black Holiness Church expanded beyond evangelism and traveled to foreign lands to share and care for others during the early 20th century. They observe, “Ironically, black people who were brutally taken away from their ancestral homes have played enormous roles in the evangelization of their African homeland.”⁵¹ Among these efforts were courageous women from COGIC who not only went to serve in their homeland but also shifted the paradigm of women's roles in mission work by actively engaging in public spaces with the African people.⁵² In 1925, under COGIC's newly created Home and Foreign Mission Board, missionary women became more organized and expanded their work to Trinidad, Costa Rica, and Turks and Caicos Islands.⁵³ COGIC's history of foreign missions is an example of a church sharing beyond its four walls. Despite experiencing Jim Crow discrimination, the care and compassion felt within the church motivated these congregants to share the goodness of God with people abroad, driven by the belief that God would provide for

⁵⁰ Barber and Thomas, 8.

⁵¹ Yong and Alexander, 209.

⁵² Yong and Alexander, 221.

⁵³ Yong and Alexander, 221.

them through the church and use them to care for those they encountered during their missions.

Dudley identifies "belonging" as a crucial final component of an effective church, exemplified by the Azusa Street Revival led by William Seymour. Dudley submits that a sense of belonging significantly enhances the effectiveness of a church. Reviewing William Seymour's work during the Azusa Street Revival offers a model for belonging birthed from the Black Holiness Church. The Black Holiness Church gave previously enslaved Africans a place of belonging. Members of the Black Holiness Church even refer to themselves as "saints," signifying a distinct identity separate from other congregations in their faith, activities, and results.⁵⁴ Seymour's followers experienced a strong sense of belonging through their understanding of their place in the history of the Pentecostal movement, their support for women in formal and informal church leadership roles, and their commitment to racial reconciliation.

Seymour and his followers viewed themselves as part of the broader Holiness Revival, often revisiting the accounts of "outpouring" experiences from revivals around the world. They would share these written accounts as if they were unfolding at Azusa Street itself. Espinosa recounts, "They even contributed to the multiple outpouring and centers by re-reading these previous revivals through a presentist lens in light of their post-Azusa Pentecostal experiences."⁵⁵ This fostered a sense of belonging to one another and an atmosphere of connection to God's work in the world.⁵⁶

The Azusa Street Revival followers viewed the women among them as vessels of God, capable of carrying out his work. This perspective was in stark contrast to many churches at the

⁵⁴ Sanders, *Empowerment Ethics*, 136.

⁵⁵ Espinosa, *William J. Seymour*, 72.

⁵⁶ Espinosa, *William J. Seymour*, 72.

time, which did not permit women to hold formal leadership roles. Seymour actively supported women in ministry, allowing them to speak during services, take on formal positions within the organization, and represent the Movement around the world.⁵⁷ This distinguishing feature of women leading in a religious setting fostered a sense of community among Seymour's followers. His preaching and interpretation of the Holiness teachings attracted new believers, particularly recent immigrants, by providing a space where racial tensions in America were minimized through teachings emphasizing unity. Yong and Alexander aptly summarize Seymour's vision:

Pentecostalism was able to soften the hardest edges of American nationalism, rationalism, and exceptionalism by not only affirming supernaturalism but also by preaching a universal message of love, salvation, forgiveness, healing, equality, and spiritual unity across racial, tribal, and nationality lines.⁵⁸

This vision transformed the Azusa Street Revival into a place of reconciliation: a place where people could go to not only experience the manifested presence of God but also to be in harmony with one another.

In conclusion, understanding the heritage of the Black Holiness Church can provide valuable insights for Holiness seminarians in church planting and building effective churches. Dudley's concepts of an effective church assert that people need a place of caring, sharing, and belonging. A close look at the Black Holiness Churches led by Jones, Mason, and Seymour reveals models of ethics, missions, and purpose that exemplify an effective church. Section three addresses the diversity gap in Holiness seminaries and how the history of African Americans, particularly women, along with the spiritual formation within the Black Holiness Church, can help bridge these gaps.

⁵⁷ Espinosa, *William J. Seymour*, 73.

⁵⁸ Espinosa, *William J. Seymour*, 73.

Section 3

Understanding the Black Holiness Church: Filling the Diversity Gap

Teaching African American Religions by Carolyn M. Jones and Theodore Louis Trost

The diversity gap in Holiness seminaries can be addressed by discussing the contributions of African Americans to the Holiness Movement in America. This includes learning from the foundation of reconciliation within the Black Holiness Church and incorporating “wisdom teaching” into the curricula for spiritual formation.

As mentioned in the problem statement, Dr. Carter G. Woodson asserts that the mis-education in higher education institutions stems from a lack of diversity. Woodson suggests that this miseducation can be rectified by sharing the contributions of Black people. African Americans have made major contributions to the Holiness Movement that are often not discussed. This is especially true of the contributions of Black women. By examining the contributions of African Americans in the Holiness Movement, we can begin to fill the diversity gap and share the stories of non-whites. In the broader context of teaching African American religion, a group of scholars cautions us not to start the story of Africans in America with slavery; instead, we should explain the contributions that Black people made to Christianity as a whole.

By placing African American religion at the forefront of academic studies, we challenge centuries of privileging Eurocentric traditions as the dominant framework. In the book *Teaching African American Religion*, Carolyn M. Jones and Theodore Louis Trost gather scholarly essays that provide innovative ways to teach African American religious traditions in a variety of

settings that engage the diversity and complexity of African American religious traditions—an area widely recognized as one of the most challenging to teach within undergraduate religious studies curricula. The expansive scope of the subject matter presents significant pedagogical difficulties, particularly for instructors who may not specialize in African American religion yet are increasingly expected to incorporate its study into broader courses on American religious history or the history of Christianity. The book seeks to address these challenges by offering accessible frameworks and critical insights to support effective instruction and deeper student engagement in this vital field of study. Within this book, Dr. Edwin David Aponte explains some foundational understandings needed to teach African American religion:

Teaching these core courses considering African American religious tradition means recognizing that this is a counter-hegemonic effort. There is a type of hegemony behind the mainline/mainstream Protestant theological curriculum that places Eurocentric traditions in the position of privilege to the exclusion of all other traditions. Courses that do not seem to be within the dominant central tradition are assigned marginal space. At the same time, the ‘real work’ is done elsewhere.⁵⁹

It may seem too much to challenge this long-standing practice of putting “whiteness” at the center, but it can also be exciting. The opportunity to lift the contributions of African Americans to Christianity, learn their perspectives and views, and collectively value their thoughts and theology is important. Aponte encourages the professor to incorporate this knowledge and perspective, highlighting this approach as a contrast to the traditional way Christian church history is taught.

Simply reading the scripture and showing a map of important locations in Biblical history can be eye-opening. When students study the map and see some of Africa's biblical cities, many

⁵⁹ Carolyn M. Jones and Theodore Louis Trost, *Teaching African American Religions* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2005), 119.

are surprised. Aponte shares, “By not divorcing ancient northern Africa from its connections to Mediterranean and Asian civilizations and taking seriously that North Africa was simultaneously African, learners gain access to a different angle on the importance of the social and cultural context of the church in its early periods. From this point of view, questions of culture, ethnicity, class, and gender are considered in addition to questions of regional orientation.”⁶⁰ Next, let’s explore how African Americans made significant contributions that helped shape the Holiness Movement, even within predominantly white denominations.

African American contributions to the Holiness Church were not limited to the Black Holiness Church. For instance, the Salvation Army is one of the most well-known organizations that serves those in need. However, it is not widely known that the Salvation Army played a significant role in the early development of the Holiness Movement in America. Dr. Bill Ury, the National Ambassador of Holiness for the Salvation Army, states, “The Gospel of full salvation comes from the heart of the Holy One, and it must reflect His nature and His purposes. The holiness of the heart must be matched with the holiness of life. Any preaching that divorces these two is neither biblical nor Salvationist.”⁶¹ Even lesser known than the Salvation Army’s place in the Holiness Movement are the contributions of African Americans to the organization. Warren Maye, editor and journalist famous for sharing the stories of African Americans in the Salvation Army, noted that “Black Salvationists have been vital in the spiritual development of the Salvation Army from its inception in the United States.”⁶²

⁶⁰ Jones and Trost, 120.

⁶¹ Central Connection, “The Army’s Whole Gospel of Holiness,” last modified September 20, 2018, <https://salarmycentral.org/blog/2022/02/07/the-armys-whole-gospel-of-holiness/>.

⁶² Warren L. Maye, “Uncommon Valor: A History of Race and the Holiness Movement,” *Holiness Today*, November 19, 2009, https://lillenasdrama.com/nphweb/html/ncnht_old/m/article.jsp?sid=10005075&id=10008284.

One family of notable African American Salvationists is the Beck family, who were the first recorded Salvation Army territorial evangelists in the West. Alexander Beck, freed from slavery as a young child, moved West with his Christian wife. There, she became a Salvationist, and Beck followed her lead, giving up his drinking and gambling habits to join the Army. In 1893, they became positioned leaders (soldiers) in the Salvation Army in Los Angeles. Mr. and Mrs. Beck and their daughter were appointed special visitors to the corps in California and traveled as a part of the singing group known as the Plantation Jubilee Singers. As the Salvation Army leadership started planning their expansion into the Southwest, the performances of the Jubilee Singers helped to raise funds. Their efforts resulted in the salvation of hundreds of people and provided continual blessings to the Southern California District.⁶³ The Beck family's contribution to the church is not widely known, but they were instrumental in advancing the mission work of the Salvation Army in the West. Their commitment to Christ and service to the poor can inspire Holiness seminarians of today, encouraging them to become pioneers in the Holiness Movement.

The Beck family is just one example of how African Americans have made significant contributions to predominantly White organizations within the Holiness Movement. In his book, *There All Along, Black Participation in the Church of the Nazarene, 1914- 1969*, Brandon Winstead outlines the numerous contributions of African Americans in the Church of the Nazarene from its inception.⁶⁴ Unfortunately, the literature on this topic tends to be isolated and

⁶³ Frances Dingman, "The First Black Salvationists in the West," *Milwaukee Courier Weekly*, February 14, 2015, <https://milwaukeecourieronline.com/index.php/2015/02/14/the-first-black-salvationists-in-the-west/>.

⁶⁴ Brandon Winstead, *There All Along: Black Participation in the Church of the Nazarene, 1914-1969* (Lexington, KY: Emeth Press, 2013).

is not widely recognized in mainstream scholarship within Holiness seminaries. Exposing seminarians to the history and contributions of Blacks in Christianity makes them more willing to hear other counter-hegemonic ideas, including the role of African Americans, specifically in the Holiness Movement. The following section will demonstrate that Black women's contributions to the Holiness Movement in America were significant.

If It Wasn't for the Women by Dr. Cheryl Townsend Gilkes

Black women were often at the forefront of various efforts in the Holiness Movement in the United States. In her book, *If It Wasn't for the Women*, Dr. Cheryl Townsend Gilkes employs a variety of methodological approaches to present essays that illuminate the multifaceted roles of Black women. These essays offer critical interpretations of their religious, social, and cultural contributions. Together, the collective works aim to articulate and theorize the specific ways in which Black women sustain, shape, and lead within ecclesial and communal contexts.

Gilkes describes the involvement of Black women in the Holiness Movement in the United States: "The women organized homes for youth, homes for unwed mothers, purchased clubhouses, and provided housing for women college students, established organizations of cultural refinement for household domestics, organized political clubs, campaigned for woman suffrage, and participated in a wide variety of activities designed to promote social change and advance the interests of 'the Race.'"⁶⁵ When William J. Seymour reflected on the Holiness Movement, he said, "The work began among the colored people. God baptized several sanctified

⁶⁵ Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, *If It Wasn't for the Women ...: Black Women's Experience and Womanist Culture in Church and Community* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), 86.

wash women with the Holy Ghost, who have been much used of Him.”⁶⁶ Gilkes explains further that Black Holiness tradition “place(s) Black women's agency, centrality, importance, and indispensability to their churches and communities in the foreground. The various essays reveal aspects of Black women's experiences in church and community with an eye toward explaining and interpreting more fully precisely what it is that women do within and for their communities.”⁶⁷ Gilkes’s collections of essays shed light on the significance of the Black women in the “Sanctified Church” (another name for the Black Holiness Church). Gilkes highlights the challenges faced by Black women in America, referring to it as a “double or triple jeopardy.” This term illustrates how white women may feel threatened by the presence of Black women, how Black men often fail to recognize the value of Black women, and how societal pressures can lead Black women to feel inadequate when it comes to leadership and making a difference in their communities.⁶⁸ Despite many attempts to silence them, there is no mistaking that Black women have been leaders of change in the U.S.A.

Gilkes explains that Black women’s creativity, emphasis on sharing Black stories, and active roles as liberators in areas such as women’s rights, family, and labor prove that they are agents of change.⁶⁹ Gilkes also explains that the “Sacrificed Church” overlooks the restrictions and stereotypes other churches impose on women, allowing women to lead in Christian education and spiritual formation within the church.⁷⁰ Many times, these women would step in to

⁶⁶ Gilkes, 32.

⁶⁷ Gilkes, 4.

⁶⁸ Gilkes, 5.

⁶⁹ Gilkes, 81.

⁷⁰ Gilkes, 80.

serve as “pastors” in the absence of designated local leaders. The importance of women serving in these roles was invaluable. Gilkes further elaborates: “Women's roles in the educational enterprise of the Sanctified Church provided for them alternative structures of authority, career pathways, and spheres of influence. Many of the men in the church were grateful for the ‘teaching’ of the women that provided for them either literacy or salvation.”⁷¹ The Black Holiness Church believed that the significant role of Black women in society should be acknowledged and celebrated within the church, and some Church of God denominations even ordained women.⁷² The establishment of “Women’s Departments” enabled the church to train and elevate women to leadership positions.⁷³

Jarena Lee, a member of the newly formed African American Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church and a talented orator, was denied a license to preach by her bishop in the early 19th century. Undaunted, she traveled to various challenging locations to carry out her places to do ministry work, including traveling from her home in the North to the South to preach. Even though she was a free woman, she was aware that there was always a risk of being captured and claimed as someone’s property; nevertheless, this possibility did not stop her from seeking lost souls.⁷⁴ Lizzie Robinson Woods was born into slavery in 1860. After establishing Bible bands in the Baptist church all around her home in Arkansas, she left the Baptist church and became a member of the Church of God in Christ. She is historically significant for her role as the national

⁷¹ Gilkes, 81.

⁷² Gilkes, 80.

⁷³ Gilkes, 83.

⁷⁴ Gilkes, 109.

organizer of the women's ministry for the Church of God in Christ.⁷⁵ Another female pioneer in the Holiness Movement, Rosa Daniels, traveled on foot and horseback with other women to, spread the gospel. She started the first “Christian Women Willing Band” in District leadership and served as its president for many years.⁷⁶ Additionally, Josephine Cann worked at every level within the missionary field of COCHUSA. She focused on establishing new churches while strengthening those already in place. In recognition of her efforts, she became a prominent leader in the Women’s Missionary Department of the church.⁷⁷ In addition to welcoming and encouraging female leadership, the Heritage Black Holiness Church was a model of a multicultural church during a period marked by significant racial and social divisions. Holiness seminarians can learn valuable lessons from Bible-guided racial reconciliation from the example set by the Black Holiness Church, which demonstrated how people of different races can come together.

Even in the time of Jim Crow and racial segregation, God’s spirit of love made people of all ethnicities worship together, often with Black men and women in the forefront. Eric C. Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya were commissioned to provide a comprehensive bibliography of literature on the Black experience in religion. Drawing from interviews with more than 1,800 Black clergy in both urban and rural settings, as well as a thorough historical analysis of seven major Black denominations, Lincoln and Mamiya present a detailed examination of the Black Church in the context of African American history and contemporary Black culture. By investigating the Church's internal organizational structures and its reactions to wider societal

⁷⁵ Yong and Alexander, 173.

⁷⁶ Cobbins, 60.

⁷⁷ Cobbins, 61.

transformations, the authors offer valuable insights into its involvement with politics, economics, gender, youth, and musical expression. While this book is over 30 years old, it is regarded as one of the definitive scholarly works on the Black Church.

The Black Church in the African American Experience by C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya

In their book, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, Lincoln and Mamiya point out how Blacks and Whites participated in the Holiness Movement.⁷⁸ As stated earlier, the churches that Jones, Mason, and Seymour led were multicultural and multiethnic. They also ordained white ministers who started Holiness Churches, such as the Assemblies of God. The COGIC and COCHUSA continue to be strong churches known for their community and mission work.⁷⁹ And while the Azusa Street Revival ended in 1914, its influence spread across the United States and internationally, playing a significant role in the emergence of numerous Pentecostal churches. During the two years of the revival, 38 missionaries of diverse races were sent to over 50 nations, including China, India, Japan, the Philippines, South Africa, and Liberia.⁸¹ The diverse history of the Holiness Movement is essential to teach in Holiness seminaries. This knowledge equips students to lead effectively in diverse contexts today. When considering the teaching of diversity, it is important to implement best practices that foster

⁷⁸ C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 79.

⁷⁹ Lincoln and Mamiya, 90-91.

⁸⁰ Castilla, 55.

⁸¹ C.N. Omenyo, "William Seymour and African Pentecostal Historiography: The Case of Ghana," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 9, no. 2 (2006): 244-258.

meaningful learning, preparing students to minister in an increasingly culturally diverse mission field in the United States.

There are several effective strategies for teaching African American religion in the classroom, which can help Holiness seminarians better understand diversity, particularly in the context of the Black experience. As minister, author, and divinity professor Daphne C. Wiggins explains, “The Black Church is a vital context for ministerial education for several reasons. One, it is a religious institution with its own *raison d'être*. The Black Church exists because African Americans desire it to. Its genesis was an act of self-determination, influenced by the negative forces of racism and the positive force of a theological mandate to respond holistically to the community. The Black Church is the manifestation of a quest for a viable faith community by Africans and African Americans.”⁸² The topic of race sparks a continuous yet often contentious conversation in America.

Even in the academic pursuit of truth and understanding, the topic of race is usually regarded as a challenging and complex issue to navigate. This applies even to seminaries. Specific teaching strategies are necessary to ensure that discussions about the Black Holiness Church’s multiculturalism are meaningful. Gathje’s first strategy is to ensure that students understand the resistance to racism inherent in African American religion. Here, Gathje advocates for an in-depth study of the Black Church and its inherent diversity. By learning about the diversity of the Black Church, students are encouraged to think about its various perspectives, people, and notable events, including the major factor distinguishing the Black Church from white churches - a focus on survival. The Black Church was established to nurture

⁸² Jones and Trost, 141-142.

and strengthen African Americans in response to the inequalities caused by racism in America.⁸³ Gathje also emphasizes the importance of students understanding the role that the Black Church played in “elevation.” He states, “Elevation seeks through education, self-help groups, and various organizations to raise African Americans’ abilities to sustain their own communities and to compete within the larger society.”⁸⁴ He stresses the importance of viewing the Black Church through its desire for “liberation.” The Black Church served as the institution and cultural influence advocating for justice and promoting African American freedom in America.⁸⁵

Gathje’s second strategy challenges students to reflect on how their perspectives on and experiences with race have been shaped by the racism that has pervaded American culture and society throughout their lives. He acknowledges the need to allow students to acknowledge and validate their own experiences while also emphasizing that their views do not represent everyone’s racial realities. Gathje states, “To build trust, the various experiences of the students need to be validated. But at the same time, the students must be invited to see these experiences as limited and as reflecting their individual perspectives.”⁸⁶ This strategy aims to help students uncover any subtle racism they may be unaware of within themselves and to encourage them to recognize racist views and actions in others. Recognizing such racism in everyday life is the first step toward addressing it.

This second strategy focuses on defining racism and exploring ways to resist it. Gathje first asks the students to define racism in their own words. He then presents various definitions

⁸³ Jones and Trost, 195.

⁸⁴ Jones and Trost, 196.

⁸⁵ Jones and Trost, 196.

⁸⁶ Jones and Trost, 200.

from individuals of different backgrounds, both secular and nonsecular. To enhance the learning process, he then poses these six questions to the students:

- 1) Which of these definitions of racism appear most similar to how you would define racism?
- 2) What, if any, changes would you make to your definition of racism after reading and discussing these definitions?
- 3) Which of these definitions do you find most helpful? Why?
- 4) Which of these definitions do you find the least helpful? Why?
- 5) Do you find it helpful to recognize different types of racism? Why or why not?
- 6) Why is it important to have a definition of racism?⁸⁷

The purpose of the answers to these questions is to help students explore the different types of racism. Gathje identifies three types: individual or personal prejudice, cultural racism, and institutional racism. While these perspectives offer valuable insights into race and diversity, the next chapter will focus on how to teach the African American perspective of the Holiness Church more directly. Embracing the importance of diversity and understanding the racial inequality in the United States prepares one to deal with the increasing number of different cultures and people groups in America, which is essential when sharing the love of Christ. Being open to others, especially when dealing with issues of class and race, is essential for ministry in the United States. As we have already discussed, the United States is becoming increasingly diverse. Understanding the contributions of others, learning how they perceive race and class, and recognizing how their experiences within the Holiness Church have shaped them not only increases our awareness of others but also prepares us to fulfill Christ's command to

⁸⁷ Jones and Trost, 203.

love our neighbors.

Again, Davis and Graham, in their book, *The Great Dechurching*, focus on the “dechurched” who are “Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC).”⁸⁸ Their finding suggests that BIPOC individuals desire strong, deep relationships with fellow congregates.⁸⁹ Davis and Graham conclude that for these individuals to return to church, “we must love our neighbors of all colors and backgrounds. If you are a member of the dominant culture, then this will require cultural humility on your part if you want to prioritize gospel mission above cultural preferences.”⁹⁰ Once Holiness seminarians meet the challenge of discussing race in the classroom and understand the central tenets of the broader Black Church, they will be better equipped to incorporate the heritage and lessons of the Black Holiness Church into their own ministry. This preparation will also help them humbly embrace others.

In conclusion, the “miseducation” of Holiness seminarians, stemming from a lack of diversity in their curriculum, can be addressed by incorporating an African American perspective of the Holiness Movement in America. The teachings of the Black Holiness Church provide valuable insights for spiritual formation, equipping individuals to minister to people from various cultures effectively. There are some strategies for teaching African American religion studies that can aid seminaries as they embrace teaching diversity and inclusion. In the next section, we will demonstrate how studying the traditions of the Black Holiness Church can open up new avenues for Holiness seminarians to minister to contemporary communities.

⁸⁸ Davis et al., 79-97.

⁸⁹ Davis et al., 96.

⁹⁰ Davis et al., 96.

Section 4

The Black Holiness Church's Approach to the Church's Mission

The Black Holiness Church has a rich heritage marked by the belief that God's presence manifests in transformative, socially conscious ways that honor human dignity. The impact of the presence of God in the Black Holiness Church has been recognized worldwide, attracting many who seek to experience it. This section discusses how studying the transformative, embracing, and justice-oriented nature of the Black Holiness Church will help Holiness seminarians understand the Holiness Movement in the United States. It will also highlight aspects of ministry that invite the manifestation of God's presence. To start off, we will look at the transformative Black Holiness Church.

John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology written by John Wesley and edited by Albert C.

Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater

The Black Holiness Church helped transform lives through the power of the Holy Spirit. While many ministers were not formally trained in seminary, we see what Wesley described as "transformation."⁹¹⁹² Wesley's view of transformation can be summarized as follows: 1) The dominant presence of the Holy Spirit, which arises from the love that the believer holds in their heart; 2) This holy love continuously influences the believer's mindset; 3) The internal changes that occur are expressed through outward actions of love; and 4) Engaging in "works of piety"

⁹¹ John M. Giggie, *After Redemption: Jim Crow and the Transformation of African American Religion in the Delta, 1875-1915* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), 181.

⁹² John Wesley, *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology*, ed. Albert C. Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 465-473.

strengthens relationships with God and others.⁹³

After Redemption: Jim Crow and the Transformation of African American Religion in the Delta, 1875-1915 by John Michael Giggie

In his book, *After Redemption: Jim Crow and the Transformation of African American Religion in the Delta, 1875-1915*, John Michael Giggie explains how the Holiness tradition of transformation is demonstrated in the formerly enslaved Africans who sought a different religious experience. His book focuses on the often-overlooked period between the end of Reconstruction and World War I, examining the religious lives of former enslaved Africans and their descendants in the Mississippi and Arkansas Delta—the area with the highest concentration of Black residents during that time. Using a wide range of sources, including memoirs, newspapers, photographs, and early blues music, Giggie challenges the common belief that this period represented a low point in African American religious and cultural development as these people found a transformative experience in the Black Holiness Church. Giggie explains that the origins of the Black Holiness Church were shaped by what he refers to as the “radical experience of sanctification.”⁹⁴

Some African Americans in the 1890s saw the failure of Reconstruction as God’s punishment for not living in spiritual harmony with Him.⁹⁵ Early Black Holiness preachers criticized worldly extravagance, complacent lifestyles, and roles bestowed by humans—such as

⁹³ Susan B. Carole, *Called into Communion: A Paradigm Shift in Holiness Theology* (Eugene, Or: Pickwick Publications, 2013), 111.

⁹⁴ Giggie, 169.

⁹⁵ Giggie, 167.

membership in fraternities—which they believed contradicted God's teachings. Instead, they promoted “holiness” as a “theology of moral perfectionism.”⁹⁶ They openly declared, “God readily and frequently imparted sanctification to his faithful, which earned them the promise of salvation and frequently one or more powers that directly recalled the spiritual gifts that Jesus’s apostles had received during the Pentecost, such as the ability to heal bodily ills, cast out evil spirits, testify or prophesy.”⁹⁷ This meant that when someone receives the love of God in their heart, it transforms their mind. They begin to love others, live a sanctified life, and express gifts from God, including healing, exercising authority over demons, and speaking out in God’s name. They viewed “sanctified living” or holiness piety as not only the salvation of the soul but also the actions of the “saint.” This meant that the Black Holiness Church differed in both their worship and everyday behaviors. They believed activities such as partying, drinking alcohol, smoking, using profanity, and wearing revealing clothes were sinful and of the devil.⁹⁸ They also believed that the presence of God, which it had been manifested in their lives, could lead to divine healing and miracles. Reflecting on the 1897 convocation of the COCHUSA, Charles P. Jones stated, “The sick were healed, the blind were made to see, the afflicted were blessed, and many received the overflowing power of the Holy Ghost.”⁹⁹ While rooted in African practices, the Black Holiness Church also embraced the concept of healing as presented in the Bible.

Divine healing, as understood in the Black Holiness Church, emerges from a unique combination of African traditions and biblical teachings within the African American

⁹⁶ Giggie, 168.

⁹⁷ Giggie, 169.

⁹⁸ Giggie, 169.

⁹⁹ Castilla, 15.

community. Sanders explains that this practice originates from the “sanctified” tradition rooted in the African heritage of the Black Holiness Church. She attributes practices such as the beating of drums, foot stomping, clapping, body swaying, and healing to the African religious experience. She explains that healing in the Black Holiness Church “directly repeat[s] African practices in an effort to tap and harness spiritual power in order to make it serve the believer in a beneficial way.”¹⁰⁰ Jones views healing from a biblical perspective and, in the 10 “tenets” of COCHUSA, submits, “God answers prayer and heals diseases” (Ps 103 and 107; James 5:14-19).¹⁰¹ A closer study of James 5:14-20 will help us understand the beliefs of the Black Holiness Church regarding the presence of God in the healing process:

Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops. My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

The Tony Evans Bible Commentary by Dr. Tony Evans

The Tony Evans Bible Commentary introduces each book of the Bible, followed by clear, passage-by-passage explanations written by Dr. Tony Evans. Dr. Evans’ insights help people understand Scripture more deeply. The commentary encourages people to experience personal transformation and to live out the values of God’s kingdom in their daily lives through its

¹⁰⁰ Sanders, *Empowerment Ethics*, 7.

¹⁰¹ Castilla, 13.

biblical practical guides. Dr. Evans explains James 5:14-20 by stating, “In these verses, James addresses one who is sick. The Greek word from which this is translated can mean ‘weak.’ Thus, it can refer to any kind of weakness, physical or otherwise. Those beaten down and struggling to pray, then, can seek help from the elders.”¹⁰² Evans’ explanation elucidates Jones’s account of the COCHUSA 1897 convocation, including the stories shared about the Black Holiness Church around the world. People with all forms of illnesses would come to the church, and they would be healed. The Black Holiness Church tied this healing directly to living a holy life. Evans gives further insight into sin and sickness, saying that sickness does not always result from one’s sin, yet “a sinful lifestyle can result in weakness and suffering. Therefore, if needed, confess your sins to a trusted, spiritually mature believer. If you will deal with your sin, you will see God work in your life.”¹⁰³

The early Black Holiness Church followers believed they could confess their sins and live sinless lives before God, viewing this as part of the healing process. Finally, the Black Holiness Church believed that God could work supernaturally through people. Evans interprets the passage in the book of James as stating, “Elijah was a human being like us, yet he knew he had a God who is sovereign and expects his people to pray to him.”¹⁰⁴ For the Black Holiness Church, the understanding that God can work through people to bring about healing fueled the popularity of the Holiness Movement and served as evidence of divine presence among them. The Christian History Institute explains the significance of divine healing at Azusa Street:

Seymour taught that the Holy Spirit freely gives spiritual gifts to all born-again believers

¹⁰² Tony Evans and C. S. B. Bibles CSB Bibles by Holman, *The Tony Evans Bible Commentary* (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2019), 1346.

¹⁰³ Evans, 1346.

¹⁰⁴ Evans, 1347.

who earnestly and sincerely desire them. Thus an economically impoverished Black woman might be called on at a revival meeting to use her gift of divine healing to lay hands on a White man to be healed of his affliction. Or, a working class Black or Mexican immigrant might be called on to lay hands on and pray for the healing of a White woman of wealth. This cross-racial interaction and physical contact scandalized Americans and many around the colonized world, and is also why Azusa Street and its daughter missions became such a curious and powerful magnet. This—perhaps as much as any other thing—was Azusa Street’s healing miracle.¹⁰⁵

This manifestation of God’s presence among the saints was evident in divine healing and inspired creativity and new ideas. James Baldwin, one of the most prominent figures in African American history, acknowledged that his experience among the saints was life-changing. In *The Fire Next Time*, Baldwin illuminates the dynamic experience of Holiness music:

There is no music like that music, no drama like the drama of the saints rejoicing, the sinners moaning, the tambourines racing, and all those voices coming together and crying holy unto the Lord. I have never seen anything to equal the fire and excitement that sometimes, without warning, fill a church, causing the church... to rock.¹⁰⁶

Despite his disillusionment with the church in later years, Baldwin still invited European artists to the Black Holiness Church to experience its unique “vitality and energy that could be felt nowhere else.”¹⁰⁷

Theologian James Cone reflects on how his transformative experience at Union A.M.E. in Little Rock, Arkansas, “a place of worship where blacks regularly ‘caught the spirit,’” affected his writing of *Black Theology and Black Power*:¹⁰⁸ “Something happened that I can’t explain. It seemed as if a transcendent voice were speaking to me through the scriptures and the medium of

¹⁰⁵ Gastón Espinosa, “Power in The Blood,” *Christian History Magazine* 142 (2022).

¹⁰⁶ James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (New York, NY: Modern Library, 2021). 27.

¹⁰⁷ Clarence E. Hardy, *James Baldwin’s God: Sex, Hope, and Crisis in Black Holiness Culture* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2023), 6, 8.

¹⁰⁸ James H. Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 2022), 154.

African American history and culture, reminding me that God's liberation of the poor is the primary theme of Jesus's gospel."¹⁰⁹

Holiness seminarians today can learn from the Black Holiness Church's belief in the manifested presence of God. By understanding how the overflow of the Holy Spirit transforms people's minds, bodies, and spirits, we can gain some insights into how God works today. Next, we will explore how the Black Holiness Church perceived the image of God in the individual.

Practical Theology for Black Churches Bridging Black Theology and African Folk

Religion by Dale P. Andrews

In the Black Church, the idea of *imago Dei* is critical. In his book *Practical Theology for Black Churches*, Dale P. Andrews describes the church as a faith identity that combines a focus on liberation with spiritual care. He argues that this identity is shaped by key biblical themes that influence preaching and pastoral work. Specifically, he explains that in church, African Americans express their identities and the belief that they are made in the image of God. When attending church, Blacks can escape from the oppression of racism and fully embrace who they are. The "invisible church" during slavery was a space where the enslaved Africans rejected the teachings of slave masters and white churches, maintaining the belief that, despite their enslavement, they were still created in God's image.¹¹⁰ The belief that humans are made in the image of God was deeply rooted in the culture of the enslaved Africans. Andrews states, "The biblical notion that all creation is declared by God as 'good' confirmed not only the African

¹⁰⁹ Cone, *The Cross*, 154.

¹¹⁰ Dale P. Andrews, *Practical Theology for Black Churches Bridging Black Theology and African Folk Religion* (Louisville, London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 41.

value of human life but all life.”¹¹¹ The Bible and African religious myths have great similarities, and Andrew offers that these similarities made it easy for the enslaved Africans to adapt Western Christian teaching based on their understanding of God.¹¹² Unfortunately, like many churches in America during the nineteenth century, the Black Church adopted an individualist mentality. Andrew highlights a significant period in the church in America where “the interests of society and community were embedded in the religious ethics of shared, but individual, responses and commitment.”¹¹³ We propose that the Black Church, at its best, embodies a sense of community and recognizes both its members and others as being created in God’s image.

Although the theological term *imago Dei* is not explicitly found in the literature about the Black Holiness Church, the community embodies the belief that both they and others are made in the image of God. We see this expressed in their piety and in their relationship with others. Holiness preachers railed against the established systems, whether secular or sacred. They criticized the relationships that Baptists and Methodists had with fraternal orders, market consumers, and material goods. They believed that the church should be separate from the world and that churches seeking affirmation and support from worldly influences were ungodly. This created a sense of “somebodiness” among those who were part of the Holiness Church. The “Saints” were seen as the different ones in society, representing God. Unlike other religious orders, they did not compromise their beliefs for worldly influence.¹¹⁴

While the Black Holiness Church followers believed they were made in the image of

¹¹¹ Andrews, 41.

¹¹² Andrews, 41.

¹¹³ Andrews, 56.

¹¹⁴ Giggie, 183.

God, they also recognized women and the poor as reflections of God's image. This perspective was not commonly held by many churches of the time. They demonstrated what Sanders calls "a model of three-dimensional Christian unity among persons of both sexes, all races, and differing economic and educational status coming together regularly for worship, sharing, and a hearty communal meal."¹¹⁵ A Black Holiness Church follower believes that both they and others are created in the image of God. This is an important concept for Holiness seminarians to understand as they minister to the changing demographics in the United States. Next, we will investigate how the Black Holiness Church's social justice and loving approach address both biblical and social issues.

From Classism to Community by Jini Kilgore Cockroft

The Black Holiness Church views social holiness and social justice as closely intertwined, stemming from their understanding of the concept of *imago Dei*—that everyone is made in the image of God. This belief has driven the Black Holiness Church's active engagement in social justice efforts. In Jini Kilgore Cockroft's book, *From Classism to Community*, she explores how classism began in the Church and how it has shaped the growth of different denominations. Through insights from scripture, theology, sociology, and history, she provides practical ways to break down the barriers that divide people in faith communities. She explains that "the biblical concept of *imago Dei* - God's image in which we all are made - is the perspective by which Christians should view and relate to one another, rather than societal norms of community and collegiality based mostly socioeconomic similarities."¹¹⁶ Cockroft, who has

¹¹⁵ Sanders, *Empowerment Ethics*, 136.

¹¹⁶ Jini Kilgore Cockroft and J. Alfred Smith, *From Classism to Community: A Challenge for the*

dedicated her life to serving the poor, provides the historical role of the Black church in caring for the poor and describes how this legacy serves as both an inspiration and guidance for the church today. Cockroft highlights the African American Christian community as an example of the “need for and the nature of inclusive community.”¹¹⁷ She explains the Black Church has a long history of “African communalism” that has served African Americans well, even in the midst of American individualism.¹¹⁸

The African American church is not perfect. As it has transitioned from being an invisible church to an institutional one, it has faced challenges related to classism and its ability to serve the poor. Some Black Churches, unfortunately, have taken on the posture of blaming the poor for their condition and ignoring the systemic issues that cause poverty in the United States.¹¹⁹ At its best, the Black Holiness Church is a justice-oriented institution. An example of the link between social holiness and social justice in the Black Holiness Church is evident in the translation of the concept of “imago Dei” into the slogan “I AM A MAN.” The Memphis Sanitation Workers’ Strike began not long after an incident in February 1968 when two workers were crushed by a malfunctioning truck. Eleven days later, 1,300 frustrated Black men from the Memphis Department of Public Works went on strike for over two months. The City Council finally recognized the union and offered the workers better pay, ending the strike.¹²⁰ William Lucy, a young, up-and-coming union official dispatched to Memphis by his union, collaborated

Church (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2016), 8.

¹¹⁷ Cockroft and Smith, 32.

¹¹⁸ Cockroft and Smith, 33.

¹¹⁹ Cockroft and Smith, 44.

¹²⁰ The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute, “Memphis Sanitation Workers’ Strike,” accessed April 25, 2024, <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/memphis-sanitation-workers-strike>.

with the COGIC-affiliated organization Community on the Move for Equality (COME) to create a slogan that was “small enough to fit on a placard but powerful enough to unite the city. They thought about systemic racism in the South and the generations of black boys who grew up to be grandfathers without ever being treated as men by white society. That’s when it hit them.”¹²¹¹²² COME was a grassroots organization that “united black Memphians across denominational lines to pursue economic justice during the strike.”¹²³ Many COGIC leaders were active in COME,¹²⁴ including G.E. Patterson, whose congregation included several people who worked for the sanitation department. COME's stated objectives were to secure justice for the sanitation workers and create job opportunities for impoverished Black residents of Memphis.¹²⁵ Anyone who has studied the Civil Rights Movement in America will remember the images of the striking sanitation workers wearing signs declaring, “I AM A MAN.” This slogan comes from the influence of the Black Holiness Church, which was a leading force in the Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike. This example of the Black Holiness Church catalyzing grassroots movements serves as a model for churches that want to engage with society and care for the poor. Teaming up with other churches across denominational lines demonstrates how the church can move beyond individual worship for the greater good of the community. This approach exemplifies the

¹²¹ Steve Flamisch, “I Am a Man: A Conversation with William Lucy,” Rutgers University, February 26, 2021, <https://www.rutgers.edu/news/i-am-man-conversation-william-lucy>.

¹²² Jonathan Chism, ““Being Martin Luther Kings with COGIC Saints in Memphis,” *The Commercial Appeal*, January 17, 2019. <https://www.commercialappeal.com/story/opinion/contributors/2019/01/17/being-martin-luther-kings-cogic-saints-memphis/2594382002/>.

¹²³ Chism.

¹²⁴ Chism.

¹²⁵ Chism.

merging of social holiness and social justice to fight against systemic oppression in the world. Hearing the pain of the community and requiring justice is rooted in biblical principles.

Just a Sister Away by Renita J. Weems

Hearing and responding to the pain in the community is a hallmark of the Black Holiness Church. Through the lens of womanist theology, we can see that this response is grounded in biblical understanding. In her article “The Liberating Theology That Transformed My Understanding of God,” Lauren W. Reliford explains, “Womanism examines the lived experience of black women who are subject to oppression that intersects with their race, class, and gender.”¹²⁶ Renita J. Weems, in her book *Just A Sister Away*, writes with African American women in mind and examines closely how women in the Bible treated one another to better understand how they may have seen themselves (womanist theology). She believes that a shared spiritual experience connects women across time and continues to shape their lives today. She analyzed the story of Hagar, pushing Abram and Sarai to the background and focusing on Hagar’s trauma in Genesis 16 and 21. Weems notes, “It is a story of exploitation and persecution suffered by an Egyptian slave woman at the hands of her Hebrew mistress.”¹²⁷ Weems contends that this story should not be left in the past because it is still instructive to us today. She argues that the “similarity of our stories, as Black and white women in America, to the story of Hagar and Sarai warrants taking the enormous risk of opening up the deep festering wounds between us

¹²⁶ Lauren W. Reliford, “The Liberating Theology That Transformed My Understanding of God,” Sojourners, March 23, 2023, <https://sojo.net/articles/liberating-theology-transformed-my-understanding-god>.

¹²⁷ Renita J. Weems. *Just a Sister Away: A Womanist Vision of Women’s Relationships in the Bible* (San Diego, CA: LuraMedia, 1988), 2.

and beginning to explore our possibilities for divine healing.”¹²⁸ As Weems concludes her explanation of Hagar’s story, she reflects on how God responds to painful prayers:

Just as Ishmael must have wept for the senselessness of Hagar, Sarah, and Abraham’s ways, maybe it will take our children weeping on our behalf - our children weeping for the sins and prejudices and stubbornness of their own mothers and fathers - to convince God to intervene on our behalf. Perhaps as a global community we will be saved - if we are to be saved at all- because of the little children whose innocent tears will prostrate heaven.¹²⁹

Womanist Theologian Valerie Rane Landfair critiques white Pentecostal, evangelical, and Catholic theologians for their inadequate engagement with the story of Hagar, arguing that they fail to truly hear the pain of the Black community.¹³⁰ Offering a Pentecostal womanist hermeneutic of Hagar’s narrative, Landfair connects it to the contemporary proclamation “Black Lives Matter.” She calls on these white theologians to acknowledge their “sins, repent, and lament” and work to actively dismantle white supremacy and cease normalizing the trauma and suffering experienced by communities of color.¹³¹ Weems and Landfair demonstrate that the Black Holiness Church’s commitment to justice begins with their interpretation of scripture. God’s call is to stand in solidarity with the marginalized and oppressed, to advocate for systemic change, to extend compassion and aid to those in need, and to interpret and teach the Scriptures from this perspective. This is a key strength of the Black Church tradition, and by engaging with the scholarship of these holiness womanist theologians, seminarians can be better prepared to address the intertwined concerns of social holiness and social justice in their service to diverse

¹²⁸ Weems, 2.

¹²⁹ Weems, 19.

¹³⁰ Lisa M. Bowens and Dennis R. Edwards, *Do Black Lives Matter? How Christian Scriptures Speak to Black Empowerment* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2023). 123.

¹³¹ Bowens and Edwards, 135.

communities.

In conclusion, Holiness seminarians can learn to serve diverse communities by studying the Black Holiness Church, as it believes in the manifested presence of God to transform lives, the theological concept of *imago Dei*, and the integration of the values of social holiness with social justice. The Black Holiness Church experienced the power of the presence of God to transform the mind, body, and soul. Even amidst societal pressures that denied their inherent worth, members affirmed their identity as bearers of God's image. Finally, they engaged in issues of justice without compromising their commitment to holiness. For today's seminarians, understanding the Black Holiness Church is essential for revitalizing the church and igniting a renewed Holiness Movement.

Chapter Conclusion

The literature review in this chapter explores African Americans' contributions to the Holiness Movement, church planting models in the Black Holiness Church, its multicultural traditions, and its fellowshiping power. The Black Holiness Church's contributions to the Holiness Movement, along with its commitment to diversity and inclusion and its interpretation of the Bible, are significant and worthy of study by Holiness seminarians. This knowledge can help revive the Holiness Church and prepare seminarians to minister effectively in multicultural settings. According to this teaching, Holiness seminarians can better serve diverse communities, foster diversity and inclusion in classroom settings, and address some theological challenges that haunt the Holiness Church today. The following chapter outlines a thesis advocating for a curriculum focused on the Black Holiness Church. This curriculum is intended to serve as a model for Holiness seminaries to study, comprehend, and integrate best practices for modern ministry.

CHAPTER 3

THESIS

CHAPTER 3: THESIS

A Pedagogical Approach and Theological Underpinning for Teaching Holiness from the African American Perspective

The aim of this chapter is to present the thesis using a comprehensive and thorough theological assessment of the problem, which is grounded in biblical, historical, and theological norms. The chapter explains how to teach the contributions, theology, ministry, and praxis of the Black Holiness Church to reverse the decline in Holiness Churches, improve the handling of diversity in Holiness seminaries, and strengthen the Holiness Church's focus on transforming lives. The curriculum will be based on four methodologies: best practices in African American religion, wisdom teaching from the Black Church, best practices from higher education syllabi, and the theological foundations of the Black Holiness Church, viewed as a vital source of life for Holiness churches in America.

Section 1 explores the lessons learned in teaching African American religion and how to translate that understanding to teaching the Black perspective of holiness in the classroom. Section 2 discusses the spiritual formation of the Black Church, known as wisdom teaching, and how it can help inform Holiness seminarians as they engage with diverse cultures. Section 3 reviews institutional standards for courses that serve as a framework for teaching Holiness seminarians the contributions, theology, ministry, and praxis of the Black Holiness Church.

Finally, section 4 explores the theological assertion that the Holiness Church in America can be revived and strengthened by embracing the heritage of the Black Holiness Church. The next chapter, Chapter 5, will present a curriculum entitled "A River of Life - The History, Theology, Missiology, and Praxis of the Black Holiness Church."

The Proposed Thesis Effect

Figure 1.1 below provides an overview of how learning the traditions of the Black Holiness Church can ultimately revive a Holiness Movement in America.

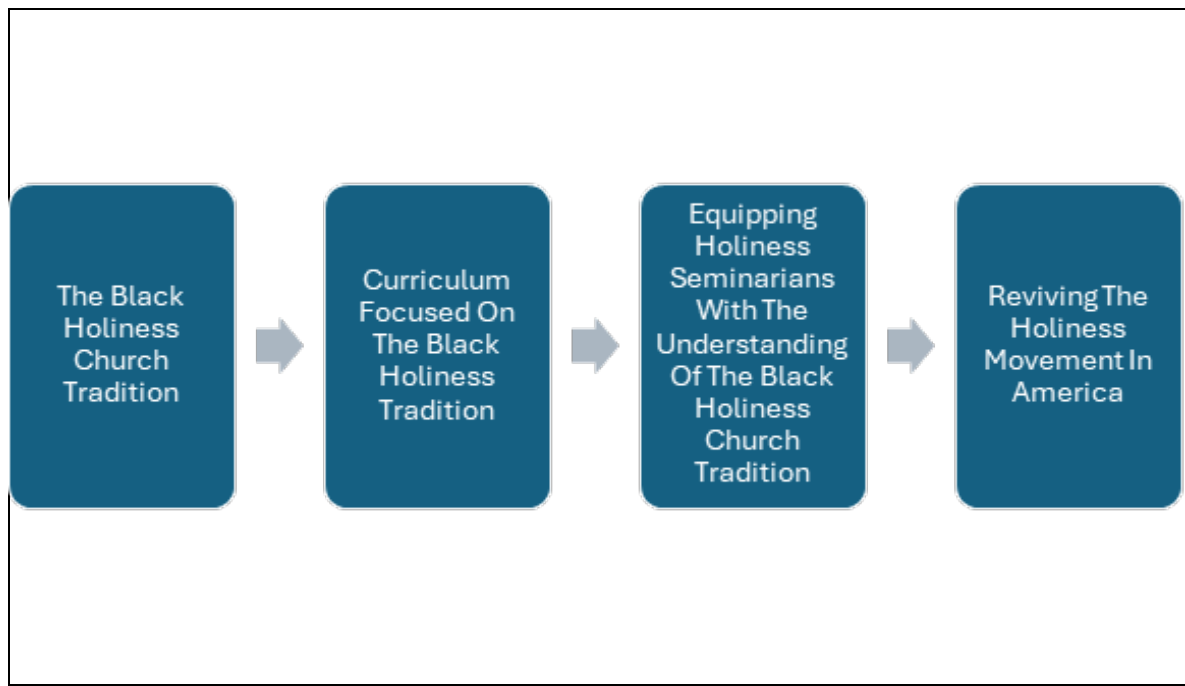


Figure 1.1. The boxes in the image represent a sequential process, where each step builds upon the previous one to achieve the final goal of reviving the Holiness Movement in America. Each box represents a step in a cause-and-effect chain, showing how knowledge and education lead to a broader revival of a religious movement.

The various components of the proposed thesis effect relate to each other as follows:

- a) The Black Holiness Church Tradition: This is the foundation of the process. The tradition provides the historical and theological basis for the movement.
- b) Curriculum Focused on the Black Holiness tradition: To preserve and pass on the Black Holiness tradition, a structured curriculum is created, ensuring that key teachings, values, and history are taught effectively.
- c) Equipping Holiness seminarians with the Understanding of the Black Holiness

Church Tradition: The curriculum is used to educate and prepare seminarians to deeply understand and embody the Black Holiness tradition.

- d) Reviving the Holiness Movement in America: The trained seminarians, who go on to lead churches and ministries, help revive and sustain the Holiness Movement in America.

Section 1

Methodology 1: African American Religion Best Practices

Black religion has already been successfully taught, and we can learn from these methods when considering how to teach the Black Holiness Church. Carolyn M. Jones and Theodore Louis Trost edited a series of essays titled *Teaching African American Religions*.¹ These essays are filled with best practices from professors who have taught African American religion for years. The work of Jones and Theodore is the praxis and pedagogy that the artifact of this dissertation will follow. *Teaching African American Religions* provides real classroom examples for teaching African American religion and ingenious methods for engaging students in learning, considering various educational settings. It also notes that there are only a few experts in African American religion, students may have very little prior knowledge of the subject, and the topic itself is extensive, with usually only limited time to cover it.

For far too long, “whiteness” has been at the center of seminary coursework. Little to no time is spent on the contribution of nonwhite groups to Christianity, its denominations, or movements. In *Teaching African American Religions*, Edwin David Aponte provides clear and

¹ Carolyn M. Jones and Theodore Louis Trost, *Teaching African American Religions* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2005).

practical ways to incorporate the contributions of Black people into the seminary classroom. At the publishing of the book, Aponte was an Associate Professor of Christianity and Culture at Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University. His research interests include North American religious history, Latino religions, and African American religions. Aponte also co-wrote the book *Introducing Latino/a Theologies with Miguel A. De La Torre*.² Often, when discussing African Americans, we start with their history of enslavement in North and South America. To truly acknowledge the contributions of African Americans, one must go back to their ancestral homelands from where they were kidnapped and review their contributions to the history of Christianity.

Aponte encourages courses to start by discussing events that took place in Africa. In Aponte's experience, just sharing the names of early Christians and their African origins challenges the learners. He states:

One key point is to review the early church leaders, thinkers, martyrs, and dissenters such as Tertullian, the biblical scholar Origen of Alexandria, the martyrs Felicitas and Perpetua, Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, Anthony of Egypt, Clement of Alexandria, Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria and champion of Nicaean orthodoxy, the famous Augustine, bishop of Hippo, who was to have ongoing influence on Christian Heretics. As I introduce these figures from early church history, I ask students to take note that these people were from Africa and that many of the events of their lives took place in Africa. While this may seem like an obvious observation, it consistently evokes surprise and occasional objection.³

The challenge of looking at religion from a Black perspective is not new. Daphne C. Wiggins, a contributor to the book *Teaching African American Religions* and the former Assistant Professor of Congregational Studies at the Divinity School at Duke University, reflects on her realization of this challenge in academia regarding understanding African American

² Jones and Trost, ix.

³ Jones and Trost, 110.

religions. She states, “It reminded me again of the racial and intellectual superiority accrued to ‘whiteness’ that makes ‘double consciousness’ a necessary analytical stance for black students in the academy. It fundamentally challenged me to consider the effectiveness of my teaching about the Christian church through investigation of the Black Church.”⁴

The misunderstanding of African Americans' contributions extends beyond early Christian history; it is evident even in contemporary holiness and Pentecostalism. Aponte illustrates this issue with an example from the classroom:

I mention in my lectures the different factors that prepared the way and eventually led to the great Azusa Street revival of 1906 in Los Angeles. I then say that Pentecostalism in many contemporary settings can trace a connection to Azusa Street, where the key initial leader was William Seymour, an African American Holiness preacher. At this point some students express surprise, including some students who are Pentecostal, who knew of Azusa Street, and perhaps even heard of William Seymour, but never knew that he was African American.⁵

During Aponte's tenure at Perkins School of Theology, the African American course was part of the three core courses at the seminary. As one would expect, some students openly expressed their concerns about engaging with the African American perspective, particularly if “(1) they are not African American and (2) they do not plan to do ministry in an African American community.”⁶ Despite the students' concerns and challenges, Aponte was committed to helping the class learn from African American religious heritage. He explains that his pedagogical approach “includes both the specific study of African and African American religious traditions, as well as consideration of broader topics originating from alternative

⁴ Jones and Trost, 141.

⁵ Jones and Trost, 110.

⁶ Jones and Trost, 111.

perspectives of African American life and culture. The former is a more direct approach to broadening the core curriculum while the latter is more implicit.”⁷

To clarify the focus of this dissertation, we assert that teaching the African American perspective of the Holiness Movement is essential, as African Americans have made significant contributions to this Movement. Consequently, this dissertation emphasizes Aponte’s best practices for encouraging the seminary to value, respect, and learn from the perspective and history of African Americans.⁸

Some people believe that simply adding a few African American authors to the course or mentioning some African American names during a lecture is enough to address the contributions and religious perspectives of Black people in America. However, rethinking and reshaping the biased perceptions regarding African American religion requires much more effort than that. Milton C. Sernett, in his book *African American Religious History*, writes about this rethinking:

It is not satisfactory simply to doctor up the standard texts by adding a paragraph or two about slave religion, Richard Allen, or Father Divine. The problem is more than inclusion as opposed to exclusion. If the African American religious experience is allowed to stand on its own merit, not as a footnote to someone else’s story, then we will discover a great deal about American culture that is opaque unless seen from the vantage point of those who, according to a nineteenth-century spiritual, have “been in the storm so long.”⁹

Wiggins asserts that instructors preparing to teach courses on African American religions must see them “as authentic and legitimate in their own right.”¹⁰ Aponte notes that requiring

⁷ Jones and Trost, 111.

⁸ Jones and Trost, 111.

⁹ Jones and Trost, 111.

¹⁰ Jones and Trost, 145.

classes on the African American perspective as core courses in seminaries presents a challenge for the diverse student body. Since these classes are mandatory for graduation, all students must enroll in them, which means the students come with various views, experiences, and interests. Aponte states that when the semester starts, “some students come in with a certain amount of disinterest, resistance, or even animosity toward the subject matter, not an uncommon response to core requirements.”¹¹ He argues that the professor must tackle the challenge of ensuring the topic is valued while also finding ways for students to lean into the coursework to expand their theological learning.¹²

Aponte describes the goals of his rethinking model as follows:

- 1) The first hope is to affirm the legitimacy of multiple perspectives on the subjects studied while demonstrating that social and cultural location does make a difference for the study of the past as well as for the study of the present. This addresses the previously unquestioned hegemony of certain dominant disciplinary perspectives.
- 2) Second, it is my hope to lift up African American perspectives and contributions in these courses in a positive way.
- 3) Third, I hope to nurture the desire to pursue further study in African American religious traditions in students' minds.
- 4) Finally, the different methodological approaches employed will be reviewed with attention to how such a pedagogical orientation impacts the rest of the curriculum and the approaches of teaching colleagues.¹³

The study of African American religious teachings offers a model for reconnecting, revolutionizing, and reimagining how seminarians learn about the Black Holiness Church.

In conclusion, this section demonstrated that pedagogy and praxis of African American religious teaching serve as an effective model for teaching the Black perspective within the Holiness Church. By connecting African American religious practices to the Black experience

¹¹ Jones and Trost, 113.

¹² Jones and Trost, 113.

¹³ Jones and Trost, 113.

before slavery, putting African American religious understanding at the center of teaching, and challenging students to rethink how they view religion, an instructor can prime seminarians to incorporate the Black experience of religion, particularly Holiness, into their own ministry. Next, we will explore the spiritual formation of wisdom teaching as a method to be utilized in the classroom while teaching the Black perspective of the Holiness Church.

Section 2

Methodology 2: Black Church Wisdom Teaching

Renewing and challenging the minds of Holiness seminarians involves introducing them to spiritual formation in the Black Church context. It is essential to recognize that while some methods for serving African American congregations are universally accepted, others are unique to the Black community. First, we will compare widely accepted spiritual formation practices as outlined by Sondra Higgins Matthaei in *Formation in Faith* with the practices unique to the Black context described by Wimberly and Parker in *In Search of Wisdom*. Conducting this comparison in the classroom engages Holiness seminarians in spiritual formation, ultimately preparing them to serve diverse cultures. *Formation in Faith* serves congregations as they strive to make disciples for Christ. Matthaei addresses the following fundamental questions: “How do persons become Christian?” and “How do people grow in faith?”¹⁴ She distills the essentials of disciple-making to the need for people to have authentic relationships and faithful Christian communities.¹⁵ Matthaei emphasizes that authentic relationships with others are “critically

¹⁴ Sondra Higgins Matthaei, *Formation in Faith: The Congregational Ministry of Making Disciples* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2008), ix.

¹⁵ Matthaei, 3, 5.

important in stopping the loss of those who find the church to be irrelevant.”¹⁶

A key component to authentic relationships is hearing and being heard, but Matthaëi elaborates that this means “[h]earing with the ear and listening with the heart.”¹⁷ She identifies the three characteristics of authentic relationships as “being heard, being known, and being accepted.”¹⁸ When engaging in spiritual formation, it is important to connect with one another. Ultimately, discipleship is about bringing people into a relationship with God. An authentic relationship with God means that he hears us; this connection is not solely based on the fact that he created us. Before creation, God heard us “and knew the deepest needs of creation before God spoke a word of redemption and salvation.” understanding of life grows. A faithful Christian community, rooted in God’s word, plays a significant role in this growth. As faith is formed, it is important for individuals to read and understand the scriptures. For the community to embody genuine Christian faith, it must create an environment where people can ask questions. These questions can enhance one’s relationship with God because “active debate about theological issues in the interpretation of Scripture only serves to deepen one’s faith.”¹⁹ Connecting with others while serving God strengthens one’s faith as well. This authentic relationship causes one to “think and act like the body of Christ focusing on God.”²⁰ Matthaëi clearly states: “When we live together in the church as a Christian family, the intentionality of the shared life creates a formative community in which all of the members of the family do their best to live a Christian

¹⁶ Matthaëi, 5.

¹⁷ Matthaëi, 3.

¹⁸ Matthaëi, 3.

¹⁹ Matthaëi, 21.

²⁰ Matthaëi, 63.

life in the midst of the many distractions of society.”²¹

Now that we have explored traditional spiritual formation, let us review the formation practices of the Black Holiness Church. In addition to the faith formation outlined by Matthaei, the Holiness tradition seeks piety and the power of the Holy Spirit. Cheryl J. Sanders, in her book *Saints in Exile*, explains that the Holiness tradition “stresses purity of life and thought achieved by means of practices such as fasting, prayer, and renunciation of the world.”²² It also “emphasiz[es] personal empowerment through the Spirit. Its characteristic discipline is tarrying, a Pentecostal method of seeking the outpouring of the Spirit in worship.”²³ While Matthaei’s concept of faith formation is important, Wimberly and Parker introduce a complementary spiritual formation that takes place within the Black Church. Their formation is based on the sharing of “wisdom.” Wisdom formation involves sharing the personal testimonies of the traumatic journey endured by Africans, highlighting how they survived and even thrived. The history, disposition, mindset, values, and knowledge of Black sages have been an important part of the lives of African American Christians.²⁴ This wisdom is shared through cultural teachings and guides.

Teaching biblical and African culture is an essential part of the spiritual formation in the Black Church. This approach differs from other faith contexts because Christian education in the Black Church addresses the African American experience, which is infused with liberation,

²¹ Matthaei, 64.

²² Cheryl Jeanne Sanders. *Saints in Exile: The Holiness-Pentecostal Experience in African American Religion and Culture* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), 136.

²³ Sanders, *Saints in Exile*, 136-137.

²⁴ Anne Streaty Wimberly and Evelyn L. Parker, *In Search of Wisdom: Faith Formation in the Black Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 11.

identity establishment, and engendering hope.²⁵ While the presence and culture of Black people are evident throughout the Bible, many within the Black Church choose to interpret biblical culture primarily through a European lens.

Unfortunately, church officials and scholars often dismiss the contributions of Black people in the Bible. Consequently, these contributions have been distorted, reinterpreted, and reimaged to communicate Eurocentric characters, standards, and values.²⁶ The Black Church serves as the place where these misconceptions can be revealed, understood as lies, and replaced with the truth. The Black Church is also the place for the teaching, understanding, and furthering of the liberation of African Americans. Liberation is central to the intent of African wisdom formation: It emphasizes that “wisdom formation should be wise decisions and wise actions, meaning those decisions and actions that contribute to Black people’s liberation from oppressive life conditions and to transformed and wholeness-producing existence.”²⁷ The church serves as a place where African Americans can learn healthy ways to deal with the realities of their lives while also being offered hope, practices, and resources to be freed from life’s struggles.²⁸ The triple-heritage model of faith formation for African American Christians includes the wisdom of their African, Black American, and Christian roots. The African heritage is shaped by the traditions of the “motherland,” which include tribal customs, rituals, music, dance, family structure, and so on.

The heritage of Black Americans reflects the strength, character, and resilience of the

²⁵ Wimberly and Parker, 45.

²⁶ Wimberly and Parker, 42.

²⁷ Wimberly and Parker, 46.

²⁸ Wimberly and Parker, 47.

men and women who built this country. These early Black Americans also recognized Christianity as a divine religion, even though it was used to oppress them.²⁹ The music and songs of the Black Church serve as avenues for experiencing, expressing, and teaching the triple heritage.³⁰ The Black Holiness Church is especially known for embracing and celebrating the African tradition through music. Cheryl J. Sanders shares how Sanctified churches drew on this tradition to “highlight the cultural distinctiveness and aesthetics of African people through the recovery and retrieval of drums, guitars, tambourines, and African modes of worship.”³¹ Blending music, song, and wisdom is a distinctive feature of the Black Church.

African Americans face unique struggles in the United States. Wisdom teachings from Biblical, cultural, and cross-generational guides aid Black Christians throughout their lives. The Hebrew teachings found in some of the Old Testament are essential for the development of African Americans. The books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job, and the apocryphal book of Sirach make up the Israelites’ concepts of wisdom.³² These books offer practical advice for navigating life and striving to live righteously. The book of Proverbs emphasizes the importance of wisdom in one’s life. Some phrases associated with wisdom include “wisdom as God’s greatest attribute,” “fearing God is the beginning of wisdom,” and “the person who finds wisdom and has understanding is very blessed and happy.”³³ These wisdom books teach us that wisdom is a

²⁹ Wimberly and Parker, 51.

³⁰ Wimberly and Parker, 43.

³¹ Sanders, *Saints in Exile*, 137.

³² Wimberly and Parker, 24.

³³ Wimberly and Parker, 24.

valuable asset in life. Much like a nurturing mother, “wisdom sustains life.”³⁴ The Israelites and Africans honored guides who communicated messages of wisdom based on their own experiences to help others make it through life.³⁵ These “wisdom teachers” impart “wisdom hewn by experience.”³⁶ They are the carriers of the oral history of their cultures. Through storytelling, they share wisdom that can be applied to real-life situations.³⁷

One of the greatest challenges in the church today is the absence of young people. As discussed before, the Black Church experience is not limited to what happens within the four walls of the church. Rather, it has historically played a significant role in the community. The disconnect with the youth and diverse cultures can be bridged by embracing the tradition of cross-generational guides.³⁸ The Black Holiness Church’s spiritual formation strives to reach across generations and cultures. Cross-generational guides are rooted in Black ancestry. Understanding this history and the significance of African Americans enables a guide to connect youth with their cultural heritage that spans time and place, thereby revealing to them the strength they have within themselves. This dialogue between adults and young people can empower the youth to value and embrace their identities in a world that often tells them their experiences do not matter.³⁹ In order to foster internal trust and teach civility across cultures within the church, the Black Holiness Church established various auxiliaries. These groups of

³⁴ Wimberly and Parker, 24.

³⁵ Wimberly and Parker, 24.

³⁶ Wimberly and Parker, 32.

³⁷ Wimberly and Parker, 34.

³⁸ Wimberly and Parker, 57.

³⁹ Wimberly and Parker, 64.

women, children, and youth are very similar to those found in Black Baptist and Methodist churches.⁴⁰ The auxiliaries of the Black Holiness Church serve as the perfect places for mentoring and faith formation. The book *In Search of Wisdom* defines mentoring as a process of responsible relationships where a sage engages peer groups in pursuing growth and development. This mentorship method of sharing wisdom is effectively facilitated within the male, female, and youth auxiliaries.⁴¹ The following section will demonstrate how this wisdom teaching can be used in holiness seminary classrooms to provide cross-cultural learning.

Wisdom teaching, a prominent spiritual formation method in the Black Holiness Church, can be used to engage Holiness seminarians in teaching that causes them to understand other cultures. Edwin David Aponte provides clear and practical ways to bring Black people's contributions to the seminary classroom. He uses “wisdom teaching” to ensure students interact with one another and learn from one another’s experiences. In contrast, some professors manage the classroom from the perspective that they are the sole authorities. They see themselves as solely responsible for imparting all knowledge. Aponte suggests the professor foster “a classroom of possibility” by trying “to cultivate a collaborative way of learning and a collegial atmosphere” in the classroom.”⁴² As the professor, he embraces all of his humanity and asks the students to do the same. The classroom is a place where everyone is open to share, all are “teachers, learners, story tellers, and interpreters together.”⁴³ The idea is not just to inform but also to form the students' thinking. Dr. Daphne Wiggins echoes this sentiment, believing that the

⁴⁰ Alexander and Amos, 48.

⁴¹ Wimberly and Parker, 74, 89, 108.

⁴² Jones and Trost, 116.

⁴³ Jones and Trost, 117.

professor must be committed to this role to not only share information but also challenge students to rethink their religious views and experiences.⁴⁴ She sees herself in the classroom as a “presenter, investigator, facilitator of ideas, ‘facts,’ and paradigms.”⁴⁵ She feels having students interact with data and view it from different perspectives is important. She challenges students to go beyond thinking that there is one solution to ministry.⁴⁶ She encourages her students to take a position and defend it while understanding some of the assumptions that could be underlying their beliefs. The process allows the students to question and investigate even things that they have believed to be true their entire lives.⁴⁷ To facilitate this process, she breaks the class into small groups and prepares questions beforehand to foster conversation and discussion. She assigns two major papers and presentations to students, as well as more minor reflections on the readings throughout the semester. Wiggins adjusts her teaching strategies to accommodate different student learning styles, keeping in mind both oral and visual learners.⁴⁸ This pedagogical approach aligns with the wisdom teaching heritage of the Black Holiness Church and can aid in the spiritual formation of Holiness seminaries as they are challenged to rethink their ministry in a multicultural context.

In conclusion, the spiritual formation of wisdom teaching is an effective method for conveying the heritage of the Black Holiness Church. By sharing personal stories and highlighting the African, Black American, and Christian roots of the Black Church in a cross-

⁴⁴ Jones and Trost, 145.

⁴⁵ Jones and Trost, 146.

⁴⁶ Jones and Trost, 146.

⁴⁷ Jones and Trost, 147.

⁴⁸ Jones and Trost, 118.

cultural classroom experience, we encourage Holiness seminarians to prepare for ministry in a diverse America. Next, we will present the outline for the curriculum focused on teaching holiness from the African American perspective.

Section 3

Methodology 3: Higher Level Institution of Learning Syllabus Best Practices

The syllabus serves as a guide for the course, detailing what to expect throughout the semester. The Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning at Harvard University identifies eight key components essential for higher-level education syllabi.

Generally, a syllabus should include the following information:

1. ***Learning Objectives:*** This section outlines what students will gain or take away from your course, emphasizing the importance of each objective in relation to the topics or sessions covered. It would be helpful if objectives were included for each topic/session.
2. ***Goal/Rationale:*** This section explains how the course relates to the discipline's primary concepts and principles. It discusses where it fits into the overall intellectual framework and the type of knowledge and abilities that will be emphasized. It also includes the rationale behind how and why the course is organized in a particular sequence.
3. ***Basic Information:*** The syllabus includes the course name and number, meeting time and place, instructor name, contact information, office hours, and information about instructional support staff.
4. ***Course Content:*** The syllabus includes a schedule, an outline, meeting dates and holidays, and major topics and sub-topics, preferably with a rationale for inclusion.

5. ***Student Responsibilities:*** This section includes particulars and rationale for homework, projects, quizzes, exams, reading requirements, participation, due dates, and policies on lateness, missed work, extra credit, etc.
6. ***Grading Method:*** This section includes a clear, explicit statement of the assessment process and measurements.
7. ***Materials and Access:*** The syllabus includes required texts and readings, course packs, and instructions on how to obtain materials, including relevant instructional technologies and additional resources such as study groups, etc.
8. ***Teaching Philosophy:*** This section includes the course's pedagogical approach and explains the rationale for why and how it will benefit students.⁴⁹

African American religion syllabi differ based on the professor's course development process. Wiggins demonstrates how she develops a syllabus by asking questions:

How can you expose students to the scholarship on African American churches? How do you structure this class so that each student experiences some dimension of African American community and church? What skills can I provide students with for social analysis and theological reflection? How do I encourage students to engage in theological reflection when they are part of the group identified as "the other"? I also considered which students might best take advantage of this type of learning experience. Three factors informed my design: their academic preparation, their time flexibility, and their inclinations toward social justice ministry.⁵⁰

The curriculum submitted as the artifact for this dissertation has been developed using this model. However, it is important to acknowledge that every professor, student, classroom, and institution will take a different approach to this model. The project is intended to serve as an

⁴⁹ "Syllabus Design," Derek Bok Center, Harvard University, accessed November 22, 2024, <https://bokcenter.harvard.edu/syllabus-design>.

⁵⁰ Jones and Trost, 148.

example.

To conclude, the artifact for this dissertation is a syllabus designed to teach the African American perspective of the Holiness Church. This section outlines a framework for a curriculum that meets higher-level educational standards, placing the African American religious experience at the center of the course. The course will include learning components, firsthand experiences of the Black Holiness Church, opportunities for reflection, and guidance for future ministry. In the following sections, we will explore the theological assertion that the understanding of the heritage of the Black Holiness Church can serve as a source of revival for the Holiness Movement in America.

Section 4

A River of Life: The Black Holiness Church's Theological Assertion

The theological underpinning of the artifact of this dissertation is that God can use the heritage of the Black Holiness Church to bring revival to the Holiness Church as a whole. To explore this theological assertion, we will answer three questions: 1) Has God ever used symbols from the past (history) to inspire and encourage people for the future? 2) Has God used education as a means for renewal? 3) How does the Black Holiness Church represent the metaphoric River of Life in the Bible? By answering these questions, we will demonstrate that it is appropriate to refer to the Black Holiness Church as A River of Life.

The first question we will answer as we examine the Black Holiness Church as a model to encourage and inspire renewal in the Holiness Church in America is, "Has God ever used symbols from the past (history) to inspire and encourage people for the future?" We find evidence of God using history to inspire future generations in Joshua 4:19-22: "On the tenth day of the first month the people went up from the Jordan and camped at Gilgal on the eastern border

of Jericho. And Joshua set up at Gilgal the twelve stones they had taken out of the Jordan. He said to the Israelites, ‘In the future when your descendants ask their parents, “What do these stones mean?” tell them, “Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.”’”

These stones served as symbols of the past, indicating God’s present and future desire for His people. The stones represented a sign that God was with their current leader, Joshua, just like God had been with their former leader, Moses. Just as He was with the Israelites, God was present with the oppressed people enslaved in the United States, and through them, He brought forth a movement of His presence—the Black Holiness Church. That same God is with us today. The stones also represented the faith that God’s people had to follow Moses out of captivity toward a promised land. We see this same faith in God in the once enslaved Africans, who were told they were nothing because of the color of their skin, yet they believed in a God who told them they were His and affirmed their worth. This faith inspired them to lead and gather people into a church without regard for race, creed, or color. Furthermore, the stones served as a symbol and reminder for future generations of what God had done. By teaching Holiness seminarians that God used African Americans to lead, establish, and nurture the Holiness Church at large, the Holiness seminarians can take pride in a Holiness Church that is multicultural. They will learn that many different individuals contributed to its success, fostering an openness to leading multicultural congregations as their predecessors did, with God’s guidance. Now that we understand how God has used history to inspire the future, let us discuss the role of education in revival.

Next, we will answer the question: “Has God used education as a means for renewal?” A major tenet of Christian education is realizing God by experiencing His Spirit and His

Creation.⁵¹ God instructs His people to teach their children about Him everywhere they go.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 reads:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

We see here that God desires His word to reach the hearts of the next generation, allowing it to grow within them as they learn more about Him. Education should always focus on studying God, His revelation, His truth, and His way.⁵² By examining the heritage of the Black Holiness Church, Holiness seminarians gain insight into the perspectives of a people whom God used to influence and build the Holiness Movement in America. This understanding provides the Holiness seminarians with a broader view of the Movement as well as a view of a God who loves and uses people of all backgrounds.

We now turn to our final question: Can the Black Holiness Church represent a river of life to the Holiness Church? To answer the question, let us first consider how Ezekiel describes the river of God in Ezekiel 47:1-12. Ezekiel portrays this river as a source of healing, restoration, and the life of God to the city.⁵³ Notably, he states, “Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows.”⁵⁴

⁵¹ Mark D. Harris, “A Biblical View of Education,” MD Harris Institute, March 4, 2024, <https://mdharrismd.com/2024/03/01/a-biblical-view-of-education/>

⁵² Harris.

⁵³ Ezekiel 47:1-12.

⁵⁴ Ezekiel 47:9 NIV.

Ezekiel envisions this river of life as God pouring out His Holy Spirit to nourish the land, creating a new Garden of Eden. Dr. Tony Evans says that this is an example of what the church of God should be today. He states, “We are supposed to be a living illustration of the flowing, deepening, and growing life that happens when the Holy Spirit manifests his growing presence in a community of believers.”⁵⁵ We have demonstrated that the heritage of the Black Holiness Church has served as a river of life to the Holiness Church as a whole, causing the Holiness Movement to flourish. The Black Holiness Church’s history, theology, missiology, and praxis enriched and nurtured the Holiness Church in America as it grew to become a powerful force of transformation in the body of Christ. Reflecting Ezekiel’s vision of water producing a new Eden, we acknowledge the Black Holiness Church as a river of life from which the Holiness Church in America should draw.

To conclude, the theological underpinning of the artifact of this dissertation is that the Black Holiness Church is a river of life. To understand this metaphor, we examined the Book of Joshua, which tells the story of how God used the history of a people to inspire their future. We also examined the biblical concept of education as a means for revival in Deuteronomy. We also discussed how the Black Holiness Church resembles a river of life in the Bible. We argued that viewing God from the African American perspective provides the Holiness seminarian with insights into a multicultural, liberating, community-serving holiness church. This perspective better equips them to minister in the ever-diversifying mission field of the United States. The river of life that Ezekiel described represents how the Black Holiness Church nourished the Holiness Movement in America, making it one of the most memorable Christian movements in

⁵⁵ Tony Evans, *The Tony Evans Bible Commentary* (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2019), 763.

history.

Chapter Conclusion

Through rigorous theological analysis of the problem, drawing on biblical, historical, and theological principles, it is possible to comprehend the pedagogy, praxis, spiritual formation, framework, and theological foundations of a course centered on the Black Holiness Church. This course aims to equip seminarians with the skills needed to revitalize a declining church, serve in diverse communities, and return to the core mission of the Holiness Church. By exploring the heritage of the Black Holiness Church in the classroom setting and the attendant experiences, reflections, and reimagining of ministry, the Holiness seminarian can develop a more adaptable approach to service. The model of African American religious teaching, along with the spiritual formation practices of the Black Holiness Church, best practices in higher education, and sharing a flourishing theological foundation, provide the blueprint of this dissertation's artifact. The ultimate goal is to revive the Holiness Church by giving seminarians an understanding of the African American perspective of the Church.

CHAPTER 4
PROPOSED SOLUTION AND METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER 4: PROPOSED SOLUTION AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides a detailed description of and justification for the Artifact titled "The Black Holiness Church: A River of Life Holiness Seminary Curriculum," emphasizing its foundational role in preparing Holiness seminarians for effective ministry in an increasingly diverse and rapidly evolving American context. As detailed throughout this dissertation, the decline of the church in America indicates a pressing need for new approaches to ministry rooted in an understanding of diverse ecclesial expressions, especially those that have arisen from historically marginalized communities. Central to this discussion is the rich heritage and transformative potential of the Black Holiness Church, which serves as both a case study and a model for revitalizing ministry practices in the American Holiness tradition. This chapter explains the dissertation artifact by discussing the major strategies behind it, namely, best practices in African American religion, wisdom teaching in the Black Church, and best practices for creating syllabi in higher education institutions.

Section 1

Strategy 1: African American Religion Best Practices

To address the challenges of declining church attendance, diversifying communities, and a church that has been distracted from the mission of transformation, "The Black Holiness Church: A River of Life Holiness Seminary Curriculum" explores the heritage, theology, ministry, and praxis of the Black Holiness Church as a model for revitalization, reconciliation, and transformation. This Curriculum was developed using the best practices outlined in Chapter 4 of teaching African American religion, spiritual formation, and higher-level education syllabi.

The series of essays titled *Teaching African American Religions* offers four best approaches that informed the development of the Curriculum: 1) discuss the story of Black

people from their African Christian origins, 2) centralize and share the religious perspectives and contributions of African Americans, 3) explore the broader culture and assumptions through an African American lens, and 4) elevate African American religious scholars and contributions to the same level as those of white Christian thoughts and assumptions.

Teaching African American Religions suggests discussing the stories of the lives of African Americans prior to enslavement. The authors believe it is essential to present the African American Christian story to demonstrate that Blacks were Christians long before they were enslaved, countering the narrative that Africans needed to be enslaved to learn about Christ.¹ Weeks 3 and 4 of the Curriculum are entitled “They Were Christians Before They Were Enslaved.” The purpose of Week 3 is to convey, through lecture and discussion, that Black people play an integral role in the biblical narrative and the Christian story, even before they were captured, enslaved, and shipped to America. The scaffolding for this week is the required reading, *The Bible is Black History*, where, through Biblical facts, history, science, and DNA evidence, the authors elucidate how Blacks were part of the Old Testament Israelites and the lost tribe of Israel.² Week 4 is dedicated to discussion, allowing students to reflect on what they learned the previous week, share their historical perspectives about the topic, and consider how this new understanding will shape them, their leadership style, and their ministry moving forward.

Since the Curriculum is about the heritage of the Black Holiness Church, there is a conscious effort to present African American perspectives of and contributions to the Holiness

¹ Carolyn M. Jones and Theodore Louis Trost, *Teaching African American Religions* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2005), 110.

² Theron D. Williams and Tyrus Goshay, *The Bible is Black History* (Indianapolis, IN: The Bible is Black History Institute, 2020).

Movement. The focus on and celebration of African Americans is in line with what the authors of *Teaching African American Religions* present as a best practice for teaching African American religion.³ The aim of the course is to teach the African American perspective of the Holiness Church in America, experience the Black Holiness Church, analyze the praxis of the Black Holiness Church, and incorporate a holistic understanding of the Black Holiness Church into the ministry of Holiness seminarians.

Teaching African American Religions points out that it is not enough to simply present the Black experience of religion; it is also important to use that knowledge to question the broader worldviews. These discussion groups provide a regular opportunity for students to connect their learning about the Black Holiness Church with broader questions of religion, culture, and society.

As has been demonstrated in this dissertation, too often, Black scholarship is not valued in academia. *Teaching African American Religions* emphasizes that the foundation of the course should be based on the perspectives of Black scholars, teachers, theologians, and the broader Black community.⁴ In the Curriculum, all the required and recommended readings are written by African American authors who are experts, scholars, and professors in the African American religion (See Appendix C). This intentional lifting of Black scholarship enhances the learning experience and dispels the myth that African Americans do not have anything to contribute to academia.

In conclusion, the curriculum developed in this dissertation deeply engages with the teachings of African American religion, highlighting the distinct contributions of the Black

³ Jones and Trost, 141.

⁴ Jones and Trost, 145.

Holiness Church to the broader Christian landscape. The text provides seminary students with a historical and theological framework to grasp the roots of Black Holiness traditions, including their emphasis on personal holiness, social justice, communal worship, and spiritual resilience. By examining the narratives of Black Holiness leaders and communities, students will gain insight into the diverse expressions of faith that have emerged in response to systemic oppression and cultural marginalization to revive churches, bring diverse people together, and change lives for Christ.

Section 2

Strategy 2: Black Church Wisdom Teaching

Spiritual formation is a critical part of seminary education. What is experienced in the classroom can enhance one's relationship with Christ. The curriculum incorporates traditional and African American spiritual formation for student development and learning.

Sondra Higgins Matthaei describes spiritual formation in her book *Faith Formation*. One of the tenets of traditional spiritual formation highlighted in the curriculum is the importance of relationships. According to Higgins, authentic relationships have three key characteristics: being heard, known, and accepted, and the curriculum seeks to foster a learning environment that values these connections.⁵ The curriculum is purposefully designed to go beyond a series of lectures. It incorporates discussion groups, weekly assigned questions, and student presentations to foster a relationship among the students and between the students and the professor. This interactive approach provides an opportunity for everyone to be heard, share experiences, and embrace diverse viewpoints.

⁵Sondra Higgins Matthaei, *Formation in Faith: The Congregational Ministry of Making Disciples* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2008), 3.

The Curriculum also incorporates the African American spiritual formation of “wisdom teaching.” Wisdom teaching encourages sharing stories and experiences to aid in the learning process.⁶ Each lecture will include a “Wisdom Teaching” section, where students will study a specific event from African American history. In addition, stories of those affected by the event will be brought to the forefront for students’ consideration. This approach not only shares information but also serves to promote the freedom, transformation, and wholeness of a community.⁷ When teaching the curriculum, the professor should see the course not only as a learning experience but also as an opportunity to liberate students from restricted thinking. This approach can help inform the students’ future ministry and encourage personal development, enabling them to experience wholeness through Christ and relationships with others.

In the book *In Search of Wisdom*, Anne Streaty Wimberly and Evelyn L. Parker synthesize African American Christianity into a “triple-heritage model of faith formation” that includes the wisdom of African, Black American, and Christian roots.⁸ This triple-heritage model is accepted in the curriculum along with the understanding that every person brings their culture to Christianity, and both should be valued and celebrated. Moreover, wisdom teaching recognizes the importance of having individuals with Biblical, cultural, and cross-generational understanding serve as guides to aid Black Christians through life.⁹¹⁰¹¹ Through engaging with

⁶ Anne Streaty Wimberly and Evelyn L. Parker, *In Search of Wisdom: Faith Formation in the Black Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 11.

⁷ Wimberly and Parker, 46.

⁸ Wimberly and Parker, 51.

⁹ Wimberly and Parker, 24.

¹⁰ Wimberly and Parker, 34.

¹¹ Wimberly and Parker, 57.

the works of selected African American authors, experiences with the Black Holiness Church, and a collaborative teaching approach from the professor, students should recognize the importance of having guides in ministry. They are encouraged to seek these types of mentors in their daily lives to help them grow into what God has called them to be.

In conclusion, a critical aspect of the curriculum is its focus on spiritual formation, which is essential for anyone entering the ministry. The curriculum encourages seminarians to engage in practices that foster personal and communal spiritual growth inspired by the heart of the Black Holiness Church community. By centering spiritual formation within their studies, seminarians will not only acquire knowledge but also cultivate a holistic approach to ministry that prioritizes the transformation of lives through the power of the Holy Spirit. This experiential learning component allows for the integration of academic rigor with the profound realities of faith as it is lived out in the community.

Section 3

Strategy 3: Higher Level Institution of Learning Syllabus Best Practices

The Curriculum is based on the syllabus design (design) published by Harvard University, a best practice for curriculum development.¹² While some of these elements may differ by the seminary, the intent is to use the design as a guide for the curriculum, with additional details included as necessary (such as time, schedule, policies on lateness, missed work, extra credit, etc.). The following are some of the key elements of the curriculum:

Learning Objectives: The objectives of this course are to: 1) learn from the effective church model of the historic Black Holiness Church; 2) understand the contributions of African

¹² “Syllabus Design,” Derek Bok Center, Harvard University, accessed November 22, 2024, <https://bokcenter.harvard.edu/syllabus-design>.

American women and men to the Holiness Movement in America; and 3) experience the Black Holiness Church's transformative power to shape students' ministry.

Goal/Rationale: By understanding and experiencing the history, theology, missiology, and praxis of the Black Holiness Church, Holiness seminarians will be better equipped to lead American churches. Statistical research and literature review revealed that the Holiness Church in the United States today is facing challenges such as declining attendance, the need to serve a diversifying community, and a lack of focus on transformation. The course is designed to introduce students to the Black Holiness Church as a model for revival, reconciliation, and transformation for the flourishing of the Holiness Church in America.

Teaching Philosophy: The pedagogy of the course combines traditional spiritual formation with teaching African American wisdom. It also focuses on relationship building, sharing stories, and fostering hope for the future.

The authors of the book *Teaching African American Religions* provide valuable best practices for professors and curriculum developers. They recommend that educators reflect on a series of questions regarding their teaching content. In summary, they suggest some basic requirements for teaching African American religion, such as ensuring African American church scholarship is a part of the curriculum, sharing experiences of the Black community and church, analyzing both social and theological concepts, and encouraging theological reflection on “the other.”¹³ The students' experiences and learning will be measured through four main activities: short reflections from the reading, two long research papers (including data analysis), a presentation on an African American who contributed to the Holiness Movement, and experiences with Black Holiness congregations. The short reflections will be based on questions

¹³ Jones and Trost, 148.

developed by the professors to challenge students to think critically about the reading based on current events. These reflections will be shared through classroom discussions, small group discussions, and electronic submissions of written work. The purpose of this activity is to have the students share what they are learning through the readings as the class progresses and how the text shapes their thinking.¹⁴

In addition, assigning two long research papers aligns with the teaching approach of African American religion, emphasizing the importance of engaging with data rather than simply quoting it. However, “most students are more comfortable with the norms of academe, which require them to read and regurgitate. Many have not done a long research paper in which they have to interpret data they have collected.”¹⁵ These research papers will be based on topics selected by the professor to apply the history of the Black Church to current challenges (both religious and social) to develop creative solutions. The students will also research the lives, contributions, and hardships of select African Americans in the Holiness Movement to present to the class. This assignment will require students to reflect on the past and analyze how their learning can improve their own future ministry. Additionally, the students will participate in worship and community activities at the Black Holiness Church. This experience will allow the students to compare their experience in the Black Holiness service with what they are used to, encouraging them to consider what resonated with them and what remains unclear.

The curriculum allows participants to engage with the contributions of Black churches in their communities, highlighting their significance and exploring the interplay between religious and social dimensions of ministry. Ultimately, the curriculum aims to foster a reimagining of

¹⁴ Jones and Trost, 150-151.

¹⁵ Jones and Trost, 151.

traditional practices within the American Holiness Church. By intentionally engaging with the history and current practices of the Black Holiness Church, seminarians will explore new methods of worship, community engagement, and social activism that reflect the holistic nature of the gospel. This reimagining is not merely an academic exercise but a call to the church to embrace a more inclusive and transformative identity that mirrors the multi-faceted expressions of God's kingdom on earth.

In summary, in developing this curriculum, we focused on best practices for higher education syllabi to ensure that the content is engaging, relevant, and reflective of pedagogical principles conducive to effective learning. The syllabus incorporates diverse instructional strategies, including collaborative learning, experiential activities, and critical reflection. These methodologies align with current trends in theological education, addressing the need for an interdisciplinary approach that encompasses history, theology, cultural studies, and practical ministry skills. By employing these best practices, future leaders will be equipped to read the cultural and social landscape, leading to a more effective, context-sensitive ministry.

Chapter Conclusion

In conclusion, the curriculum of the Black Holiness Church is both a response to the challenges faced by the church in the U.S. and a proactive step toward reconciliation, empowerment, and renewal in the holiness movement. It acknowledges the urgent need for holistic, contextually relevant training for seminarians who will serve diverse communities with compassion and conviction. As these future leaders engage with the principles and practices drawn from the Black Holiness tradition, they will be better prepared to contribute to the revitalization of the church, promoting a ministry of transformation that reflects the heart of the gospel for all people. Through this curriculum, we hope to inspire a new generation of leaders

who will carry forward the legacy of revival, reconciliation, and transformation that characterizes the rich tradition of the Black Holiness Church.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Following the development of the curriculum explained in the previous chapter, this chapter explores its implications and how it can be implemented in a specific context. Specifically, the chapter discusses in section one how the curriculum can be used in the future. Section two explores some of the limitations of the curriculum. Finally, section three provides an overall conclusion of the dissertation.

A Curriculum for Holiness seminaries

This curriculum is designed for use in Holiness seminaries and offers numerous benefits for both educational and community-building purposes. It serves as a tool to enhance cultural understanding and appreciation for diverse voices. Additionally, the curriculum provides a deeper insight into the historical context of the Black Holiness Church, including its emergence during the post-Reconstruction Era and its significant role in the Civil Rights Movement. It highlights the cultural contributions of the Black church to American society, including its music, preaching styles, and community practices, fostering appreciation for Black cultural expressions.

The curriculum also fosters spiritual development. Engaging with the curriculum allows individuals to deepen their understanding of beliefs and practices surrounding holiness, fostering their spiritual growth and personal faith journeys. It also offers a moral and ethical framework that underscores teachings central to the Black Holiness Church, which often highlights the significance of moral living, social justice, and community service to guide individuals in their ethical decisions. Additionally, students will acquire tools to participate in social justice initiatives and activism rooted in the principles of social holiness. The curriculum will equip participants with the tools and knowledge to engage in social justice issues, drawing on historical

examples from the Black church's engagement in movements for equality and justice. Understanding the church's role in advocating for civil rights can empower individuals to continue that legacy in contemporary social issues.

The Black Holiness Church has always been a place of community building. The curriculum is designed to promote community through group discussions, shared experiences, and collaborative projects. These efforts aim to strengthen bonds among participants and facilitate discussions across generations, where older members share experiences, wisdom, and traditions with younger members, thereby preserving the church's legacy. The curriculum emphasizes the importance of providing opportunities for interfaith and ecumenical dialogue, particularly within the context of the Black Holiness Church. It aims to encourage conversations between different faith traditions, promoting understanding and cooperation among various religious communities. This approach highlights the shared values among faiths, fostering respect and collaboration on common social and moral issues.

The curriculum is meant to serve as a foundation for scholarly research, encouraging students and theologians to explore the theological, sociological, and cultural dimensions of the Black Holiness Church. Experiencing the curriculum can address gaps in theological education by integrating Black voices and perspectives, promoting a more holistic understanding of the Christian faith. When Holiness seminarians focus on the history and practices of the Black Holiness Church, they can nurture leadership qualities in participants, encouraging them to take active roles in their communities and churches.

In summary, a curriculum centered on the Black Holiness Church enriches participants' understanding of its history, theology, and cultural significance. It serves as a means of spiritual growth, social activism, community building, and educational advancement, making it a valuable

resource for individuals and communities alike. The next section discusses the limitations of the curriculum's assertions.

Limitations of the Curriculum

The curriculum related to the Holiness Church from an African American perspective faces several limitations. As discussed in this dissertation, one significant limitation is the overall historical underrepresentation of the Black Holiness Church within broader religious and educational curricula. This lack of inclusion can result in insufficient awareness and appreciation for its importance, contributions, and diversity, leading many institutions to overlook the necessity for such a curriculum. Additionally, major Holiness seminaries may show reluctance to adopt a curriculum focused on the Black Holiness Church due to prevailing stereotypes that depict Black Churches as primarily characterized by emotionalism or fervor. This perception can hinder a deeper understanding of their theological, cultural, and social complexities.

While the curriculum focuses on examining historical contexts to inform the future of ministry, there are notable concerns regarding the historical experiences of the Black Holiness Church, particularly in relation to race, sexuality, and gender. For young individuals, it may be challenging to overlook these issues in favor of recognizing the best practices of the Black Holiness Church. Additionally, the dissertation is somewhat limited in showcasing the positive impacts of teachings from African American religion. Nonetheless, it is evident that the best practices of the Black Holiness Church have established it as a beacon of revival, diversity, and transformation. A more comprehensive study, along with an assessment of the effectiveness of students who have engaged with this curriculum and others like it, is needed to illustrate how it contributes to ministry growth, multiculturalism, and transformative change in people's lives.

Chapter Summary

In summary, the curriculum developed by the Black Holiness Church addresses the challenges facing the church in the United States and serves as a proactive approach to reconciliation, empowerment, and renewal within the holiness movement. It acknowledges the urgent need for comprehensive and contextually relevant training for seminarians who will minister to diverse communities with both empathy and determination. By engaging with the principles and practices rooted in the Black Holiness tradition, these future leaders will be better prepared to contribute to the church's revitalization, fostering a transformative ministry that truly reflects the essence of the gospel for all. Through this curriculum, we aim to inspire a new generation of leaders committed to upholding and advancing the legacy of revival, reconciliation, and transformation that characterizes the rich heritage of the Black Holiness Church.

We do not offer any of these ideas, work, or suggestions devoid of the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who leads us into all truth.¹⁶ As we conclude this dissertation, we humbly submit this work along with the prayer the Apostle Paul shared with the Ephesians in Ephesians 3:14-21(NIV):

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

¹⁶ John 16:13.

APPENDIX A: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX B: HOLINESS SEMINARIES IN THE UNITED STATES

In order to assess what Holiness seminaries in the United States are teaching regarding the contributions of people of color to the Holiness movement, a survey was conducted involving a significant sample size of seminaries certified by The Association of Theological Schools (The Association). The findings from this survey were included in the dissertation. The Association has more than 270 graduate schools of theology in the United States and Canada. The beliefs of members of the Confederation of Schools vary. Still, they are united under the Association due to their shared values and consensus on what constitutes a quality theological education.¹

A search of the Association's public website revealed that 26 of its over 270 schools are Holiness seminaries (see table below).

1. Assemblies of God Theological Seminary
2. Southeastern University School of Divinity
3. Azusa Pacific Seminary
4. Christian and Missionary Alliance Theological Seminary
5. Ambrose Seminary of Ambrose University
6. Crown College Graduate School of Ministry
7. Horizon College and Seminary
8. Anderson University School of Theology
9. Pentecostal Theological Seminary
10. Interdenominational Theological Center
11. Church of the Brethren
12. Bethany Theological Seminary
13. Nazarene Theological Seminary
14. Northwest Nazarene University Graduate School of Theology
15. Seattle Pacific Seminary
16. Oral Roberts University Graduate School of Theology and Ministry
17. Robert E. Webber Institute for Worship Studies
18. America Evangelical University Seminary
19. International Urshan Graduate School of Theology
20. Wesley Seminary

¹ “Denominational Search.” Association of Theological Schools, 2023.
<https://www.ats.edu/Denominational-Search>.

Holiness seminaries

Seminary	Denomination/Church	Diversity In Curriculum Analysis ²
1) Assemblies of God Theological Seminary	Assemblies of God	No data
2) Southeastern University School of Divinity	Assemblies of God	No data
3) Azusa Pacific Seminary	Brethren in Christ Church	No data
4) Christian and Missionary Alliance Theological Seminary	Brethren in Christ Church	No data
5) Ambrose Seminary of Ambrose University	Brethren in Christ Church	No data
6) Crown College Graduate School of Ministry	Brethren in Christ Church	No data
7) Horizon College and Seminary	Brethren in Christ Church	TS5101 Survey of Church History ³ Jacobsen, Douglas. <i>Thinking in the Spirit: Theologies of the Early Pentecostal Movement</i> . Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003. ⁴
8) Anderson University School of Theology	Church of God (Anderson, Indiana)	email/no response
9) Azusa Pacific	Church of God	No data

² This column describes the research, whether there are “email responses,” curriculum reviews, or no data could be compiled.

³ Dr. Mykhaylo Khromyak, “TS5101 Survey of Church History Syllabus -Fall 2017 Module ...,” Horizon Seminary, 2024, <https://www.horizon.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/TS5101-Survey-of-Church-History-SYLLABUS-Fall-2017-Module-Horizon.pdf>.

⁴ Douglas Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit*, Google Books, accessed September 6, 2024, <https://books.google.com/books?id=sMih7IBW2x8C&lpg=PP1&dq=Jacobsen%2C+Douglas.+Thinking+in+the+Spirit&pg=PR15#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

Seminary	(Anderson, Indiana)	
10) Pentecostal Theological Seminary	Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee)	No data
11) Interdenominational Theological Center	Church of God in Christ	Charles H. Mason Theological Seminary is the only fully accredited African American Pentecostal Seminary in the world. It maintains a strong presence in the professional and academic communities and develops many men and women for ministry and Christian service throughout the world. The mission of the Charles H. Mason Theological Seminary is to educate men and women, credential holders and non-credential holders, for ministry and other forms of service in the Church of God in Christ. This mission includes preparing scholars for careers in religious education in the global community. The unique theological education and preparation provide opportunities for students to interact and receive instruction from current leaders and officials of the Church of God in Christ. This includes training on major social, historical, theological, and ethical issues that affect the Church of God in Christ and the Christian community as a whole. This type of teaching takes the form of forums, conferences, symposiums, lectures, presentations, and other methods of exposure made possible through technology in the classroom. ⁵
12) Church of the Brethren Bethany Theological Seminary	Church of God in Christ	No data

⁵ ITC. "Charles H. Mason Theological Seminary." February 14, 2018.
<https://www.itc.edu/seminaries/charles-h-mason-theological-seminary/>.

13) Nazarene Theological Seminary	Church of the Nazarene	The Black Leadership and Ministry track invites pastors and leaders who are currently engaged in the Black Church tradition to participate in education from a Black Theological perspective. The uniqueness of the Black Church experience, exemplified in the racial injustices that continue to trouble Black communities, requires theological education and scholarly analysis from a Black Theological perspective. Such work is crucial in strengthening the Black Church leader's prophetic and ministerial voice. Critical dialogue about these problems will aid Black ministers and leaders in finding resources for addressing their personal, congregational, and community challenges. The Black Leadership and Ministry track is cohort-based and online, with three one-week, face-to-face site visits in Kansas City, Washington, D.C, and Atlanta, Georgia. ⁶
14) Northwest Nazarene University Graduate School of Theology	Church of the Nazarene	No data
15) Seattle Pacific Seminary	Free Methodist Church	No data
16) Oral Roberts University Graduate School of Theology and Ministry	Inter/Multi Denominational	575 Missionary Anthropology Equip students for ministry in cross-cultural contexts in order to provide leadership for motivating, mobilizing, and training Great Commission Christians Articulate the fundamental issues of the dynamic relationship of gospel to culture in establishing a strategy for effective intercultural

⁶ “Doctor of Ministry in Black Leadership and Ministry,” Nazarene Theological Seminary, accessed January 17, 2025, <https://www.nts.edu/academic-program/doctor-of-ministry-in-black-leadership-and-ministry/>.

		ministry. ⁷
17) Robert E. Webber Institute for Worship Studies	Inter/Multi Denominational	MWS 504: Cross-Cultural Perspectives in Christian Worship Course Description This course explores the impact of globalization on Christian worship in the 21st century. Students will examine a wide variety of contemporary cultural expressions of worship and seek to understand how these expressions reveal the triune God. Students will also reflect on how understanding these expressions might enable deeper engagement with the triune God in the student's own worship setting.⁸
18) America Evangelical University Seminary	Korean Evangelical Holiness Church	BUS 574 Culture and Socialization An in-depth examination of the concepts of culture and socialization, this course analyzes the socialization process as the key means through which culture is reproduced. Through a critical engagement with competing theories of socialization, students undertake advanced research projects, oral presentations, and written assignments. Topics include issues of ethnic identity and cultural diversity, socio-economic, gender and racial stratification, media representations, dress, language and religion and schooling and the reproduction of inequality. Issues are

⁷ "Oru Graduate School of Theology & Ministry Degree ...," Oral Roberts University Graduate School of Theology and Ministry, accessed January 18, 2025, http://web.oru.edu/current_students/class_pages/grtheo/mmankins/DegreePrograms/Master's Degree Program Charts, Jan 2022/MDV chart.-2.pdf.

⁸ "Master of Worship Studies," The Institute For Worship Studies, November 21, 2024, <https://iws.edu/academics/programs-offered/master-of-worship-studies/>.

		explored from a cross-cultural Perspective. ⁹
19) International Urshan Graduate School of Theology	United Pentecostal Church	I teach the Modern Pentecostal Movements class at Urshan. In telling the Pentecostal story, it is necessary to explore the Holiness Movement. This is principally done through Holiness doctrine, but some through personality. Amanda Berry Smith might be mentioned. I usually do a piece on C.H. Mason and C. P. Jones and the struggle for the Church of God in Christ. William Seymour and Lucy Farrow are key Black Pentecostal pioneers. They both come from the Holiness Movement, so it is necessary to explore their background. That is the best I can do off the top of my head. I often assign <i>Black Fire</i> by Estrela Alexander as a course text, and she does some background of Black Holiness leaders.¹⁰
20) Wesley Seminary	Wesleyan Church	Concentrate your electives within a certain specialization, such as Urban Ministry, Missional Church, Emerging Ministry, or Theology & the Arts. ¹¹

⁹ “Home Page,” America Evangelical University, April 13, 2020, <https://aeu.edu/?aca=18>.

¹⁰ Robin Johnston, *Thesis Research*, September 12, 2024.

¹¹ “Master of Divinity: Wesley Theological Seminary,” Wesley Theological Seminary | God’s call is bold. Your seminary should be, too., June 9, 2020, <https://www.wesleyseminary.edu/academics/degrees/mdiv/>.

APPENDIX C: COURSE OUTLINE AND CURRICULUM

**A River of Life- The Heritage, Theology, Missiology, and Praxis of
The Black Holiness Church****Course Outline and Curriculum**

The Heritage, Theology, Missiology, And Praxis of The Black Holiness Church A River of Life Course Outline

Course Summary: By understanding and experiencing the history, theology, missiology, and praxis of the Black Holiness Church, Holiness seminarians will be better prepared to lead the church in America. Statistical research and literature review revealed that the Holiness Church in the United States today faces declining attendance, having to serve an ever-diversifying community, and lacking a transformative focus. The course is designed to introduce students to the Black Holiness Church as a model for revival, reconciliation, and transformation for the flourishing of the Holiness Church in America.

Course: This course is designed to incorporate best practices from African American religious education methods to engage students, enabling them to serve more effectively in diverse communities. The objectives of the course are: 1) To learn from the effective church model of the historic Black Holiness Church, 2) To understand the contributions of African American women and men to the Holiness Movement in America, and 3) To experience the transformative power of Black Holiness Churches and how they shape ministry to serve in a multicultural America.

Required Texts and Materials

Author	Title	Publisher	Year	ISBN	Total pages to be read
Evans, Tony, and C. S. B. Bibles CSB Bibles by Holman	<i>The Tony Evans Bible commentary</i>	B & H Publishing Group	2019	0805499423	20
Hines, Samuel George, Curtiss Paul DeYoung, Cheryl J. Sanders, and Dalineta L. Hines.	<i>Beyond Rhetoric: Reconciliation as a Way of Life</i>	Wipf and Stock Publishers	2011	1610972147	192
Parker, Brianna K.	<i>I still believe in the Black Church: Using Data to Decode the Promise and Pain of the Black Church</i>	Black Millennial Café	2022	979-8804157907	182
Perkins, John P, and Anthony D Bobo	<i>Commissioned to Love: Living Out the Whole Gospel</i>	I Am Intercultural	2020	1940105811	178

Author	Title	Publisher	Year	ISBN	Total pages to be read
Sanders, Cheryl Jeanne	<i>Saints in Exile: The Holiness-Pentecostal Experience in African American Religion and Culture</i>	Oxford University Press	1999	0195131010	200
Sanders, Cheryl Jeanne	<i>Empowerment Ethics for a Liberated People: A Path to African American Social Transformation</i>	Fortress	1995	0800629175	152
Williams, Theron D. and Tyrus Goshay.	<i>The Bible is Black History</i>	The Bible is Black History Institute	2020	1792125887	160
Wimberly, Anne Streaty and Evelyn L. Parker	<i>In Search of Wisdom: Faith Formation in the Black Church.</i>	Nashville: Abingdon Press	2002	0687067006	160

Recommended Texts and Materials

Author	Title	Publisher	Year	ISBN	Suggested pages
Cannon, Katie Geneva, Emilie M. Townes, and Angela D. Sims (Editors)	<i>Womanist Theological Ethics: A Reader</i>	Westminster John Knox Press	2011	978-0-664-23537-6	267
Kreiss, Daniel, and Efrem Smith	<i>Church For Everyone: Building A Multi-Inclusive Community For Emerging Generations</i>	InterVarsity Press	2024	1514005506	224
Mason, Eric (General Editor)	<i>Urban Apologetics: Restoring Black Dignity with the Gospel</i>	Zondervan	2021	978-0-3101-0094-2	236

Class Assignments and Requirements

Assignments will be evaluated using the rubric(s) found in the *Class Grading Rubrics and Feedback* section below.

- **Engagement:** Weekly classes will consist of lectures, group discussions, and reflections. Students are required to attend classes regularly.
- **Forum Discussions:** Students will participate in three forum discussions on assigned readings. Their posts will require evidence of careful reading and integration of other scholarly readings and resources. During discussion weeks, students will post 500–650-word responses to prompts in Google Classroom and engage with at least two other students, who will provide 250–300-word responses that include reflection, inquiry, and affirmation. The initial posts are due on Tuesdays by midnight, and responses are due on the following Monday of the next week by midnight.
- **4–6 Page Reflection and Future Paper:** Students will reflect on and express their understanding of the Black Holiness Church using insights from lectures, readings, experiences, and discussions in the course. This information should inform their future ministry.
- **Final Paper:** Students will write a paper of 6–8 pages that demonstrates engagement with the assigned readings, class discussions, and personal research. The prompt for this paper can be found in the Final Paper Assignment section in Google Classroom.

Weekly Class Summary			
Week	Learning Method (Lecture/Small Group/Assessment)	Topic	Assignments Due
1	Lecture	A River Of Life- What Is The Black Holiness Church?	Read: Sanders, Cheryl Jeanne. <i>Saints in Exile: The Holiness-Pentecostal Experience In African American Religion And Culture</i> . New York: Oxford University Press, 2023. Attend or participate in a Black Holiness Church Worship experience.
2	Small Group	Reflection on Black Holiness Church Worship Experience	Group discussion about experiences using the provided prompting questions.
3	Lecture	They Were Christians Before They Were Enslaved	Read: Williams, Theron D. and Tyrus Goshay. <i>The Bible is Black History</i> .

			The Bible is Black History Institute, 2020.
4	Small Group	Reflection on Contributions of African Americans to Christianity	Group discussion of experience with provided prompting questions.
5	Lecture	The Reconciling Praxis of the Black Holiness Church	Read: Yong, Amos, and Estrelida Alexander. <i>Afro-pentecostalism: Black Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in History and Culture</i>. New York, New York: New York University Press, 2016. Participate in or witness a preaching experience at a Black Holiness Church.
6	Small Group	The Reconciling Praxis of the Black Holiness Church	Group discussion of experience with provided prompting questions.
7	Class Assessment	4–6-page Reflection and Future Paper	Students will use the lectures, readings, experiences, and discussions from the coursework to reflect and express their understanding of the Black Holiness Church and how this information will affect their ministry going forward.
8	Lecture Presentations	A Movement of Empowerment: The Black Holiness Church	Sanders, Cheryl Jeanne. <i>Empowerment Ethics For a Liberated People: A Path to African American Social Transformation</i>. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995. Attend or experience a Black Holiness Church Preaching Experience. Individual presentations on a Black Holiness contributor to the Holiness Movement in America.
9	Small Group	Reflect on the Justice-oriented Nature of the Black Holiness Church	Group discussion of experience using provided prompting questions.

10	Class Discussion	The Black Holiness Church My Questions, My Concerns, My Perceptions	Parker, Brianna K. <i>I still believe in the Black Church: Using Data to Decode the Promise and Pain of the Black Church</i> . Mansfield, TX: Black Millennial Café, 2022.
11	Lecture Presentations	Communal, Reflective, Intergenerational: The Spiritual Formation in The Black Holiness Church	Matthaei, Sondra Higgins. <i>Formation in Faith: The Congregational Ministry of Making Disciples</i> . Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2008. Attend or experience a Black Holiness Church Worship, Bible Study, or Sunday School service. Individual presentations on a Black Holiness contributor to the Holiness Movement in America.
12	Class Discussion	Reflection on the Spiritual Formation in the Black Church	Group discussion of experience with provided prompting questions
13	Lecture Presentations	A Church in Community Church: The Black Holiness Church	Sanders, Cheryl Jeanne. <i>Empowerment Ethics for a Liberated People: A Path to African American Social Transformation</i> . Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995. Attend or participate in a Black Holiness Church Community outreach experience. Individual presentations on a Black Holiness contributor to the Holiness Movement in America
14	Small Group	Small Group	Attend or participate in a Black Holiness Church Community outreach experience.
15	Workshop	Develop a Ministry Plan for the Future	Review provided information to prepare for the final class assessment.
16	Lecture/Discussion	Summary of Semester The Black Holiness Church: Its past, present, and future	Reread any materials that you might have questions about and come prepared to discuss the semester course experience.

17	Final Assessment	4–6-page Ministry Plan Informed by the Black Holiness Church Experience	Students will reflect on and express their learning about the Black Holiness Church using the lectures, readings, experiences, and discussions from the coursework. This reflection will inform how this information affects their ministry moving forward, building on the paper they wrote earlier in the semester.
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Course Calendar and Work

It is the professor's discretion to adjust the final semester letter grade according to the official grading scale.

Distribution of Student Learning Hours

[Faculty: Please retain calculation rates]	Hours
Substantive interaction (face-to-face, online discussion forums, etc.) [at least 15 per credit; 45 for a 3-credit course]	66.5
Reading (957 pages at 25 pages per hour)	38.5
Research writing (2,000 words at 125 words per hour)	16
Non-research online writing discussion forums excluded (1,500 words at 250 words per hour)	6
Exams and quizzes	0
Other learning activities (Presentations, web search, etc.)	15
Total [50±5 per credit; 135-165 for a 3-credit course]	142

Class Attendance

Attending class sessions is crucial for getting the most out of your education. If you must miss a class due to extenuating circumstances, please reach out to your professor as soon as possible to discuss your situation. A student who is absent for four or more weeks during the semester (including missed online substantive interactions) may be at risk of failing the course automatically, as determined by the professor.

Daily attendance records must be submitted for individuals receiving benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Education. Students should inform the professor if their attendance needs to be documented. Should inclement weather prompt a campus-wide closure, any arranged class meetings will be conducted via Zoom at the scheduled time.

VIDEOCONFERENCING NOTE: To ensure the safety of our students and minimize distractions in the classroom, participation and attendance via videoconference require a fixed and stable location, with the camera/video turned "on." Students who are driving while

participating in any class activity via videoconference may be subject to dis-enrollment from the class. Individual faculty retain the right to impose additional requirements.

Course Evaluation

An anonymous course evaluation will be available in the final weeks of the semester. Please take the time to complete it, as the data collected will be used to enhance the course. The professor will never see your individual evaluation. Your serious participation is expected and greatly appreciated.

Week 1

Lecture Title: A River of Life- What is the Black Holiness Church?

Objectives: By the end of this lecture, students should be able to understand the distinctiveness of the Black Holiness Church and how it serves as a model for revival, reconciliation, and spiritual transformation.

Biblical Foundation: Ezekiel 47:1-12 - New International Version (NIV)

The man brought me back to the entrance to the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar. He then brought me out through the north gate and led me around the outside to the outer gate facing east, and the water was trickling from the south side. As the man went eastward with a measuring line in his hand, he measured off a thousand cubits and then led me through water that was ankle-deep. He measured off another thousand cubits and led me through water that was knee-deep. He measured off another thousand and led me through water that was up to the waist. He measured off another thousand, but now it was a river that I could not cross, because the water had risen and was deep enough to swim in—a river that no one could cross. He asked me, “Son of man, do you see this?” Then he led me back to the bank of the river. When I arrived there, I saw a great number of trees on each side of the river. He said to me, “This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, where it enters the Dead Sea. When it empties into the sea, the salty water there becomes fresh. Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows. There will be large numbers of fish, because this water flows there and makes the salt water fresh; so where the river flows everything will live. Fishermen will stand along the shore; from En Gedi to En Eglaim there will be places for spreading nets. The fish will be of many kinds—like the fish of the Mediterranean Sea. But the swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt. Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing.”

Wisdom Teaching: That Will Do, Never Does... The importance of rethinking well-accepted models.

Black Holiness Church Heritage: The theology, ministry, and praxis of the Black Holiness Church.

Course Text: Read Sanders, Cheryl Jeanne. *Saints in Exile: The Holiness-Pentecostal Experience in African American Religion and Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2023.

Lecture Outline

Why is it important to look back to go forward? “Sankofa”

Biblical Foundation: Ezekiel 47:1-12 - New International Version (NIV)

The man brought me back to the entrance to the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar. He then brought me out through the north gate and led me around the outside to the outer gate facing east, and the water was trickling from the south side. As the man went eastward with a measuring line in his hand, he measured off a thousand cubits and then led me through water that was ankle-deep. He measured off another thousand cubits and led me through water that was knee-deep. He measured off another thousand and led me through water that was up to the waist. He measured off another thousand, but now it was a river that I could not cross, because the water had risen and was deep enough to swim in—a river that no one could cross. He asked me, “Son of man, do you see this?” Then he led me back to the bank of the river. 7 When I arrived there, I saw a great number of trees on each side of the river. He said to me, “This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, where it enters the Dead Sea. When it empties into the sea, the salty water there becomes fresh. Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows. There will be large numbers of fish, because this water flows there and makes the salt water fresh; so where the river flows everything will live. Fishermen will stand along the shore; from En Gedi to En Eglaim there will be places for spreading nets. The fish will be of many kinds—like the fish of the Mediterranean Sea. But the swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt. Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing.”

In summary, Ezekiel perceives this river of life as God pouring out His Holy Spirit to nourish the land, thereby creating a new Garden of Eden. Dr. Tony Evans asserts that this serves as an example of what the church of God should embody today. Evans states, “We are supposed to be a living illustration of the flowing, deepening, and growing life that happens when the Holy Spirit manifests his growing presence in a community of believers.”¹ We have demonstrated that the heritage of the Black Holiness Church is one that has been a river of life to the Holiness church in America, helping the Holiness Movement to flourish. The Black Holiness Church’s history, theology, missiology, and praxis have been enriching and nurturing influences on the Holiness Church in America as it has grown into a powerful force for transformation in the body of Christ. According to Ezekiel’s vision of water producing a new Eden, we see the Black

¹ Tony Evans and CSB Bibles by Holman, *The Tony Evans Bible Commentary* (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2019), 763.

Holiness Church as a river of life for the Holiness Church in America.

Discussion Question: How does bringing different models and thoughts to the forefront advance the Kingdom? Education? Community?

Wisdom Teaching: That will do, never does...

We all have projects where we say, “That will do.” We usually say this because we have done just enough but not everything that needs to be done. Often, later on, because we did not fully address what was needed, the project failed, and the situation became worse. When it comes to learning and achieving, many times, we have settled for understanding the accepted, established approach and say, “That will do.”

Discussion Question: What would it look like to embrace multiple ways of thinking and be more curious about others instead of taking the “That Will Do...” attitude toward learning?

Black Holiness Church Heritage:

The Black Holiness Church served as a source of liberation, believing that God saved African Americans from slavery in a manner similar to how He rescued the children of Israel in the Bible. By reflecting on Exodus 6:6-8, they recognized a God who genuinely freed them from chattel slavery, offering them freedom and a new life:

Therefore, say to the Israelites: “I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the Lord.”

This later became known as Liberation Theology or Black Theology of Liberation. It is the belief that God is active in the daily struggles of the believer’s life, freeing them not only from sin but also from social injustice. Dr. James Cone, father of Liberation Theology, writes plainly in his book, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, that “Black theology is a theology of liberation because it is a theology which arises from an identification with the oppressed blacks of America, seeking to interpret the gospel of Jesus in the light of the black condition. It believes that the liberation of the black community is God’s liberation.”² This theology, which states that God supports the oppressed, fueled the Holiness Movement in America as these Black saints of God led efforts to spread the gospel.

In her book *Saints in Exile: The Holiness-Pentecostal Experience in African American Religion and Culture*, Dr. Cheryl J. Sanders provides an extensive study of the Black Holiness Church. As she uses the term “Sanctified church” (another name used for the Black Holiness

² James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2023), 5.

Church), she outlines what the Black Holiness Church is.³ The Black Church began in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries during a period of change in the United States, as America was moving beyond Reconstruction. Sanders summarizes that the Black Holiness Church represents the convergence of three distinct religious traditions—both old and new at the time: African rituals and religion, white reformist Protestantism, and Haitian spirituality.⁴ She asks what distinguishes the Black Holiness Church apart from other worship traditions in the Black community. She concludes that it is its “adherence to the traditions of oral music and ecstatic praise associated with slave religion.”

When we discuss this expression of the Holiness Movement, it was not initiated in the halls of academia or within church buildings adorned with stained glass and steeples. The Black Holiness Church was founded outside in the woods, where enslaved Africans interrupted the still of the night with their cries and songs of freedom. The Black Holiness Church was an underground church. While we recognize formal leaders considered its founders, this was indeed a movement of God born out of pain, hurt, and despair. It represented a pursuit of God for liberation and justice. A person did not need advanced education to be a leader in the Sanctified Church; they just needed to be “holy.” Worship was open and free, with little to no structure. The spirit could “have its way.” Often, worship was filled with dancing, twirling, loud outbursts, unrehearsed singing, and unexpected shouting. This living of a “holy” life did not end at the church door but was observed by having a clean body, mind, and spirit. This concept of living a holy life resulted in a list of things that “saints” did not do, such as partying, smoking, drinking, cursing, and wearing revealing clothes (to name a few).⁵ When examining Holiness from an African American perspective, it’s crucial to understand the expressions of the Movement over time and the labels used to define certain differences. The Pentecostal church originated from the Holiness Movement. Although they share similarities, there is a clear distinction between holiness and Pentecostalism. Yong and Alexander, in their book, *Afro-Pentecostalism*, give a brief history of Holiness and how it differs from Pentecostalism:

The nineteenth-century Holiness Movement, which focused on calling the church back to personal piety through the experience of sanctification, produced such black leaders as the evangelists Jarena Lee and Amanda Berry Smith, and pastors like Charles Price Jones and William Christian, and saw the founding of several black denominations including the Church of Christ Holiness and the Church of the Living God (Christian Workers for Fellowship). Members of this movement laid the foundations for twentieth-century Pentecostalism by reincorporating John Wesley’s concept of entire sanctification into a personal spirituality and piety, which they sensed was missing in their churches. These Holiness folk, who were already employing camp-meeting style revivalism and language

³ Cheryl Jeanne Sanders, *Saints in Exile: The Holiness-Pentecostal Experience in African American Religion and Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 5.

⁴ Sanders, *Saints in Exile*, 3.

⁵ John M. Giggie, *After Redemption: Jim Crow and the Transformation of African American Religion in the Delta, 1875-1915* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), 169.

of Holy Spirit “Fire” baptism, as endowment with power for service and piety, eventually made their way into the Pentecostal movement. For their part, the Pentecostals incorporated the initial sign of speaking in tongues as an indication that one had truly received the Spirit, and by doing so, made a significant shift in Holiness beliefs about practices regarding the Holy Spirit. A number of denominations that had roots in the black Holiness movement, including the United Holy Church of America and the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of America, would ultimately become Pentecostal.⁶

According to Yong and Alexander, there are three expressions of the Black Holiness Church: Classical Apostolic, Charismatic, and Neo-Pentecostal. Classical Apostolic (also known as Jesus’ name or “Oneness”) believes in the necessity of baptism by immersion “in the name of Jesus” and rejects the Trinitarian conception of the Godhead, favoring the idea of God as one person expressed in three modes. Churches in this category include the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, the Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, and Bible Way Church World Wide.⁷ Charismatic, independent congregations or networks developed in the 1960s incorporate an expanded pneumatology and a distinctive appreciation for the operation of spiritual gifts in both individual lives and corporate worship. This development occurred without the strict personal piety or rigid insistence on speaking in tongues as the necessary evidence of Holy Spirit baptism, integrating into mainline congregations and independent networks. Churches in this category include the Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship International and World Changers Church International.⁸ Neo-Pentecostal churches heavily influence many classically Black denominations, including large segments of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. Black neo-Pentecostals have generally thus remained in their classical denominational churches and may not even go by that label; however, they have incorporated Pentecostal-style worship practices without making major changes in theology.⁹

Closing Reflection/Discussion:

- What did you learn or see differently today that you hadn’t seen before?
- How can you incorporate what you learned today into your ministry?
- If you were to share what you experienced today with a friend, what would you say?

⁶ Amos Yong and Estrela Alexander, *Afro-Pentecostalism: Black Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in History and Culture* (New York, New York: New York University Press, 2016), 2.

⁷ Yong and Alexander, 3.

⁸ Yong and Alexander, 3-4.

⁹ Yong and Alexander, 4.

Week 2

Small Group: Reflection on Black Holiness Church Worship Experience

- 1) The class starts with a group activity selected by the professor to create a collaborative learning environment.
- 2) The professor allows students to share and ask questions about their experiences.
- 3) The professor follows up with the following questions as time and learning experiences require:
 - a. How has what you have learned, experienced, and observed comported with your previous understanding of the topic?
 - b. Has your understanding of the topic changed at all because of this class?
 - c. What will you do with this information going forward?
 - d. What question do you have that you would like the class to reflect on or consider?

Week 3

Lecture Title - They Were Christians Before They Were Enslaved: The Black Holiness Church

Objectives: By the end of this lecture, students should be able to explain Christianity for African Americans before enslavement, the Bible's African orientation, and the distinctiveness of the Black Holiness Church.

Biblical Foundation: Acts 8:26-40 - New International Version (NIV)

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means “queen of the Ethiopians”). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.” Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked. “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading: “He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth.” The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?” And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

Wisdom Teaching: They were Christians before being enslaved.

[The earliest Christians in the world](#)

Black Holiness Church Heritage:

The Black Holiness Church is a mix of African religion and white protest Protestantism.

Course Text: Gay, Jerome. *The Whitewashing of Christianity: A Hidden Past, a Hurtful Present, and a Hopeful Future*. Chicago, IL: 13th & Joan, 2021.

Lecture Outline

- When does one's history begin?
- When we look at Africans in America who were formerly enslaved, when do we normally start their history? Why do you think so? How does this affect the way we view African Americans?

Biblical Foundation: Psalm 139:14 (New International Version)

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

For discussion, refer to The Tony Evans Bible Commentary page 576.¹⁰

Discussion Question: Are all people “made in the image of God (imago dei)”? How then do we justify oppression, devaluing, and ignoring people?

Wisdom Teaching: Treat People The Way They Want To Be Treated.

For discussion, refer to Duke Human Resources.¹¹

It's time to adopt the “Platinum” Rule: Treat others as they would like to be treated. This should be the fundamental maxim for effective relationships. All it takes to put this new mindset into practice is understanding, curiosity, and compromise.

Discussion Question: What would it take for you to adopt the “platinum” rule? Is it possible to live by it?

Black Holiness Church Heritage:

Africans have a long history of contributions to Christianity.

The Bible was used to promote white supremacy in Christianity. While some argue that this is far from the truth, Dr. Theron D. Williams, in his book *The Bible Is Black History*, uses scholarship to prove that the Bible has been whitewashed and consciously interpreted to lift whiteness. *The Bible Is Black History* challenges the way people look at the racial makeup of the

¹⁰ Tony Evans and C. S. B. Bibles CSB Bibles by Holman, *The Tony Evans Bible Commentary* (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2019).

¹¹ Michelle Jones, “The Platinum Rule: Treat Others How They Want to Be Treated,” Duke Learning and Organization Development, August 25, 2022, <https://sites.duke.edu/lodtraininghub/2022/08/25/the-platinum-rule/>.

characters of the Bible. Using science and scholarship, Williams presents that Black people are a part of the Israelites. He also explains how white supremacy has influenced the depiction of biblical figures, emphasizing that Jesus had dark skin and this fact was not shared to promote whiteness: “This image did not come about because of an innocent historical mistake, but it is a calculated plan designed to persuade people of color to submit to their assigned subordinate roles in the White Male Supremacy System by ascribing deity to a White man, thus bowing down in the worship of him.”¹²

Williams points out that the Bible is an Afro-Asiatic sacred text that spawned four great religions, yet, widely, people do not accept the characters described in the text as people of color. He states plainly, “Modern images of biblical characters are not Black Africans or dark-skinned Asians; they are all White Europeans. It is astounding how this has been accepted as factual by most of the world since the 1500s, given the fact that neither Judaism nor Christianity was founded in Europe. In truth, no major religion was ever founded on the continent of Europe.”¹³

When Europeans conquered lands around the world in the sixteenth century, they brought a white Jesus with them. The Jesuit missionaries even set up art schools that taught the newly converted Christians to paint biblical figures in a European way, i.e., as white.¹⁴ Williams discusses how, after the Spanish conquest of South America, a “white” Jesus was employed to perpetuate a caste system with Christian Europeans at the top and darker-skinned people on the lower levels.

Edward J. Blum, Professor of History at San Diego State University, is quoted stating: “The centuries after European colonization of the Americas, the image of a white Christ associated him with the logic of the empire and could be used to justify the oppression of Native and African Americans.”¹⁵ Depicting the people in the Bible as white and God as white supports the idea that the ruling class of whites is justified.¹⁶ Williams asserts that chattel slavery and the caste system in America made it essential to label races. He states, “Prior to American colonization, Europeans never identified themselves as the White race; they distinguished themselves according to nationality-- Dutch, Scottish, English, Irish, Italian, and other European nationalities. It was not until the colonization of America that skin color, or race, became important. Race was made an issue for psychological, economic, political, religious and, later, social purposes.”¹⁷ The system of white supremacy put enslaved Africans at the bottom and

¹² Theron D. Williams and Tyrus Goshay. *The Bible is Black History*, (Indianapolis, IN: The Bible is Black History Institute, 2020), 66.

¹³ Williams and Goshay, 107.

¹⁴ Williams and Goshay, 67.

¹⁵ Williams and Goshay, 67-68.

¹⁶ Williams and Goshay, 108.

¹⁷ Williams and Goshay, 110.

whites at the top. Elite whites used the system to elevate poor whites over blacks, giving status just for being white. Williams calls this “the invention of American racism.”¹⁸ American racism was pervasive. It affected every activity in the country, even religion. Williams explains, “The notion of white superiority influences every sphere of American life. Whether it is science, religion, education, economics, sports, politics, entertainment, labor, law, etc., it is twisted, stretched, redacted, or altered to support this narrative, no matter how ludicrous.”¹⁹ Seeing Blacks as inferior and whites as superior leads to the downplaying or ignoring of the contributions of African Americans, as Woodson described, therefore creating a diversity gap in higher-level institutions of learning.

Institutions too often encourage blacks to lift other cultures and their contributions without valuing African culture or African American culture. Woodson asserted that not only were blacks taught to value other cultures, but they were also taught to devalue their own culture. “The ‘educated Negroes’ have the attitude of contempt toward their own people because in their own as well as in their mixed schools Negroes are taught to admire the Hebrew, the Greek, the Latin and the Teuton and to despise the African.”²⁰ The Black church and its leaders have made great contributions to this country and the church, which are hardly discussed. Even with all his criticism of it, Woodson saw it as “a part of the capital that the race must invest to make its future.”²¹ African American church leaders have developed schools and businesses and led social change. Woodson highlights, “The Negro church has taken the lead in education in the schools of the race, it has supplied a forum for the thought of the ‘highly educated’ Negro, it has originated a large portion of the business controlled by Negroes, and in many cases, it has made it possible for Negro professional men to exist.”²²

While Holiness seminaries today may be, as Woodson would say, “miseducating” students by failing to discuss the contributions of diverse people, including African Americans, Wesley was a strong advocate for recognizing God in all people and vehemently opposed the racist system of slavery. In Wesley’s pamphlet *Thoughts upon Slavery*, he presents compelling arguments against the institution of slavery. He explains that Africans are not savages needing control and highlights how Europeans invaded Africa, creating discord that provided a pretext for enslaving African people. He also argues that there was no economic necessity for slavery. He contends that slavery is an injustice—merciless and ungodly. The inclusion- and justice-oriented understanding of Wesley can be seen in his writing and should also be recaptured in seminaries. What Woodson was concerned about in higher-level learning institutions was borne

¹⁸ Williams and Goshay, 111.

¹⁹ Williams and Goshay, 111.

²⁰ Woodson et al., 1.

²¹ Woodson et al., 53.

²² Woodson et al., 53.

out in our review of the Holiness seminaries' coursework. There is an overwhelming lack of diversity and, more specifically, a failure to identify the contributions of African Americans to the Holiness Movement.

Closing Reflections/Discussion

- What did you learn or see differently today that you had not seen before?
- How can you incorporate what you learned today in your ministry?
- If you would share what you experienced today with a friend, what would you say?

Week 4**Small Group - Reflection on Contributions of Africans to Christianity**

- 1) The class starts with a group activity selected by the professor to create a collaborative learning environment.
- 2) The professor allows students to share and ask questions about their experiences.
- 3) The professor follows up with the following questions as time and learning experiences require:
 - a. How has what you have learned, experienced, and observed comported with your previous understanding of the topic?
 - b. Has anything changed about your understanding of the topic area because of this class?
 - c. What will you do with this information going forward?
 - d. What question do you have that you would like the class to reflect on or consider?

Week 5

Lecture Title - The Reconciling Praxis of the Black Holiness Church

Objectives: By the end of this lecture, students should be able to explain the difference between biblical and racial reconciliation and use the historic role of the Black Holiness Church to deal with issues of conflict today.

Biblical Foundation: 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 New International Version (NIV)

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

Wisdom Teaching: Can't We All Get Along? The cry of the oppressed.

Black Holiness Church Heritage:

African Americans led efforts of reconciliation through revivals and ordination of ministers in the Holiness Movement in America.

Course Text: Hines, Samuel George, Curtiss Paul DeYoung, Cheryl J. Sanders, and Dalineta L. Hines. *Beyond Rhetoric Reconciliation as a Way of Life*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011.

Lecture Outline

What is reconciliation?

Beyond Rhetoric Reconciliation as a Way of Life, Hines:

Revolutionary = "If you get in my way, I will kill you, because I must do what I have to do."

Reconciler = "I am willing to lay down my life for this cause."

The reconciler is willing to pay the ultimate price of giving up the right to revenge, even to the extent of laying down his or her life for the cause. Reconciliation is the way of the cross- love pressing its way even in the face of death. Reconciliation begins between God and human beings through the atonement of Jesus Christ and then is channeled through

us to each other by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.²³

Biblical Foundation: 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 - New International Version (NIV)

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

For discussion, refer to The Tony Evans Bible Commentary page 1187.²⁴

Discussion Question: Is it right to start with the reconciliation between God and man before dealing with reconciliation among people? Pros/Cons

Wisdom Teaching: Can't We All Get Along? The cry of the oppressed.

For discussion, refer to "When LA Erupted In Anger: A Look Back At The Rodney King Riots"²⁵

On May 1, the third day of the riots, Rodney King himself attempted to publicly appeal to Los Angeles residents to stop fighting. He stood outside a Beverly Hills courthouse with his lawyer and asked, "People, I just want to say, you know, can we all get along? Can we get along?"

Discussion Question: Often, those who have been offended take the lead in the reconciliation process. Is this the best model for reconciliation? Why or why not? What are other models that work?

Black Holiness Church Heritage:

African Americans led efforts of reconciliation through revivals and ordination of ministers in the Holiness Movement in America.

Azusa Street Revival

²³ Samuel George Hines et al., *Beyond Rhetoric Reconciliation as a Way of Life* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011).

²⁴ Tony Evans and C. S. B. Bibles CSB Bibles by Holman, *The Tony Evans Bible Commentary* (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2019). 1187.

²⁵ Anjuli Sastry Krbechek and Karen Grigsby Bates, "When La Erupted in Anger: A Look Back at the Rodney King Riots," NPR, April 26, 2017, <https://www.npr.org/2017/04/26/524744989/when-la-erupted-in-anger-a-look-back-at-the-rodney-king-riots>.

While there is still much controversy surrounding the matter, most agree that William Seymour and Charles Fox Parham are the founders of Pentecostalism. One reason for the disputes about who the founder is stems from the difficulty in defining “Pentecostalism.” Gastón Espinosa, in his book *William J. Seymour and the Origins of Global Pentecostalism: A Biography and Documentary History*, attempts to explain the makeup of Pentecostalism. He describes Pentecostalism as a “slave religion, revivalism, black and white Holiness theology, the Keswick Movement, the reformed idea of power for Christian living dispensational premillennialism, and Divine Healing Movements.”²⁶

Seymour, born to enslaved Africans, was baptized in the Roman Catholic Church but soon began attending a Baptist church with his brothers and sisters near his home. He grew up in the Jim Crow South and could barely read or write. Later, he moved to Houston, Texas, with relatives and joined a Holiness Church. It was in Houston that Seymour became acquainted with Parham. Parham invited Seymour to assist him in conducting services for Black individuals. Parham organized services that welcomed and taught Blacks, whites, Indians, and Mexicans. Under Parham's guidance, Seymour developed a deeper understanding and appreciation for the outpouring and baptism of the Holy Spirit, as well as divine healing. While Parham taught and embraced all races, he maintained firm beliefs regarding the separation of races. Espinosa explains, “Parham taught racial separation, eighth-day creationism, white supremacy, and the idea that miscegenation caused Noah’s flood. Parham also promoted British Israelism, which posited that the Anglo-Saxon race were the lineal descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel and therefore God’s chosen race.”²⁷

Seymour and Parham broke up when Seymour was called to a Holiness Mission in Los Angeles. On February 22, 1906, Seymour arrived in Los Angeles to lead the Mission. By mid-March, white people began to join an all-black holiness band. The revival started attracting more and more attendees, and Seymour began to send missionaries around the world. Many argue that the birth of the Azusa Street Revival and Pentecostalism occurred on April 9, 1906, when Seymour laid hands on a white believer, prayed for him, and he began to speak in tongues. News of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit spread around the world. Due to the growing crowds, he relocated the revival to the former Stevens African American Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church at 312 Azusa Street. His work was then called the Apostolic Faith Movement, characterized by speaking in tongues and integrated worship.

The Apostolic Faith Movement, the Azusa Street Revival, and Seymour’s leadership are credited with birthing the most major Pentecostal denominations. Seymour’s ability to attract people of all backgrounds contributes to the spiritual formation of the Black Holiness Church, which will be discussed later in this section as essential to an effective church. Now that we have examined three significant church planters in the Holiness Movement in America, let us explore

²⁶ Gastón Espinosa, *William J. Seymour and the Origins of Global Pentecostalism: A Biography and Documentary History*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 42.

²⁷ Espinosa, *William J. Seymour*, 42, 51.

how they provide models for maintaining an effective church.

Ordination of Ministers

As stated earlier, the churches that Jones, Mason, and Seymour led were multicultural and multiethnic. They also ordained white ministers who started Holiness Churches like the Assemblies of God. Both the COGIC and COCHUSA continue to be strong churches known for their community and missions work.²⁸²⁹ Although the Azusa Street Revival concluded in 1914, the revival had an influence across the country and internationally, including driving the emergence of many Pentecostal churches. In the two years of the revival, 38 missionaries of varying races were sent to over 50 nations (including China, India, Japan, the Philippines, South Africa, and Liberia). The rich history of the Holiness Movement is essential to teach in Holiness seminaries. This knowledge equips students to lead effectively in diverse contexts today. When considering the teaching of diversity, best practices emerge that foster meaningful learning as the students prepare to serve in an increasingly culturally diverse mission field in the United States.

Closing Reflections/Discussion

- What did you learn or see differently today that you had not seen before?
- How can you incorporate what you learned today in your ministry?
- If you would share what you experienced today with a friend, what would you say?

²⁸ Lincoln and Mamiya, 90-91.

²⁹ Castilla, 55.

Week 6

Small Group - The Reconciling Praxis of the Black Holiness Church

- 1) The class starts with a group activity selected by the professor to create a collaborative learning environment.
- 2) The professor allows students to share and ask questions about their experiences.
- 3) The professor follows up with the following questions as time and learning experiences require:
 - a. What did you experience that you did not expect or you have questions about?
 - b. How did the lecture and what you read prepare you for the experience?
 - c. Did what you experienced differ from what you heard in the lecture or read in the literature?
 - d. What did you experience that you believe is more social than theological?
 - e. What did you see differently theologically because of the experience?
 - f. What questions do you have that you would like the class to reflect on or consider?

Week 7**Class Assessment - 4–6-page Reflection and Future Paper**

Students will use the lectures, readings, experiences, and discussions from the coursework to reflect on and express their learning about the Black Holiness Church and how this information will affect their ministry going forward.

Week 8

Lecture Title - A Movement of Empowerment: The Black Holiness Church

Objectives: By the end of this lecture, students should be able to demonstrate the difference between charity and empowerment, demonstrate the difference between social holiness and social justice, cite some activities of the Black Holiness Church concerning empowerment, and apply empowerment ethics of the Black Holiness Church to their ministry context.

Biblical Foundation: Acts 3:6 NIV - New International Version (NIV)

Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.”

Wisdom Teaching: A hand up, not just a hand out.

Black Holiness Church Heritage:

The Black Holiness Church has been a model of both social holiness and social justice.

Course Text: Sanders, Cheryl Jeanne. *Empowerment Ethics for a Liberated People: A Path to African American Social Transformation*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995.

Lecture Outline

What is the difference between social holiness (Wesley) and social justice? Is the church responsible for one/the other/both? Why or why not?

Social holiness is simply defined as engaging social ills from a biblical perspective. Social justice is when the world’s cultural norms define what is right and wrong.

What is the difference between charity and empowerment?

Charity is using giving without any connection. Empowerment is about relationships, giving influence, and mutual respect.

Biblical Foundation: Acts 3:1-6 - New International Version (NIV)

One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do

not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.”

For discussion, refer to The Tony Evans Bible Commentary page 1074.³⁰

Discussion Question: How does this scripture demonstrate social holiness, social justice, charity, and empowerment ethics? Which one of these does this scripture not demonstrate, but you have a biblical example that does?

Wisdom Teaching: A hand up, not just a hand out.

My story of the Baltimore Bible Study where a Mennonite and an ex-con demonstrated empowerment ethics through relationship, work ethic, and sharing influence.

Discussion Question: What does empowerment ethics look like in your life?

Black Holiness Church Heritage:

COCHUSA demonstrated its commitment to empowerment ethics by addressing the challenges its members face. The organization collectively sacrificed and established programs that ensured safety for members of the Black Holiness Church while providing equal opportunity for upward mobility through education. In 1908, COCHUSA incorporated Christ’s Missionary and Industrial College in Jackson, Mississippi.³¹ Before becoming a college, it was a grade school known as “Christ Holiness School.”³² The school was started at the prompting of Sister Alice Brown, who believed “the Lord wanted among us a school where the students could be taught the Bible as well as the regular school textbooks.”³³ Also, the severe beating of one of the Elders’ daughters at the public school because she “testified to a holy life” caused the church to start an institution of its own.³⁴ The church set up a “Christian Education Fund,” established a board, and purchased 142 acres of land for the school. Over its lifetime, the institution served various educational purposes, including a daycare, a preschool/kindergarten, an elementary school, a high school, and a Bible college.³⁵ Unfortunately, the school was also terrorized by

³⁰ Tony Evans and C. S. B. Bibles CSB Bibles by Holman, *The Tony Evans Bible Commentary* (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2019).

³¹ Castilla, 26.

³² Castilla, 28.

³³ Castilla, 27.

³⁴ Castilla, 27-28.

³⁵ Castilla, 33.

arsonists, with at least four fires on campus set by angry white mobs at various points in its history.³⁶ We see COCHUSA caring for its members by setting up a school where the children could receive a standard education and learn about holiness in a safe environment. This initiative exemplifies the caring approach described by Dudley, which is crucial for an effective church, as well as Sanders's concept of empowerment ethics. Through acts of care, the church actively engages in the safety and education of its members. We also see the principles of empowerment ethics reflected in COCHUSA's decision to fund the school, set up advisory boards with its members, and integrate the school into the church's framework.³⁷

Closing Reflection/Discussion

- What did you learn or see differently today that you had not seen before?
- How can you incorporate what you learned today in your ministry?
- If you would share what you experienced today with a friend, what would you say?

³⁶ Castilla, 26-35.

³⁷ Castilla, 26-35.

Week 9

Small Group - Reflect on the Justice-oriented Nature of the Black Holiness Church

- 1) The class starts with a group activity selected by the professor to create a collaborative learning environment.
- 2) The professor allows students to share and ask questions about their experiences.
- 3) The professor follows up with the following questions as time and learning experiences require:
 - a. How has what you have learned, experienced, and observed comported with your previous understanding of the topic?
 - b. Has anything changed about your understanding of the topic area because of this class?
 - c. What will you do with this information going forward?
 - d. What question do you have that you would like the class to reflect on or consider?

Week 10

Class Discussion -The Black Holiness Church: “My Questions, My Concerns, My Perceptions”

Course Text: Parker, Brianna K. *I still believe in the Black Church: Using Data to Decode the Promise and Pain of the Black Church*. Mansfield, TX: Black Millennial Café, 2022.

- 1) The class starts with a group activity selected by the professor to create a collaborative learning environment.
- 2) The professor allows students to share and ask questions about their experiences.
- 3) The professor follows up with the following questions as time and learning experiences require:
 - a. How has what you have learned, experienced, and observed comported with your previous understanding of the topic?
 - b. Has anything changed about your understanding of the topic area because of this class?
 - c. What will you do with this information going forward?
 - d. What question do you have that you would like the class to reflect on or consider?

Week 11

Lecture Title - Communal, Reflective, Intergenerational: The Spiritual Formation in The Black Holiness Church

Objectives: By the end of this lecture, students should be able to 1) define wisdom teaching, 2) understand how wisdom teaching can be used to bring people together, and 3) explain how wisdom teaching fits within their ministry context.

Biblical Foundation: Joshua 4:19-22: New International Version (NIV)

On the tenth day of the first month the people went up from the Jordan and camped at Gilgal on the eastern border of Jericho. And Joshua set up at Gilgal the twelve stones they had taken out of the Jordan. He said to the Israelites, ‘In the future when your descendants ask their parents, “What do these stones mean?” tell them, “Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.”’

Wisdom Teaching: [THE LEGEND OF THE TWO WOLVES || Native American Legend](#)

Discussion Question: What do we learn from this story? How does it bring generations together? Who do you have in your life that shares their stories with you like this elder?

Black Holiness Church Heritage: What is wisdom teaching?

Course Text: Anne Streaty Wimberly and Evelyn L. Parker. *In Search of Wisdom: Faith Formation in the Black Church*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002.

Lecture Outline

Biblical Foundation: Joshua 4:19-22: New International Version (NIV)

On the tenth day of the first month the people went up from the Jordan and camped at Gilgal on the eastern border of Jericho. And Joshua set up at Gilgal the twelve stones they had taken out of the Jordan. He said to the Israelites, ‘In the future when your descendants ask their parents, “What do these stones mean?” tell them, “Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.”’

These stones served as symbols of the past, indicating God’s present and future desire for His people. The stones represented a sign that God was with their current leader, Joshua, just like God had been with their former leader, Moses. Just as He was with the Israelites, God was present with the oppressed people enslaved in the United States, and through them, He brought

forth a movement of His presence—the Black Holiness Church. That same God is with us today. The stones also represented the faith that God’s people had to follow Moses out of captivity toward a promised land. We see this same faith in God in the once enslaved Africans, who were told they were nothing because of the color of their skin, yet they believed in a God who told them they were His and affirmed their worth. This faith inspired them to lead and gather people into a church without regard for race, creed, or color. Furthermore, the stones served as a symbol and reminder for future generations of what God had done. By teaching Holiness seminarians that God used African Americans to lead, establish, and nurture the Holiness Church at large, the Holiness seminarians can take pride in a Holiness Church that is multicultural. They will learn that many different individuals contributed to its success, fostering an openness to leading multicultural congregations as their predecessors did, with God's guidance. Now that we understand how God has used history to inspire the future, let us discuss the role of education in revival.

For discussion, refer to The Tony Evans Bible Commentary page 247.³⁸

Discussion Question: What symbols have those before left to you to remember the works of God?

Wisdom Teaching: [THE LEGEND OF THE TWO WOLVES || Native American Legend](#)

Discussion Question: What do we learn from this story? How does it bring generations together? Who do you have in your life that shares their stories with you like this elder?

Black Holiness Church Heritage: Black Church Wisdom Teaching

Part of renewing and challenging the mind of Holiness seminarians is to introduce them to spiritual formation in the Black Church context. It is important to understand that there are some universally accepted methods for serving African American congregations, while other methods are unique to the Black community. First, we will compare widely accepted spiritual formation practices as outlined by Sondra Higgins Mattheaei in *Formation in Faith* to the formation unique to the black context outlined by Wimberly and Parker in *In Search of Wisdom*. Performing this comparison in the classroom is a way of engaging Holiness seminarians in spiritual formation to ultimately learn to serve diverse cultures. *Formation In Faith* serves congregations as they make disciples for Christ. She submits that faith formation answers the

³⁸ Tony Evans and C. S. B. Bibles CSB Bibles by Holman, The Tony Evans Bible Commentary (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2019), 247.

questions of “How do persons become Christian?” and “How do people grow in faith?”³⁹ She also distills the essentials of disciple-making to the need for people to have authentic relationships and faithful Christian communities.⁴⁰

Matthaei argues that authentic relationships with others are “critically important in stopping the loss of those who find the church to be irrelevant.”⁴¹ A key component to authentic relationships is hearing and being heard, but Matthaei elaborates that this means “[h]earing with the ear and listening with the heart.”⁴² The three characteristics of authentic relationships are “being heard, being known, and being accepted.”⁴³ When forming spiritually, it is important to connect with one another. Ultimately, discipleship involves guiding people into a relationship with God. An authentic relationship with God means that He hears us; it is not simply based on the fact that He created us. Before creation, He heard us: “God heard and knew the deepest needs of creation before God spoke a word of redemption and salvation.”⁴⁴ When one is connected with God, one’s understanding of life deepens. A faithful Christian community is rooted in God’s word. As one is forming faith, it is important to read and understand scripture. For the community to demonstrate its commitment to being faithful Christians, it must allow people to ask questions. These questions cause one to gain a greater relationship with God, because “active debate about theological issues in the interpretation of Scripture only serves to deepen one’s faith.”⁴⁵ Connecting with others while serving God strengthens one’s faith. This authentic relationship causes one to “think and act like the body of Christ focusing on God.”⁴⁶ Matthaei plainly states: “When we live together in the church as a Christian family, the intentionality of the shared life creates a formative community in which all of the members of the family do their best to live a Christian life in the midst of the many distractions of society.”⁴⁷

Now that we have a view of traditional spiritual formation, let us review the Black Holiness Church Formation. The Holiness tradition, in addition to the faith formation outlined by Matthaei, seeks piety and the power of the Holy Spirit. Cheryl J. Sanders, in her book *Saints in*

³⁹ Sondra Higgins Matthaei, *Formation in Faith: The Congregational Ministry of Making Disciples* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2008), ix.

⁴⁰ Matthaei, 3, 5.

⁴¹ Matthaei, 5.

⁴² Matthaei, 3.

⁴³ Matthaei, 3.

⁴⁴ Matthaei, 9.

⁴⁵ Matthaei, 21.

⁴⁶ Matthaei, 63.

⁴⁷ Matthaei, 64.

Exile, explains that the Holiness tradition “stresses purity of life and thought achieved by means of practices such as fasting, prayer, and renunciation of the world.”⁴⁸ It also “emphasiz[es] personal empowerment through the Spirit. Its characteristic discipline is tarrying, a Pentecostal method of seeking the outpouring of the Spirit in worship.”⁴⁹ While Mattheaei’s concept of faith formation is important, Wimberly and Parker introduce a complementary spiritual formation that takes place within the Black Church. Their formation is based on the sharing of “wisdom.” Wisdom formation involves sharing the personal testimonies of the traumatic journey endured by Africans, highlighting how they survived and even thrived. The history, disposition, mindset, values, and knowledge of Black sages have been an important part of the lives of African American Christians.⁵⁰ This wisdom is shared through cultural teachings and guides. Teaching biblical and African culture is an essential part of the spiritual formation in the Black Church. This approach differs from other faith contexts because Christian education in the Black Church addresses the African American experience, which is infused with liberation, identity establishment, and engendering hope.⁵¹ While the presence and culture of Black people are evident throughout the Bible, many within the Black Church choose to interpret biblical culture primarily through a European lens.

Unfortunately, church officials and scholars often dismiss the contributions of Black people in the Bible. Consequently, these contributions have been distorted, reinterpreted, and reimaged to communicate Eurocentric characters, standards, and values.⁵² The Black Church serves as the place where these misconceptions can be revealed, understood as lies, and replaced with the truth. The Black Church is also the place for the teaching, understanding, and furthering of the liberation of African Americans. Liberation is central to the intent of African wisdom formation: It emphasizes that “wisdom formation should be wise decisions and wise actions, meaning those decisions and actions that contribute to Black people’s liberation from oppressive life conditions and to transformed and wholeness-producing existence.”⁵³

The church serves as a place where African Americans can learn healthy ways to deal with the realities of their lives while also being offered hope, practices, and resources to be freed

⁴⁸ Cheryl Jeanne Sanders. *Saints in Exile: The Holiness-Pentecostal Experience in African American Religion and Culture* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), 136.

⁴⁹ Sanders, *Saints in Exile*, 136-137.

⁵⁰ Anne Streaty Wimberly and Evelyn L. Parker, *In Search of Wisdom: Faith Formation in the Black Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 11.

⁵¹ Wimberly and Parker, 45.

⁵² Wimberly and Parker, 42.

⁵³ Wimberly and Parker, 46.

from life's struggles.⁵⁴ The triple-heritage model of faith formation for African American Christians includes the wisdom of their African, Black American, and Christian roots. The African heritage is shaped by the traditions of the "motherland," which include tribal customs, rituals, music, dance, family structure, and so on. The heritage of Black Americans reflects the strength, character, and resilience of the men and women who built this country. These early Black Americans also recognized Christianity as a divine religion, even though it was used to oppress them.⁵⁵ The music and songs of the Black Church serve as avenues for experiencing, expressing, and teaching the triple heritage.⁵⁶ The Black Holiness Church is especially known for embracing and celebrating the African tradition through music. Cheryl J. Sanders shares how Sanctified churches drew on this tradition to "highlight the cultural distinctiveness and aesthetics of African people through the recovery and retrieval of drums, guitars, tambourines, and African modes of worship."⁵⁷ Blending music, song, and wisdom is a distinctive feature of the Black Church.

African Americans face unique struggles in the United States. Wisdom teachings from Biblical, cultural, and cross-generational guides aid Black Christians throughout their lives. The Hebrew teachings found in some of the Old Testament are essential for the development of African Americans. The books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job, and the apocryphal book of Sirach make up the Israelites' concepts of wisdom.⁵⁸ These books offer practical advice for navigating life and striving to live righteously. The book of Proverbs emphasizes the importance of wisdom in one's life. Some phrases associated with wisdom include "wisdom as God's greatest attribute," "fearing God is the beginning of wisdom," and "the person who finds wisdom and has understanding is very blessed and happy."⁵⁹ These wisdom books teach us that wisdom is a valuable asset in life. Much like a nurturing mother, "wisdom sustains life."⁶⁰ The Israelites and Africans honored guides who communicated messages of wisdom based on their own experiences to help others make it through life.⁶¹ These "wisdom teachers" teach out of their "wisdom hewn by experience."⁶² They are the carriers of the oral history of their culture.

⁵⁴ Wimberly and Parker, 47.

⁵⁵ Wimberly and Parker, 51.

⁵⁶ Wimberly and Parker, 43.

⁵⁷ Sanders, *Saints in Exile*, 137.

⁵⁸ Wimberly and Parker, 24.

⁵⁹ Wimberly and Parker, 24.

⁶⁰ Wimberly and Parker, 24.

⁶¹ Wimberly and Parker, 24.

⁶² Wimberly and Parker, 32.

Through storytelling, they share wisdom that can be applied to real-life situations.⁶³

One of the greatest challenges in the church today is the absence of young people. As discussed before, the Black Church experience is not limited to what happens within the four walls of the church. Rather, it has historically played a significant role in the community. The disconnect with the youth and diverse cultures can be bridged by embracing the tradition of cross-generational guides.⁶⁴ The Black Holiness Church's spiritual formation strives to reach across generations and cultures. Cross-generational guides are rooted in Black ancestry. Understanding this history and the significance of African Americans enables a guide to connect youth with their cultural heritage that spans time and place, thereby revealing to them the strength they have within themselves. This dialogue between adults and young people can empower the youth to value and embrace their identities in a world that often tells them their experiences do not matter.⁶⁵

In order to foster internal trust and teach civility across cultures within the church, the Black Holiness Church established various auxiliaries. These groups of women, children, and youth are very similar to those found in Black Baptist and Methodist churches.⁶⁶ The auxiliaries of the Black Holiness Church serve as the perfect places for mentoring and faith formation. The book *In Search of Wisdom* defines mentoring as a process of responsible relationships where a sage engages peer groups in pursuing growth and development. This mentorship method of sharing wisdom is effectively facilitated within the male, female, and youth auxiliaries.⁶⁷ These male, female, and youth auxiliaries are the ideal locations for the mentoring process. Next, we will demonstrate how this wisdom teaching can be used in holiness seminary classrooms to provide cross-cultural learning.

Wisdom teaching, a prominent spiritual formation method in the Black Holiness Church, can be used to engage Holiness seminarians in teaching that causes them to understand other cultures. Edwin David Aponte provides clear and practical ways to bring Black people's contributions to the seminary classroom. He uses "wisdom teaching" to ensure students interact with one another and learn from one another's experiences. In contrast, some professors manage the classroom from the perspective that they are the sole authorities. They see themselves as solely responsible for imparting all knowledge. Aponte suggests the professor foster "a classroom of possibility" by trying "to cultivate a collaborative way of learning and a collegial atmosphere" in the classroom."⁶⁸ As the professor, he embraces all of his humanity and asks the

⁶³ Wimberly and Parker, 34.

⁶⁴ Wimberly and Parker, 57.

⁶⁵ Wimberly and Parker, 64.

⁶⁶ Alexander and Amos, 48.

⁶⁷ Wimberly and Parker, 74, 89, 108.

⁶⁸ Jones and Trost, 116.

students to do the same. The classroom is a place where everyone is open to share; all are “teachers, learners, story tellers, and interpreters together.”⁶⁹ The idea is not just to inform but also to form the students' thinking.

Dr. Daphne Wiggins echoes this sentiment, believing that the professor must be committed to this role to not only share information but also challenge students to rethink their religious views and experiences.⁷⁰ She sees herself in the classroom as a “presenter, investigator, facilitator of ideas, ‘facts,’ and paradigms.”⁷¹ She feels having students interact with data and view it from different perspectives is important. She challenges students to go beyond thinking that there is one solution to ministry.⁷² She encourages her students to take a position and defend it while understanding some of the assumptions that could be underlying their beliefs. The process allows the students to question and investigate even things that they have believed to be true their entire lives.⁷³ To facilitate this process, she breaks the class into small groups and prepares questions beforehand to foster conversation and discussion. She assigns two major papers and presentations to students, as well as more minor reflections on the readings throughout the semester. Wiggins adjusts her teaching strategies to accommodate different student learning styles, keeping in mind both oral and visual learners.⁷⁴ his pedagogical approach aligns with the wisdom teaching heritage of the Black Holiness Church and can aid in the spiritual formation of Holiness seminaries as they are challenged to rethink their ministry in a multicultural context.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the spiritual formation of wisdom teaching is an effective method for conveying the heritage of the Black Holiness Church. By sharing personal stories and highlighting the African, Black American, and Christian roots of the Black Church in a cross-cultural classroom experience, we encourage Holiness seminarians to prepare for ministry in a diverse America. Next, we will present the outline for the curriculum focused on teaching holiness from the African American perspective.

Closing Reflection/Discussion

- What did you learn or see differently today that you had not seen before?
- How can you incorporate what you learned today in your ministry?

⁶⁹ Jones and Trost, 117.

⁷⁰ Jones and Trost, 145.

⁷¹ Jones and Trost, 146.

⁷² Jones and Trost, 146.

⁷³ Jones and Trost, 147.

⁷⁴ Jones and Trost, 118.

- If you could share what you experienced today with a friend, what would you say?

Week 12

Small Group - Reflection on the Spiritual Formation in the Black Church

- 1) The class starts with a group activity selected by the professor to create a collaborative learning environment.
- 2) The professor allows students to share and ask questions about their experiences.
- 3) The professor follows up with the following questions as time and learning experiences require:
 - a. How has what you have learned, experienced, and observed comported with your previous understanding of the topic?
 - b. Has anything changed about your understanding of the topic area because of this class?
 - c. What will you do with this information going forward?
 - d. What question do you have that you would like the class to reflect on or consider?

Week 13

Lecture Title - A Church in Community Church: The Black Holiness Church

Objectives: By the end of this lecture, students should be able to 1) understand the distinctiveness of the Black Holiness Church engaging in the community, 2) historical examples of the Black Holiness Church engaging with the community, and 3) analyze how the model of the Black Holiness Church fits within their ministerial context.

Biblical Foundation: Micah 6:8 New International Version (NIV)

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Wisdom Teaching: First they came for the...

Black Holiness Church Heritage: Walking with God and community in justice.

Course Text: Jini Kilgore Cockroft and J. Alfred Smith. *From classism to community: A challenge for the Church*. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2016.

Lecture Outline

Biblical Foundation: Micah 6:8 - New International Version (NIV)

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Deuteronomy 32:4 declares that God is just. God's commitment to justice sets a standard for His people to continuously pursue justice. The prophet Micah was sent to the kingdom of Judah and Israel during a time that was not only riddled with inequitable economic prosperity that widened the wealth gap but also made room for the affluent to exploit the disadvantaged. Dr. Tony Evans writes in the first entire commentary of The Bible written by an African American, "the rich expand[ed] their wealth to the detriment of the lower class."⁷⁵ He explains, "The greater the wealth, the greater distance there was between the people and their God."⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Tony Evans. *The Tony Evans Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2019), 817.

⁷⁶ Evans, 817.

Micah preached to Judah and Israel encouraging them to return to God. Micah outlines in simple terms God's desire for His people. It was not the religious sacrifice of bulls and goats that satisfied a just God, but He demands hearts and minds that lead to actions of justice. Micah 6:8 states, "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Dr. Evans asserts, "Religion becomes authentic when it demonstrates itself in the equitable application of biblical truth in order to meet the needs of people in God's name."⁷⁷ The Black Church demonstrates a people who are committed to justice.

For discussion, refer to The Tony Evans Bible Commentary page 1187.⁷⁸

Discussion Question: What does "justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" mean to you?

Wisdom Teaching: First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.

—Martin Niemöller⁷⁹

Discussion Question: What does it mean to stand with the other? Is this beyond diversity and inclusion? Is it biblical?

Black Holiness Church Heritage:

Preparation Within the Four Walls (Hearing the Pain of Community)

Lauren W. Reliford, in her Sojourners article "The Liberating Theology That Transformed My Understanding of God," explains that "Womanism examines the lived experiences of Black women who are subject to oppression that intersects with their race, class,

⁷⁷ Evans, 821.

⁷⁸ Tony Evans and C. S. B. Bibles CSB Bibles by Holman, *The Tony Evans Bible Commentary* (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2019), 1187.

⁷⁹ Holocaust Encyclopedia. "Martin Niemöller: 'First They Came for the Socialists...'" Last modified April 11, 2023. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/martin-niemoeller-first-they-came-for-the-socialists>.

and gender." Through the lens of womanist theology, Renita J. Weems wrote *Just a Sister Away: A Womanist Vision of Women's Relationships in the Bible*. In Chapter One, she focuses on the story of Hagar, pushing Abram and Sarai to the background and focusing on Hagar's trauma. Weems provides insight, stating, "It is a story of exploitation and persecution suffered by an Egyptian slave woman at the hands of her Hebrew mistress." Weems believes that this story should not be relegated to the past because it is instructive for us today. She points out the "similarity of our stories, as black and white women in America, to the story of Hagar and Sarai warrants taking the enormous risk of opening up the deep festering wounds between us and beginning to explore our possibilities for divine healing."⁸⁰ As Weems concludes her explanation of Hagar's story, she reflects on how God responds to painful prayers saying:

Just as Ishmael must have wept for the senselessness of Hagar, Sarah, and Abraham's ways, maybe it will take our children weeping on our behalf - our children weeping for the sins and prejudices and stubbornness of we their mothers and fathers - to convince God to intervene on our behalf. Perhaps as a global community we will be saved - if we are to be saved at all- because of the little children whose innocent tears will prostrate heaven.⁸¹

Womanist Theologian Valerie Rane Landfair wrote the essay, "Hagar's Lament," which appeared in the book titled *Do Black Lives Matter?: How Christian Scriptures Speak to Black Empowerment*. In the essay, she critiques white Pentecostals, evangelicals, and Catholic theologians for their failure to hear the pain of the Black community.⁸² Offering a Pentecostal womanist hermeneutic of Hagar's narrative, Landfair connects it to the contemporary proclamation "Black Lives Matter." She calls on these white theologians to acknowledge their "sins, repent, and lament" and work to actively dismantle white supremacy and cease normalizing the trauma and suffering experienced by communities of color.⁸³

Weems and Landfair demonstrate that the Black Holiness Church's commitment to justice begins with their interpretation of scripture. God's call is to stand in solidarity with the marginalized and oppressed, to advocate for systemic change, to extend compassion and aid to those in need, and to interpret and teach the Scriptures from this perspective. This is a key strength of the Black Church tradition, and by engaging with the scholarship of these holiness womanist theologians, seminarians can be better prepared to address the intertwined concerns of social holiness and social justice in their service to diverse communities.

⁸⁰ Weems, 2.

⁸¹ Weems, 19.

⁸² Lisa M. Bowens and Dennis R. Edwards. *Do Black Lives Matter?: How Christian Scriptures Speak to Black Empowerment*. Eugene (OR: Cascade Books, 2023), 123.

⁸³ Bowens and Edwards, 135.

Action Outside the Church Doors (Advocating for the Poor)

The Black Holiness Church views social holiness and social justice as closely intertwined, stemming from their understanding of the concept of imago Dei—that everyone is made in the image of God. This belief has driven the Black Holiness Church’s active engagement in social justice efforts. In Jini Kilgore Cockroft’s book, *From Classism to Community*, she explains that “the biblical concept of imago Dei - God’s image in which we all are made - is the perspective by which Christians should view and relate to one another, rather than societal norms of community and collegiality based mostly socioeconomic similarities.”⁸⁴ Cockroft, who has dedicated her life to serving the poor, provides the historical role of the Black church in caring for the poor and describes how this legacy serves as both an inspiration and guidance for the church today. Cockroft highlights the African American Christian community as an example of the “need for and the nature of inclusive community.”⁸⁵ She explains the Black Church has a long history of “African communalism” that has served African Americans well, even in the midst of American individualism.⁸⁶

The African American church is not perfect. As it has transitioned from being an invisible church to an institutional one, it has faced challenges related to classism and its ability to serve the poor. Some Black Churches, unfortunately, have taken on the posture of blaming the poor for their condition and ignoring the systemic issues that cause poverty in the United States.⁸⁷ At its best, the Black Holiness Church is a justice-oriented institution. An example of the link between social holiness and social justice in the Black Holiness Church is evident in the translation of the concept of “imago Dei” into the slogan “I AM A MAN.” The Memphis Sanitation Workers’ Strike began not long after an incident in February 1968 when two workers were crushed by a malfunctioning truck. Eleven days later, 1,300 frustrated Black men from the Memphis Department of Public Works went on strike for over two months. The City Council finally recognized the union and offered the workers better pay, ending the strike.⁸⁸

William Lucy, a young, up-and-coming union official dispatched to Memphis by his union, collaborated with the COGIC-affiliated organization Community on the Move for Equality (COME) to create a slogan that was “small enough to fit on a placard but powerful

⁸⁴ Jini Kilgore Cockroft and J. Alfred Smith, *From Classism to Community: A Challenge for the Church* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2016), 8.

⁸⁵ Cockroft and Smith, 32.

⁸⁶ Cockroft and Smith, 33.

⁸⁷ Cockroft and Smith, 44.

⁸⁸ The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute. “Memphis Sanitation Workers’ Strike,” accessed April 25, 2024, <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/memphis-sanitation-workers-strike#:~:text=Negotiators%20finally%20reached%20a%20deal,follow%20through%20with%20its%20commitment.>

enough to unite the city. They thought about systemic racism in the South and the generations of black boys who grew up to be grandfathers without ever being treated as men by white society. That's when it hit them.”⁸⁹⁹⁰ COME was a grassroots organization that “united black Memphians across denominational lines to pursue economic justice during the strike.”⁹¹ Many COGIC leaders were part of COME,⁹² including G.E. Patterson, whose congregation included several people who worked for the sanitation department. COME's stated objectives were to secure justice for the sanitation workers and create job opportunities for impoverished Black residents of Memphis.⁹³ Anyone who has studied the Civil Rights Movement in America will remember the images of the striking sanitation workers wearing signs declaring, “I AM A MAN.” This slogan comes from the influence of the Black Holiness Church, which was a leading force in the Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike. This example of the Black Holiness Church catalyzing grassroots movements serves as a model for churches that want to engage with society and care for the poor. Teaming up with other churches across denominational lines demonstrates how the church can move beyond individual worship for the greater good of the community. This approach exemplifies the merging of social holiness and social justice to fight against systemic oppression in the world. Hearing the pain of the community and requiring justice is rooted in biblical principles.

Conclusion

Holiness seminarians can learn to serve diverse communities by embracing the Black Holiness Church's belief in the power of the manifested presence of God to transform lives, the theological concept of imago Dei, and the values of social holiness paired with social justice. The Black Holiness Church experienced the presence of God in changing the mind, body, and soul. It views itself through the image of God, even in the face of circumstances that may suggest otherwise. Finally, they were able to engage in issues of justice without walking away from the intents of holiness. Therefore, it is essential for Holiness seminarians today to study and understand the Black Holiness Church to revive both the church and the Holiness Movement.

⁸⁹ Steve Flamisch, “I Am a Man: A Conversation with William Lucy,” Rutgers University, February 26, 2021, <https://www.rutgers.edu/news/i-am-man-conversation-william-lucy>.

⁹⁰ Jonathan Chism, “Being Martin Luther Kings with COGIC Saints in Memphis,” The Commercial Appeal, January 17, 2019. <https://www.commercialappeal.com/story/opinion/contributors/2019/01/17/being-martin-luther-kings-cogic-saints-memphis/2594382002/>.

⁹¹ Chism.

⁹² Chism.

⁹³ Chism.

Closing Reflection/Discussion

- What did you learn or see differently today that you had not seen before?
- How can you incorporate what you learned today in your ministry?
- If you would share what you experienced today with a friend, what would you say?

Week 14**Small Group - Black Holiness Church Community Outreach Experience**

- 1) The class starts with a group activity selected by the professor to create a collaborative learning environment.
- 2) The professor allows students to share and ask questions about their experiences.
- 3) The professor follows up with the following questions as time and learning experiences require:
 - a. How has what you have learned, experienced, and observed comported with your previous understanding of the topic?
 - b. Has anything changed about your understanding of the topic area because of this class?
 - c. What will you do with this information going forward?
 - d. What question do you have that you would like the class to reflect on or consider?

Week 15

Workshop Develop a Ministry Plan for the Future

Objectives: By the end of this workshop, students should be able to 1) understand at least one effective church model, 2) how the Black Holiness Church demonstrates an effective church model, and 3) understand how to develop at least one personal ministry plan in preparation for final class assessment.

Workshop Materials: Personal Ministry Plan template.

Workshop Outline

Biblical Foundation: Habakkuk 2:2-3 New International Version (NIV)

Then the LORD replied: “Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.

Habakkuk 2:2-3 English Standard Version 2016 (ESV)

And the LORD answered me: “Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it. For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay.

For discussion, refer to The Tony Evans Bible Commentary page 1187.⁹⁴

The Black Holiness Church:

An Effective Church Model

Holiness seminarians are ministering during a time of church closure and changing demographics. The existing methods are ineffective in addressing these issues, and it is time to look for new models of engagement and church effectiveness. This section will review the Black Holiness Church’s role in church planting during the early Holiness Movement in the United States. After examining how the Black Holiness Church contributed to the growth of the Holiness Movement, we will discuss an effective church ministry model. In addition, we will explore how the Black Holiness Church’s empowerment ethics, spiritual formation, and

⁹⁴ Tony Evans and C. S. B. Bibles CSB Bibles by Holman, *The Tony Evans Bible Commentary* (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2019), 1187.

worldwide missions demonstrate how the model can be applied today.

Church planting is vital today due to the increasing number of church closures. The Black Holiness Church was at the forefront of church planting during the early days of the Holiness Movement in America. This discussion will focus on Charles P. Jones, Charles H. Mason, and William J. Seymour because of the significance of their church-planting contributions to the Holiness Church in America. Leaders of the Holiness Movement in America often had relationships with one another, as seen in the connections among Jones, Mason, and Seymour. Seymour was invited to Los Angeles by Neely Terry, a Holiness woman who asked him to be the pastor of a Church of the Nazarene congregation.⁹⁵ Seymour was acquainted with Jones and Mason. Mason also eventually moved to Los Angeles, which played a key role in shaping his Pentecostal experience. These connections and mutual honoring of each other's gifts benefitted the Movement as the three traveled, ran revival meetings, and ministered together across the country. While the split between Jones and Mason was contentious, one cannot overlook the contributions made by all three men and their churches to the Holiness Movement.

Bishop Charles Price Jones founded the Church of Christ (Holiness) USA (COCHUSA). The official history of the church celebrates its services as places where "sins were confessed openly and privately forsaken, tears shed, sinful living given up, crutches thrown away, secret order pins thrown out the church windows and many souls were added to the church."⁹⁶ Jones was called to preach in 1885 in the Baptist Church. However, he disagreed with the teachings of the Baptist Church, believing that they brought little to no transformation in one's life. Historians of COCHUSA elaborate, "Bishop Jones was not satisfied with a religion that had none of the signs spoken in the Bible and began to seek the blessedness and usefulness of real Bible religion. He believed that God was calling people to holy living."⁹⁷ Jones himself challenged believers to "not be satisfied with the attitude that holiness is right, to get the experience, and to get saved."⁹⁸

Despite all his work, Jones did not hold his first Holiness Convention in Jackson, Mississippi, until 1897. During this convention, he urged attendees to live holy and sanctified lives, which led to the establishment of the Church of Christ (Holiness) USA.⁹⁹ COCHUSA describes its doctrine as "very close to the Church of the Nazarene."¹⁰⁰ They follow the Methodist Articles of Religion and stress the second blessing as part of the holiness credo. They

⁹⁵ Sanders, *Saints in Exile*, 28-29.

⁹⁶ Otho B. Cobbins, ed., *History of Church of Christ (Holiness) U.S.A.* (New York, NY: Vantage Press, 1966), 18.

⁹⁷ Church of Christ (Holiness), "Bishop Charles Price Jones, D.D., L.L. D.," accessed November 5, 2022, <https://cochusa.org/about-cochusa/bishop-charles-price-jones/>.

⁹⁸ Church of Christ (Holiness), "Bishop Charles Price Jones, D.D., L.L. D."

⁹⁹ Cobbins, 28.

¹⁰⁰ Church of Christ (Holiness), "Bishop Charles Price Jones, D.D., L.L. D."

profess “one God who is triune, being revealed as the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. We further believe that Jesus is the Son of God and manifested in the flesh, died and rose again for our salvation. We believe that the Holy Bible is the eternal inerrant word of God, and it contains all necessary truth pertaining to salvation and to Christian living. We believe and are fully persuaded that ‘without holiness no man shall see the Lord.’”¹⁰¹ Next, we will discuss one of Jones’s followers, partners, and later a detractor, Bishop Charles Harrison Mason.

Bishop Charles Harrison Mason founded the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) in 1907. Mason was ordained as a minister in the Baptist church. Jones mentored him. According to an article in the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, “They [Jones and Mason] preached and taught the Wesleyan view of entire sanctification as the second work of grace. They taught Perfectionist doctrines and believed those receiving the sanctification experience were holy and known as ‘saints.’ The people who followed their teachings did not smoke or drink, worked hard, and paid their bills. They praised the Lord by shouting and dancing.”¹⁰²

Mason was one of the many who went to the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles and came home believing that “speaking in tongues” was the unquestionable sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit. This tenet of Pentecostalism asserts that the act of speaking in tongues happens after “conversion and sanctification.”¹⁰³ Pentecostals believe that speaking in tongues is necessary for the Christian’s life and that this “third blessing” is the key to heaven after death.¹⁰⁴ Mason’s revelation caused him to separate from the Baptist Church. The experience also caused a split between Mason and Jones, which resulted in a very contentious ideological rift and legal fight over the name “Church of God in Christ.”¹⁰⁵ After returning from California and his experience at Azusa, Mason shared his new understanding of the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. However, Jones did not accept what Mason explained. Eventually, they parted ways, and Jones started what would eventually be called COCHUSA (which we have already discussed), while Mason founded the Church of God in Christ (COGIC). COGIC is considered the “first Black Pentecostal church” because it embraces speaking in tongues, as demonstrated by the New Testament church on the day of Pentecost.¹⁰⁶¹⁰⁷

In November of 1907, Mason, along with others, formed the COGIC. At its formation, it was one of the most integrated denominations in the country because it ordained hundreds of

¹⁰¹ Church of Christ (Holiness), “Bishop Charles Price Jones, D.D., L.L. D.”.

¹⁰² Mike Mayton, “Washing Away the Color Line,” *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, July 11, 2021.

¹⁰³ Giggie, 175.

¹⁰⁴ Giggie, 175.

¹⁰⁵ Mayton.

¹⁰⁶ Giggie, 175

¹⁰⁷ Giggie, 175.

white preachers.¹⁰⁸ However, in 1914, a group of white Pentecostal preachers (many of whom Mason had ordained) met, broke away from COGIC and formed The Assemblies of God.¹⁰⁹ COGIC is recognized as one of the longest-standing Pentecostal churches in the world and the largest Black church in America. The church continues to promote teachings of holiness, sanctification, and the presence of God through speaking in tongues, ensuring that the church remains very active in the United States. At one point, COGIC was reported to have 3.7 million members, exceeding the membership of its Protestant counterparts in the United States, including Presbyterian, Episcopal, and the United Church of Christ.¹¹⁰ COGIC is also known for its worldwide missions, which will be discussed later in this section as crucial to effective church outreach.¹¹¹ In the next section, we will discuss the contributions of William Seymour, who led the Azusa Street Revival.

There is considerable controversy surrounding the origins of Pentecostalism, but most experts agree that William Seymour and Charles Fox Parham are its founders. One reason for the controversy over the founding figures is the challenge in defining “Pentecostalism.” Gastón Espinosa, in his book *William J. Seymour and the Origins of Global Pentecostalism: A Biography and Documentary History*, attempts to explain the makeup of Pentecostalism as “slave religion, revivalism, black and white Holiness theology, the Keswick Movement, the reformed idea of power for Christian living dispensational premillennialism, and Divine Healing Movements.”¹¹² Seymour, born to enslaved Africans, was baptized in the Roman Catholic Church, but he soon started attending a Baptist Church with his brothers and sisters close to his home. He grew up in the Jim Crow Area of the South and could hardly read or write. He would later move to Houston, Texas, with relatives and join a Holiness church. While in Houston, Seymour became acquainted with Parham. Parham asked Seymour to join him in conducting services among Blacks. Parham hosted services that welcomed and taught Blacks, whites, Indians, and Mexicans. During his time with Parham, Seymour gained a greater knowledge and appreciation for the outpouring and baptism of the Holy Spirit as well as divine healing. Although Parham taught and embraced all races, he held strong views regarding racial segregation. Espinosa explains, “Parham taught racial separation, eighth-day creationism, white supremacy, and the idea that miscegenation caused Noah’s flood. Parham also promoted British Israelism, which posited that the Anglo-Saxon race were the lineal descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel and therefore God’s chosen race.”¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ Sanders, *Saints in Exile*, 19-21.

¹⁰⁹ Cobbins, 50.

¹¹⁰ Sanders, *Saints in Exile*, 62.

¹¹¹ Yong and Alexander, 221.

¹¹² Gastón Espinosa, *William J. Seymour and the Origins of Global Pentecostalism: A Biography and Documentary History*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 42.

¹¹³ Espinosa, *William J. Seymour*, 42, 51.

Seymour and Parham parted ways when Seymour was called to a Holiness Mission in Los Angeles. On February 22, 1906, Seymour arrived in Los Angeles to lead the Mission. By mid-March, whites began to join an all-black holiness band. The revival started drawing more and more people, and Seymour began to send missionaries around the world. Most historians agree that the birth of the Azusa Street Revival and Pentecostalism occurred on April 9, 1906, when Seymour laid hands on a white believer, prayed for him, and he began to speak in tongues. Word of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit began to spread throughout the world. Because of the growing crowds, he moved the revival to the former Stevens African American Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church at 312 Azusa Street. Back then, his work was called the Apostolic Faith Movement, characterized by speaking in tongues and integrated worship. The Apostolic Faith Movement, The Azusa Street Revival, and Seymour's leadership are credited with birthing many of the major Pentecostal denominations.¹¹⁴ Seymour's ability to attract diverse groups of people contributed to the spiritual formation of the Black Holiness Church, which will be discussed later in this section as being necessary for an effective church. Having examined three significant church planters in the Holiness Movement in America, let us now explore how they offer models for maintaining an effective church.

The Black Holiness Church provides strategies for developing effective churches in empowerment ethics, missions, and spiritual formation. Carl S. Dudley, in his book *Effective Small Churches in the Twenty-first Century*, asserts that the church must care for people, give people a sense of broad contribution, and create a sense of belonging.¹¹⁵ Dudley focuses on small congregations based on the assumption that 50% of the churches in the United States have memberships of less than 100 people.¹¹⁶ The three key components of caring, sharing, and belonging are essential for the unity and motivation of small church members to live out their faith. Dudley explains the three key components, namely, caring, sharing, and belonging, in detail.

Regarding sharing, Dudley explains that members demonstrate the care they have received by extending it to others. They strive to live in a world of harmony and give beyond their small church community, even engaging with individuals of different faiths.¹¹⁷ Regarding belonging, Dudley emphasizes that members view the church as a place that engenders fond memories and positive mental images. Current members cherish their memories of people and places as well as the relationships formed in the past, valuing their history while remaining open

¹¹⁴ Espinosa, *William J. Seymour*, 56-57.

¹¹⁵ Carl S. Dudley, *Effective Small Churches in the Twenty-First Century* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2010), 11.

¹¹⁶ Dudley, 11.

¹¹⁷ Dudley, 134.

to change.¹¹⁸ These three components are crucial for small churches to thrive and maintain a vibrant community.

The heritage of the Black Holiness Church aligns well with Dudley's three-part framework for an effective church. The Black Holiness Church demonstrates caring through the empowerment ethics we see in the history of COCHUSA. Dr. Cheryl J. Sanders explains what "empowerment ethics" means in her book *Empowerment Ethics for a Liberated People*. In the book, she explains that empowerment ethics are "the norms, values, and principles that have guided this people's journey from slavery to liberation and from victimization to moral agency."¹¹⁹ One of her seven approaches to empowerment is ministry. She defines ministry as "the professional work of clergy who serve the needs of the church by preaching, teaching, counseling, leading worship, and church administration."¹²⁰

Furthermore, Sanders expands on the meaning of ministry within the African American context: "The historical prominence of these churches as institutions of prophetic engagement and communal empowerment is largely the fruit of efforts undertaken by African American ministers and their parishioners to extend the realm of ministry 'beyond the four walls of the church' to include response to the social problems of the people."¹²¹ We offer this as the "empowerment ethic," which embodies a commitment to fostering an effective church within the community. This principle is unique to the Black Holiness Church. This approach goes beyond simply doing for others; it emphasizes genuinely caring for others and collectively sacrificing to establish institutions of the church that meet the needs of the people. Sanders summarizes this empowering ethic and ministry as focusing on care, sacrifice, and equality, stating:

The ethics of empowerment challenges religious leaders to embody creative approaches to personal growth and collective resourcefulness for meeting human need, and to resist the temptation to follow the path of "cheap justice" that demands repentance and restitution from the oppressing group on behalf of the poor without engaging in a self-critical assessment of the full cost of the equitable sharing of one's own power and resources.¹²²

COCHUSA demonstrated its commitment to empowerment ethics by addressing the challenges its members face. The organization collectively sacrificed and established programs that ensured safety for members of the Black Holiness Church while providing equal opportunity

¹¹⁸ Dudley, 85.

¹¹⁹ Cheryl J. Sanders, *Empowerment Ethics for a Liberated People: A Path to African American Social Transformation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), ix.

¹²⁰ Sanders, *Empowerment Ethics*, 115.

¹²¹ Sanders, *Empowerment Ethics*, 115.

¹²² Sanders, *Empowerment Ethics*, 124.

for upward mobility through education. In 1908, COCHUSA incorporated Christ's Missionary and Industrial College in Jackson, Mississippi.¹²³ Before becoming a college, it was a grade school known as "Christ Holiness School."¹²⁴ The school was started at the prompting of Sister Alice Brown, who believed "the Lord wanted among us a school where the students could be taught the Bible as well as the regular school textbooks."¹²⁵ Also, the severe beating of one of the Elders' daughters at the public school because she "testified to a holy life" caused the church to start an institution of its own.¹²⁶ The church set up a "Christian Education Fund," established a board, and purchased 142 acres of land for the school. Over its lifetime, the institution served various educational purposes, including a daycare, a preschool/kindergarten, an elementary school, a high school, and a Bible college.¹²⁷ Unfortunately, the school was also terrorized by arsonists, with at least four fires on campus set by angry white mobs at various points in its history.¹²⁸ We see COCHUSA caring for its members by setting up a school where the children could receive a standard education and learn about holiness in a safe environment. This initiative exemplifies the caring approach described by Dudley, which is crucial for an effective church, as well as Sanders's concept of empowerment ethics. Through acts of care, the church actively engages in the safety and education of its members. We also see the principles of empowerment ethics reflected in COCHUSA's decision to fund the school, set up advisory boards with its members, and integrate the school into the church's framework.¹²⁹

Dudley suggests that an effective church cares for its members and shares with others. This idea of sharing with others is expressed in what churches traditionally refer to as "missions." In his book, *Red Brown Yellow Black White Who's More Precious in God's Sight?* Leroy Barber defines "missions" and challenges those choosing to engage in mission work. According to Barber, "The Latin term *Missio Dei* means 'mission of God' or 'the sending of God' in Christian theology. Missions are part of the very nature of God. The true missionary idea comes only from God."¹³⁰ Barber challenges Christians to move beyond church walls and gain a deeper understanding of the lives of others. He states, "Missionaries and mission supporters who

¹²³ Castilla, 26.

¹²⁴ Castilla, 28.

¹²⁵ Castilla, 27.

¹²⁶ Castilla, 27-28.

¹²⁷ Castilla, 33.

¹²⁸ Castilla, 26-35.

¹²⁹ Castilla, 26-35.

¹³⁰ Leroy Barber and Velma Maia Thomas, *Red, Brown, Yellow, Black, White: Who's More Precious in God's Sight? -- A Call for Diversity in Christian Missions and Ministry* (New York: Jericho Books, 2014), 3.

sit in church every Sunday, reducing missions to evangelism, lessen the depth of who God is and who God can be in somebody's life. These often-well-meaning Christians say they know God, but they don't know the devastation of lives — children in foster care, parents who sell their children to the sex trade, families who go hungry while seeing others dine lavishly.”¹³¹ Members of an effective church share beyond the church and go wherever God leads. We see an example of this in the foreign ministry work of the Church of God in Christ (COGIC), where those oppressed in the United States chose to share their blessings overseas.

Yong and Alexander documented how the Black Holiness Church expanded beyond evangelism and traveled to foreign lands to share and care for others during the early 20th century. They observe, “Ironically, black people who were brutally taken away from their ancestral homes have played enormous roles in the evangelization of their African homeland.”¹³² Among these efforts were courageous women from COGIC who not only went to serve in their homeland but also shifted the paradigm of women's roles in mission work by actively engaging in public spaces with the African people.¹³³ In 1925, under COGIC's newly created Home and Foreign Mission Board, missionary women became more organized and expanded their work to Trinidad, Costa Rica, and Turks and Caicos Islands.¹³⁴ COGIC's history of foreign missions is an example of a church sharing beyond its four walls. Despite experiencing Jim Crow discrimination, the care and compassion felt within the church motivated these congregants to share the goodness of God with people abroad, driven by the belief that God would provide for them through the church and use them to care for those they encountered during their missions.

Dudley identifies "belonging" as a crucial final component of an effective church, exemplified by the Azusa Street Revival led by William Seymour. Dudley submits that a sense of belonging significantly enhances the effectiveness of a church. Reviewing William Seymour's work during the Azusa Street Revival offers a model for belonging birthed from the Black Holiness Church. The Black Holiness Church gave previously enslaved Africans a place of belonging. Members of the Black Holiness Church even refer to themselves as “saints,” signifying a distinct identity separate from other congregations in their faith, activities, and results.¹³⁵ Seymour's followers experienced a strong sense of belonging through their understanding of their place in the history of the Pentecostal movement, their support for women in formal and informal church leadership roles, and their commitment to racial reconciliation.

Seymour and his followers viewed themselves as part of the broader Holiness Revival, often revisiting the accounts of “outpouring” experiences from revivals around the world. They

¹³¹ Barber and Thomas, 8.

¹³² Yong and Alexander, 209.

¹³³ Yong and Alexander, 221.

¹³⁴ Yong and Alexander, 221.

¹³⁵ *Saints in Exile*, 136.

would share these written accounts as if they were unfolding at Azusa Street itself. Espinosa recounts, “They even contributed to the multiple outpouring and centers by re-reading these previous revivals through a presentist lens in light of their post-Azusa Pentecostal experiences.”¹³⁶ This fostered a sense of belonging to one another and an atmosphere of connection to God’s work in the world.¹³⁷

The Azusa Street Revival followers viewed the women among them as vessels of God, capable of carrying out his work. This perspective was in stark contrast to many churches at the time, which did not permit women to hold formal leadership roles. Seymour actively supported women in ministry, allowing them to speak during services, take on formal positions within the organization, and represent the Movement around the world.¹³⁸ This distinguishing feature of women leading in a religious setting fostered a sense of community among Seymour’s followers. His preaching and interpretation of the Holiness teachings attracted new believers, particularly recent immigrants, by providing a space where racial tensions in America were minimized through teachings emphasizing unity. Yong and Alexander aptly summarize Seymour’s vision:

Pentecostalism was able to soften the hardest edges of American nationalism, rationalism, and exceptionalism by not only affirming supernaturalism but also by preaching a universal message of love, salvation, forgiveness, healing, equality, and spiritual unity across racial, tribal, and nationality lines.¹³⁹

This vision transformed the Azusa Street Revival into a place of reconciliation: a place where people could go to not only experience the manifested presence of God but also to be in harmony with one another.

Personal Development Ministry Plan

John Maxwell’s “5 Areas of Personal Growth That Lead to a Life of Significance”¹⁴⁰

Communication, Leadership, Equipping, Attitude, and Relationships (C.L.E.A.R.)

¹³⁶ Espinosa, *William J. Seymour*, 72.

¹³⁷ Espinosa, *William J. Seymour*, 72.

¹³⁸ Espinosa, *William J. Seymour*, 73.

¹³⁹ Espinosa, *William J. Seymour*, 73.

¹⁴⁰ Maxwell Leadership, “Your Personal Growth Plan: Maxwell Leadership,” August 30, 2022, <https://www.maxwellleadership.com/blog/growth-plan-for-significance/>.

COMMUNICATION

The first lane—communication—is all about learning to communicate positively and effectively, not only with others but also with yourself. If you can enhance your communication skills, you'll experience greater success in your life—ranging from personal relationships to how you lead others, as well as how you pursue your vision. Effective communication can make a remarkable difference in everyday life.

LEADERSHIP

When we think about leadership, we often consider leading others. However, before we can lead others, we must first learn to lead ourselves. Mark Cole, CEO of Maxwell Leadership, articulates this perspective: “Leadership is about bringing out the best in others and making them a champion. But to do that, you have to bring out the best in yourself so you can become a catalyst for bringing out the best in others.”

EQUIPPING

The highest calling of leadership isn't just about becoming the best leader you can be. Rather, it's achieving significance by helping others grow their own leadership potential. In the area of Equipping, leadership expert Chris Hodges discusses how leaders multiply their influence by equipping themselves and others with the right tools and the right people.

ATTITUDE

The world's greatest achievements have been realized by individuals who were only slightly better than their peers—and often, that difference stemmed from their attitude. Your attitude is a decisive factor in whether you succeed or fail, and it consistently shapes your ability to influence others.

RELATIONSHIPS

The fifth and final lane of the Maxwell Leadership Growth Plan takes a deep dive into the realm of relationships and the impact they have on our personal growth and development.

Week 16

Lecture/Discussion - Summary of Semester the Black Holiness Church: Its Past, Present, and Future

- The class starts with an exercise to create a collective learning environment.
- This lecture and discussion should be tailored to address students' questions about the Black Holiness Church and the Church in general. It should incorporate material covered in the course, as well as current events that encourage students to think about the future of their ministries.

Week 17

Final Assessment Ministry Plan

- Develop a 4–6-page Ministry Plan that reflects the insights gained from the Black Holiness Church experience this semester. Utilize the lectures, readings, experiences, and discussions from the course to articulate your understanding of the Black Holiness Church and consider how this knowledge will influence your ministry moving forward. Build upon the paper you wrote earlier in the semester. Additionally, incorporate the tools discussed in the Week 15 workshop related to visioning, strategic planning, and effective ministry models.