

Outreach to Embracing:

A Johannine Model for Community Engagement

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To my beloved CJ,
for a lifetime of embracing

To Gezelle,
my greatest source of inspiration

To Chris,
my greatest source of admiration

This is my legacy.

Abstract

Outreach ministries often perpetuate systems of apartheid. Embracing is an alternative model inviting vulnerability and mutual sharing. John's gospel is concerned for the faith of the one reaching out. John 4 will yield the four congruent steps from outreach to embracing. This project employs a mixed methodology drawn from Richard Osmer's 4-step Consensus Model for Practical Theology and Robert O. Brinkerhoff's Success Case research method. The success case method brings stories from three actual congregations who exercise embracing practices. The stories are accompanied by song lyrics that harken from the receiving end of the apartheid.

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Introduction

Outreach programs have been established by evangelical Christian churches in America to respond to the needs of impoverished communities, to evangelize non-professing citizens, and to attend to systems of injustice.¹ These programs have successfully led to the physical growth of the Christian church in America. The church can celebrate the countless children fed, numerous communities resourced, and all the followers of Christ who have actively complied with the teachings of Jesus in the Bible because of its efforts. Christian outreach programs in America have done a great deal to help less fortunate people, but they have also done a fair amount of harm to those they endeavor to aid.

This project claims that the Christian church in America perpetuates a system of apartheid that maintains a separate development between the helping agent and the recipient in its outreach programs. This apartheid is rooted in a series of deeply held lies about the recipients of services particularly poor people, black women, and people outside the church. This project offers the church a biblical model of community engagement that interrogates the soul of outreach practitioners and allows recipients of the church's outreach programs to exercise dominion, according to God's design. It employs a mixed methodology approach drawn from Richard Osmer's four-step Consensus Model for Practical Theology, which includes the "sagely wisdom" of the

¹ Evangelicalism has been co-opted and convoluted in ways that demand clarity concerning the full intention of its name for this project. This project borrows from David Bebbington's quadrilateral understanding of evangelicalism to include all churches, denominations and organizations who hold to these four tenants: a high regard for scripture, a focus on Jesus's crucifixion and its salvation, a commitment to conversion and the belief that faith influences one's public life. David William Bebbington, *Evangelicalism In Modern Britain* (London: Routledge, 1988).

interpretive task, the “prophetic discernment” of the normative task, the “priestly listening” of the descriptive/empirical task, and finally the “servant leadership” of the pragmatic task, which functions as the larger moves in the project.² Robert O.

Brinkerhoff’s Success Case research method offers a basic structure for research in the descriptive/empirical task that provides core research questions, clarity around research subjects, methods for data collection, and ethical considerations.³

The first chapter, the interpretive task, will engage the sagely wisdom around outreach practices as it has been published in the arts and sciences to bring forth the best theories and conclusions including Lisa Sharon Harper, who provides a vision for what it means that all people bear the image of God and therefore the right to exercise dominion is the author of *The Very Good Gospel*. Her work helps to expose how lies embed themselves in the church and manifest in an apartheid that disrupts God’s true intention for shalom in the world.⁴ Her understanding of dominion as the God-given mandate to “equalize power” is critical to this project’s criticism of outreach practices in the evangelical church in America.

bell hooks, David Kinnaman, and Aly Hawkins will illuminate three particular targets of outreach: poor people, black women, and people outside the church, are denied the ability to exercise dominion, by the very folks who reach out to them. bell hooks will provide a historical survey of movements involving socially active middle class white women and the ways in which their socio-political movements have explicitly and

² Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), Kindle.

³ Robert O. Brinkerhoff, *The Success Case Method: Find Out Quickly What's Working and What's Not* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler, 2003).

⁴ Lisa Sharon Harper, *The Very Good Gospel: How Everything Wrong Can Be Made Right* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook, 2016).

implicitly denied black women access to the title and liberty of being called a woman.⁵ Kinnaman and Hawkins will address the lies that affix faceless labels like “the lost,” “the un-churched,” and “the unsaved,” and deny dignity and full humanity to people outside the church. These authors erase apartheid-producing labels and replace them with “nomads,” “prodigals,” and “exiles”—names that reflect humanity embodying the image of God.⁶ The interpretive task invites the voice of the populace to speak through spoken word, music, and poetry to support the claim that outreach in the evangelical Christian church often perpetuates apartheid-wielding lies that hinder targets from exercising dominion.

The second chapter, the normative task, makes the case for more favorable outcomes based on theological themes and concepts. It borrows from the work of Nobel Peace Prize-winning pastor and theologian Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who called for the church in South Africa to exchange the lies of apartheid for the following three reconciling truths:

- All people are created by God to determine their own ends.
- Persons of all skin tones are created to be God’s “viceroys” or representers on earth, from which they gain their worth.
- Reconciliation of all people to God and to one another is the central act of the Christ.

Johannine scholar Raymond Brown will help illumine Jesus as the ultimate embracing figure, who invites the church to go deeper in her faith in ways that allow a

⁵ bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1981), 125.

⁶ David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church—and Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 61.

Samaritan woman in chapter 4, a sick man at an enchanted pool in chapter 5, and a blind man in chapter 9 to exercise dominion as image bearers of God. Here the four-step process of motivation, initiation, escalation, and invitation leads the way from apartheid-perpetuating outreach practices to introduce a model called embracing.

The third chapter is the descriptive/empirical task or the priestly listening that takes place in particular contexts in order to glean stories and gain understanding about feelings, motivations, and outcomes in those contexts. This task is coupled with Brinkerhoff's Success Case methodology, which contributes to the smaller moves in the project, bringing stories from three actual congregations who successfully execute some or all of the embracing steps in community engagement. These three success case demonstrate some portions of the embracing model and yet are distinct in these ways:

- The *Rock Church* is church-based ministry committed to practice of embracing as a whole.
- *Emmaus Ministries* is a neighborhood-based parachurch organization committed to invite churches to engage in embracing ministries with them and their neighbors.
- *Holy Trinity Metropolitan Church* is a mega church with an embracing presence in a different community than the one they worship in.

Brinkerhoff's method invites four key questions to be addressed to each successful ministry to help extrapolate the ways in which they, in big or small ways, live into this model called embracing. The four key questions are these:

- What is happening?

- What is being achieved?
- What is the value?
- How can it be improved?⁷

The fourth and final chapter, the pragmatic task, will fashion the research into a useful workbook to help practitioners understand the problems with outreach and redirecting apartheid-perpetuating practices toward a nuanced model for embracing in community engagement. St. Augustine in his commentary on John proclaims that Jesus “enters into her [the Samaritan woman’s] heart by degrees.”⁸ This particular observation frames the four-step movement of the embracing process in this project. The pragmatic task consists of five chapters based on the four embracing moves and a conclusion. Each chapter invites the practitioner to reflect deeply on the words and expressions from pop culture, to pray, to read the Johannine text, and to explore some introspective questions.

Each chapter of the workbook does two things, they integrate Osmer’s four-step model for practical theology—the interpretive task, the normative task, the descriptive/empirical task, and the pragmatic task and includes stories gleaned from success-case interviews. This handbook will be most useful for practitioners who are either already engaged in some sort of outreach ministry or are poised to begin engagement. To be clear, this handbook is less of a reference but more of an ethical guide to cultivating a Christ-like embracing posture for Christian churches and organizations who provide outreach services.

Osmer’s four tasks help explain the problem of outreach practitioners

⁷ Brinkerhoff, 60.

⁸ Augustine et al., *St. Augustine: Homilies on the Gospel of John; Homilies on the First Epistle of John; Soliloquies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 3217, Kindle.

perpetuating apartheid in the Christian church and provides a theological path forward. With Archbishop Desmond Tutu and John's gospel as guide, and the three embracing ministries as successful witnesses, "The Embracing Workbook" gives the church an important tool for moving from apartheid-perpetuating outreach to embracing.

The passion for this topic comes first from my love of John's gospel. In it God becomes flesh and dwells with all sorts of folks, indeed all of us. In this gospel there is no us and them, just us. It has pained me to look around the church and Christian outreach agencies in my varying contexts and see people being fed at arms-length, housed in humble quarters, treated like they have no worth because of their socio-economic location. In short, outreach seemed one sided, it favored the motive and effort of the one reaching out and disparaged the recipient. Embracing offers a more two sided reciprocal posture, whereby each participant must be vulnerable, expecting and engaged. I believe the church who reaches out must do the introspective work necessary to honor all God's people with an invitation to embrace.

Chapter 1: The Interpretive Task

The interpretive task will engage what Richard Osmer calls “the sagely wisdom” of the academy, the church, and pop culture to reinforce this project’s thesis claim that outreach practices in the evangelical Christian church in America often perpetuate systems of apartheid.¹

Peel back the layers of the evangelical Christian church in America and it will not be difficult to see a deep stain marked by apartheid. Apartheid, a heinous separate-and-unequal term born inside the painful, demoralizing history of South Africa, has made a second home in the American evangelical church. Church outreach practices and programs maintain this apartheid, or “separate development,” with lies about fellow image bearers of God at the center.

This chapter provides a historical narrative of the making and maintaining of apartheid in the American church and provides a framework to understand the claim of apartheid in the twentieth century. The lies of apartheid are exposed by reference to the work of Lisa Sharon Harper, who unearths the source and result of the lies that shape the way the church engages across differences. Finally, exposing apartheid in the manifestation of the lies told about poor people, black women, and people who do not attend church. Throughout the interpretive task, the claim of apartheid in Christian evangelicalism is confirmed with lyrics from varying genres of pop music that testify of the church’s apartheid-perpetuating practices.

Objectification

Christian outreach programs satisfy the appetite of practitioners whose ultimate

¹ Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), Kindle.

goal is to satisfy a faith that demands service, care for “the poor,” and evangelization of “the lost”—often without consideration for these same people. While these motivations themselves might be noble, they tend to lean toward a one-sided posture that favors the ends and means of the server as opposed to those of the one being served. These voices are not often captured in church newsletters or Christian magazines but can be found between the lyrics of pop music, the place where “tossed out lemons” can have their say.

Nineteenth-century philosopher Immanuel Kant grew up a poor child in Prussia, where he formulated the moral theory that introduced objectification to the subject of ethics. Feminists argued for Kant’s theory from sexual ethics in particular, where he made claims that seems useful and applicable to the thesis of this project. In the context of sexual love, Kant claims,

*“Sexual love makes of the loved person an object of appetite;
as soon as that appetite has been stilled,
the person is cast aside as one casts away a lemon
which has been sucked dry; as soon as a person becomes
an object of appetite for another, all motives of moral
relationship cease to function, because as an object of appetite
for another, a person becomes a thing and can be treated and used as such by every
one.”²*

Kant’s theory of objectification reflects the value of the Hebrew word *radah* and its permission for all humans to set and pursue their own ends. One interpreter of Kant maintains that the capacity to determine one’s own end is not just a Christian right but the very thing that “distinguishes them [humans] from animals and inanimate objects.”³

However, the Christian church in America has denied certain human beings the right to

² Immanuel Kant and Louis Infield, *Lectures on Ethics* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 163.

³ Evangelia Papadaki, "Feminist Perspectives on Objectification," Stanford University, March 10, 2010, section goes here, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-objectification/>.

determine their own end in its outreach practices.

The History of Outreach in the United States

The twentieth century metropolis was once occupied by what Gibson Winter calls “native-born white Protestants” who were able during reconstruction to “upgrade” from manual farm labor to non-manual work in other parts of the metropolis.⁴ As business and industry began to explode, poorer populations of people began to flood the innermost parts of the city, causing those who had moved outward to migrate further away from the center. This was the beginning of the social divide between “the haves and the have-nots,” as it were. The only people left in the center city were blue-collar white people who could finally afford to live there. The exodus of those would be middle-class white people had a huge impact on city churches that were depleted of the resources of highly skilled laity and the economic ability to maintain buildings and budgets.

Each decade seemed to usher in a new breed of immigrants to the metropolis. First, blue-collar workers, then the once-despised Irish Catholic people, followed by non-English-speaking immigrants; finally, there was “the Negro invasion.”⁵ Each new group’s need provided the suburbs with a mission, and the central part of the city with a nuanced ecclesiological expression. Neighborhoods were redlined and the suburbanites decided who could live in their neighborhood and, more importantly, who could not. Even after the 1948 Supreme Court decision against restrictive covenants (*Shelley v. Kraemer*), suburban communities continued to mark invisible lines separating the served from the serving, the employee from the employed, and the middle-class white Protestant church

⁴ Gibson Winter, *The Suburban Captivity of the Churches* (New York:, 1961), 50.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 51.

from everyone else. This left one conclusion: “the long tradition of social apartheid had eventuated a schism of the first magnitude in metropolitan Protestantism.”⁶ In this way the mainline American churches resembled their apartheid-perpetuating kin in South Africa.

As the metropolis became more populated, the suburbs flourished with their practiced uniformity and active affability. The Protestant church in the suburbs had come so far from the Petrine and Pauline ideology that championed the church as the household of God and the priesthood of all believers. Winter faults American Puritanism, which in his opinion turned the church into a classroom and turned preaching into instruction, thereby separating the teacher from the taught, which called for conformity and faith that demands hard work. These common ideals set suburban churches on the road to economic integration such that people began to relate to each other primarily on the basis of economic similarity.

The Negro invasion of the metropolis caused a problem for blue-collar whites who endeavored to move as close to the suburbs as their budget would allow, though often stretching them financially. Even though they were not economically middle class, they were provided access to middle-class association on the basis of being white, Protestant, English speaking, and most importantly not negro.

The problem with the Negro was his four hundred years as a slave, many to white Protestant Christians who now had built an island of safety in the suburbs, which would only be jeopardized by racial inclusiveness. Furthermore, the Negro worshipped differently, held differing values, and had a great deal to overcome to cast off the mental

⁶ Ibid., 52.

bonds chattel slavery had placed on his mind and community.

This suburban church's separation from the city gave birth to the emergence of what Winter calls "the introverted church."⁷ The introverted church was comprised of other ethnic congregations with their own languages and expressions including the black church and its rising middle class and the sects who were mostly poor believing Christians whose only hope was in the hereafter. Having been crowded into the urban centers, each of these groups turned to its own interests. In the case of the black church, "the black bourgeoisie" would manage to obtain middle-class standing by servicing their own communities as funeral directors, barbers, and so forth.⁸ This emerging group was economically equipped to live in the suburbs but was never given the middle-class access that white blue-collar workers with less economic standing were offered in the suburbs. The suburban church continued its vehement resistance to integration, although the world around it had begun to change rapidly.

The 1950s gave birth to the civil rights movement, which highlighted the division between whites and blacks, including black clergy and white clergy as depicted in Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*, and even blue-collar and white-collar sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee, where apartheid claimed King's life with an assassin's bullet.⁹ Unfortunately, the gap of segregation grows wider as the Protestant church continues to draw indelible distinctions between peoples, classes, political ideals, races, and communities. The history of apartheid in American cities and

⁷ Ibid., 104.

⁸ Ibid., 115.

⁹ Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., *A Letter from a Birmingham Jail* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994).

subsequently in her churches is maintained by deeply held lies.

The Problem with Outreach

In the spring of 2013, I requested back issues of Outreach magazine.¹⁰ They contributed twenty complimentary copies of its esteemed magazine with at least two issues from each year between 2009 and 2012. If this popular magazine were the only picture of outreach ministries in America, one would conclude that white males are the protagonists in the outreach movement and that people of color and poor people are the target. Apartheid is evident, simply by a brief view of the covers. Only three people of color were interviewed for the respected “Outreach Interview” from 2009 to 2012. The same sample showed that white, male leaders of large churches were favored for their theology, growth, evangelism, and community engagement. Black pastors like the late Rev. Eddie Long, the then pastor of New Birth church in Atlanta, Georgia, made an occasional appearance, but only for ministry done in his own cultural and ethnic context.

In the March/April 2010 issue, Dr. Brenda Salter McNeil, an African American pastor, became the first and last woman of any ethnicity on the cover in this collection of magazines.¹¹ These issues of *Outreach* magazine confirm the painful truth of segregation in the American evangelical church, reinforced by programs and practices that maintain the separation and perpetuate a system of apartheid that delineates patterns of “us” and “them,” helper and helped, insider and outsider.

¹⁰ “*Outreach* magazine is the gathering place of ideas, insights and stories for Christian churches focused on reaching out to their community—locally and globally—with the love of Christ. Our primary readers are pastors and church leaders, as well as laity who are passionate about outreach.” From *Outreach* magazine’s website, <http://www.outreachmagazine.com/magazine/5652-about-us-outreach-magazine.html>

¹¹ James P. Long, “Where’s the Other Half of the Gospel?,” *Outreach Magazine*, March 10, 2010.

Christian rapper Le Crae, a self-proclaimed “outsider” to the church, offers a wide-eyed view into his reality on the outside of the church’s system of separation:

I won’t stay here another night
If I gotta sacrifice
Who I am on the inside
I’d rather be an outsider
And you can stay if you like
I’ll see you on the other side
I wanna live the free life¹²

Pop artists like LeCrae are critical of the church’s tendency to draw lines between insider and outsiders based on exclusionary standards that run contrary to the teaching of the Bible. that attenders strive to conform to the expectations and standards of the institution. The song “outsiders” is new but the baseline is the same; even outsiders notice how apartheid is deeply embedded in the evangelical church in America.

Willie Jennings traces the church’s system of apartheid all the way back to colonization, which “drove an abiding wedge between the land and peoples,” rendering a first-order apartheid that made “creation into private property.”¹³ He goes on to cite colonizers’ resistance to patterns of discipleship reflective of Pentecost’s all-encompassing mutuality in exchange for patterns that demanded “spatial commodification and social segregation.”¹⁴ The seeds of apartheid would bury themselves in the soil of the evangelical church in America and bear fruit in the latter portion of the nineteenth century and well into the middle of the twentieth, when the metropolis underwent social and economic shifts.

¹² LeCrae et al., writers, *Outsider*, LaCrae, Reach Records, 2014, accessed August 7, 2014, Spotify.

¹³ Willie James Jennings. *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* (Yale University Press), 6443, Kindle

¹⁴ *ibid.*

The Lies

Today, lines of division, though often invisible, appear in neighborhoods and communities where outreach programs hold their recipients of goods and services at bay. Lisa Sharon Harper in *The Very Good Gospel* claims the actual lies told about outreach recipients are one of the key protagonists in the church's apartheid today.¹⁵ There are lies that allow image bearers of God to deny others the most significant aspect of what it means to be human—namely, the right to exercise dominion according to God's command in Genesis 2. This section will elaborate how lies embedded in the outreach ministries of the church perpetuate systems of apartheid made manifest in the treatment of poor people, black women, and people who do not attend church.

Since the serpent convinced the first humans to partake of the forbidden tree in Genesis 2, humanity has been in a constant battle with the lies of the enemy. It all began with a lie about God: when the serpent assured Adam and Eve that they would not surely die if they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.¹⁶ This lie attempted to pick away at humanity's trust in God by creating an apartheid between themselves and God—an apartheid called *sin*. Sin, once embedded in the soul of an individual, organization or system begins to produce *shame* in that place.¹⁷ According to Harper, the core lie of *shame* is "I am not enough," communicated to the human soul at work, in family systems, through media, and in numerous other ways.¹⁸ Shame causes withdrawal from

¹⁵ Lisa Sharon Harper, *The Very Good Gospel: How Everything Wrong Can Be Made Right* (Crown Publishing Group), 1144, Kindle.

¹⁶ Genesis 3:1-4.

¹⁷ Harper, *Very Good Gospel*, 1130.

¹⁸ Harper uses the example of a table to explain implicit bias. When one sees it he does not register four legs, a top, and then a table. The mind takes in the whole and deduces based on data it must be a table. This

community and ultimately lashing out against those who are around. This lashing out denies recipients their right as image bearers of God to execute the one, simple, God-given act endowed upon every human being at creation: the right to exercise dominion.

The Hebrew word for dominion is *radah*, which Harper defines as the right to exercise agency to steward God's creation.¹⁹ It makes all people "equally powerful and equally vulnerable," leaving no justification for separate systems in society, church, or life. However, she sees the core lie of Western civilization in particular to be that "God reserved the power of dominion, for some, not all."²⁰ These lies led to abuse that was powered by explicit bias against natives who were annihilated, enslaving Africans, and denying citizens full rights under the law.

Far deeper in the fabric of Western culture is the existence of implicit bias. Harper defines implicit bias as "what the mind does when it makes quick associations in order to shorten its thought process. Implicit bias is a non-intentional source that substantiates lies about others to legitimize denying them the right to exercise dominion. Lies about God, lies about ourselves, and lies about others explicitly and implicitly provide the recipe for apartheid-perpetuating practices in the church's outreach programs relative to poor people, black women, and people who do not attend church.

Lies about Poor People

*There is something about poverty that smells like death.
Dead dreams dropping off the heart like leaves*

is useful when deducing a table but the Implicit bias test done with people showed 75% of people tested showed racial bias toward European-ness and away from African-ness. European or closest to white was associated with goodness, leadership, and other positive qualities while African or closest to black was associated with criminality, dishonesty, and other negative qualities.

¹⁹ Ibid., 580.

²⁰ Ibid., 2339.

*in a dry season and rotting around the feet;
impulses smothered too long in the fetid air of underground caves.
The soul lives in sickly air. People can be slave ships in shoes.²¹*

Poor people are the primary recipients of the church's outreach practices and bear the weight of the effects of the lies the church has come to believe about poor people. The lies of apartheid turn poor people into pawns that the church uses to appease a god who demands that they help the poor without necessarily acknowledging the complexity and dimensions that contribute to the state of poverty. There are in fact many kinds of poor people in society. Some are in the local homeless shelter after losing their homes for one reason or another. Some live on the streets in metropolitan cities. Still others are senior citizens who live in their own homes but whose retirement benefits and social security are not enough to sustain them in their latter years. There are working poor people with low-paying jobs who can barely afford to keep food on the table. Poor people are high-school dropouts and college professors; they live in slums in urban centers and in fancy suburbs on the sofas of relatives.

The truth is, poor people are not just one particular kind of person captured by the use of one simple label: "the poor." Poor people are human beings, image bearers of God, worthy of more than being used by others to gain and maintain God's approval.

The deeper implication of the lies about poor people is that Christian outreach practices in America prevent them from flourishing as image bearers of God. In fact, "no one is too low"—or in this case, too poor—to use her voice to guide, direct, and make choices that impact the world.²²

²¹ Zora Neale Hurston, *Dust Tracks on a Road* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996), 87.

²² Harper, *Very Good Gospel*, 580-581.

The separate development between poor people and outreach practitioners often begins with the lie that poor people are useful to appease a god who demands that its subjects care for the poor in order to secure a place in heaven.²³ This deeply held belief is exacerbated in part by implicit and explicit biases that categorize poor people as a single group of people who on the basis of their economic location are unable and unfit to enact their God-given right to exercise dominion, and agency.

Facing Bias

Bias often becomes explicit in pastoral engagement like when the pastor of the Rock Church consulted with an upper middle-aged woman from an affluent church. Her church partnered with a neighborhood school to help tutor students labeled “at-risk.” She had been mentoring a certain high school senior since he was in kindergarten, although the program officially ended at fifth grade. Over the years she consistently tutored, transported, and supported him in every aspect. He had moved around a great deal and was faced with many of the challenges that children living in poverty often have to deal with, but she was with him through it all. At the time of the consult, he had taken a difficult turn in his life, and the woman was looking to the pastor for direction.

She admitted to the pastor that her commitment to this child had been her only act of service to humanity. The lie surfaced quickly when she admitted, “If there is a ‘good and faithful servant’ in heaven for me, it’s because of what I’m doing for [him].” The stakes in this relationship were extremely high for this woman. Outreach programs like

²³ In Matthew 25 Jesus rendered a rebuke at the end of time to those who refused to provide for the sick, needy and imprisoned. “Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels,” “whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.” These are the texts that enforce the practice of objectifying poor people to appease God.

the tutoring program she was involved with invite Christians to fulfill their God-given mandate to help poor people at the risk of using them to gain God's approval.

Another lie about poor people is that they are lazy people who prey upon the kindness of well-intending citizens. Hip-hop artist Kendrick Lamar offers a lyrical demonstration of this claim in "How Much a Dollar Cost," about a panhandler outside of a gas station who encounters a self-righteous man who allows the lies about poor people to direct his actions and emotions.

So I'mma tell you like I told the last bum
Crumbs and pennies, I need all of mines
And I recognize this type of panhandlin' all the time
I got better judgement, I know when nigga's hustlin'²⁴

The lyrics reveal the lie that poor people are likely drug abusers, lazy and "hustlin," and therefore worthy of the apartheid that sidelines their voice, body, and volition. The panhandler who asks for "a single dollar, nothing less nothing more," reveals himself at the end of the song:

He looked at me and said, "Know the truth, it'll set you free
You're lookin' at the Messiah, the son of Jehovah, the higher power
The choir that spoke the word, the Holy Spirit
The nerve of Nazareth, and I'll tell you just how much a dollar cost
The price of having a spot in Heaven, embrace your loss, I am God"

This self-righteous man's implicit bias against poor people caused him to make assumptions about the panhandling man's intentions, motives, and identity. These assumptions lead the self-righteous man to become angry, to the extent that he even contemplated "if [he] had a bat [he] would aim it at his neck," just because the man asked him for a dollar. This self-righteous man failed to see the panhandling man as an image bearer of God with the right to stand on the street corner and exercise dominion,

²⁴ Kendrick Lamar, writer, *How Much a Dollar Cost*, Aftermath/Interscope Records, 2015, MP3.

according to God’s design. The song’s final verse affirms Lisa Sharon Harper’s claim that to deny poor people the right to exercise dominion, is to “diminish the image of God on earth.”²⁵

Lies about Black Women

The lies about black women in outreach practices manifest in the actions of middle-class white women who have historically and categorically distanced themselves from other women by hijacking the title “woman” to actually mean “white woman”—to the exclusion of all others, especially black woman. The implications for outreach practices in the Christian church in America are gravely affected by this apartheid and sustained by a lie that denies black womanhood. These roots run deep in the historical development of white women as Christian agents for change. Recent studies by the National Association for Christian Social Workers and the National Association for Social Workers show that middle-class white women are the leading population operating in direct care with helping professions in both secular and Christian arenas. Corresponding data concerning those who utilize these services reveal predominantly non-white and/or obviously poor women as the primary recipients of outreach services.²⁶

Feminist and scholar bell hooks provides a helpful historical survey of perpetual apartheid created and maintained by middle-class white women vis-a-vis black women in

²⁵ Harper, *Very Good Gospel*, 649.

²⁶ Gaynor Yancey and Diana Garland, “Christian Congregations as Contexts for Social Work,” *Social Work and Christianity* 41, no. 4 (2014): 283, accessed November 24, 2014, <http://www.nacsw.org/RC/49993339.pdf>; National Association of Social Workers, “What Is NASW’s Practice Research Network?” *Practice Research Network: Informing Research and Policy Through Social Work Practice* 2.2 (2003):1, accessed November 24, 2014, <http://www.socialworkers.org/naswprn/surveyTwo/datagram2.pdf>.

particular, dating back to the abolitionist movement of the early nineteenth century.²⁷ hooks writes, “While they strongly advocated an end to slavery they never advocated a change in the racial hierarchy that allowed their caste status to be higher than that of black women or men.”²⁸ When slavery was abolished, blacks continued to maintain their status beneath that of white women. Even the women’s suffrage movement was primarily intended to acquire the vote for white women. The same white women who set up kindergartens for blacks in the south and considered themselves “a friend to the Negro” denied black women like Josephine Ruffin full participation in the suffrage movement by maintaining they “simply cannot recognize the colored women socially.”²⁹

These clear lines of distinction beg the question suffragette Sojourner Truth so pointedly raised in her iconic speech where she asks: “Ain’t I Woman?”³⁰ Southern Baptist women and their national training schools in the early twentieth century established the school of “the Bible, bath and broom” as training to advance the black race. While white women were being trained to be better wives and mothers, black women were being trained by middle-class white Christian women to acclimate to the lie that they were to be domestic workers—indeed, objects for the purpose of service.

During the industrial revolution, white women refused to eat or wash with black women, calling them diseased and immoral. Black women in tobacco factories were relegated to the work of “loosening” and other tasks that had historically been done by

²⁷ bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1981), 124.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 125.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 129.

³⁰ Illona Linthwaite, *Ain't I a Woman!: A Book of Women's Poetry from Around the World* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1999), 43.

men, thereby allowing for the construction of a lie that black women were what hooks calls “masculinized sub-human creatures.”³¹

T. Laine Scales notes how black women weren’t the only subjects of the Southern Baptist women’s lies in the early 1900s. They also viewed Southern and Eastern European immigrants “as a different species that was morally, socially and intellectually inferior.”³² The women used evangelism as a means to uphold the middle class and the “Anglo Saxon way of life.”³³ Outreach programs engaged immigrant women with the ultimate goal of changing a “species” into “white women.” Women of color, however, faced the reality that no matter how they were re-socialized, they would never become (white) women. In 1951, talented actress and notable activist Beah Richards confirmed the lies and the apparent apartheid in her dramatic poem “A Black Woman Speaks of White Womanhood”:

*But now, since 'tis deemed a thing apart
supreme,
I must in searching honesty report
how it seems to me.
White womanhood stands in bloodied skirt
and willing slavery
reaching out adulterous hand
killing mine and crushing me.
What then is this superior thing
that in order to be sustained must needs feed upon my flesh?
How came this horror to be?
Let's look to history.³⁴*

³¹ T. Laine Scales, *All That Fits a Woman: Training Southern Baptist Women for Charity and Mission, 1907-1926* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2000), 129.

³² *Ibid.*, 200.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Innervisions, by Beah E. Richards, accessed September 12, 2016.

Richards then doles out segments of history that juxtapose the experiences of black and white women while exposing the lie of white woman supremacy.

*Tis true
my pearls were beads of sweat
wrung from weary bodies' pain,
instead of rings upon my hands
I wore swollen, bursting veins.
My ornaments were the wip-lash's scar
my diamond, perhaps, a tear.
Instead of paint and powder on my face
I wore a solid mask of fear to see my blood so spilled.
And you, women seeing
spoke no protest
but cuddled down in your pink slavery
and thought somehow my wasted blood
confirmed your superiority.*

*Because your necklace was of gold
you did not notice that it throttled speech.
Because diamond rings bedecked your hands
you did not regret their dictated idleness.
Nor could you see that the platinum bracelets
which graced your wrists were chains
binding you fast to economic slavery.
And though you claimed your husband's name
still could not command his fidelity.*

This analysis is important because of the implication of the lie of white woman superiority for outreach programs currently administered by the daughters and granddaughters of the aforementioned middle-class white women. One need only peruse local Christian agencies, missions, thrift stores, and human-service arenas to find that the majority of frontline workers providing outreach and services are middle-class white women. Concrete data to explain and clarify why white women tend to be drawn to helping professions is lacking, there is research to show a long-standing apartheid between white women and the black women they serve in outreach organizations and

programs in America.

As black women like Neo-Soul artist Jill Scott increasingly move into the middle and upper class alongside white women, there continues to be a chasm that explicitly and implicitly challenges the ability of white women to fully share the place of mutual womanhood. Chanequa Walker-Barnes identifies part of the burden of a *strongblackwoman* is to grapple with the cult of white womanhood.³⁵ This non-religious form of cult has to do with socially constructed models of womanhood steeped in white supremacist ideals for body image, manner, and decorum.³⁶ Artists like Scott are exercising full dominion, by exposing the explicit and implicit lies of black woman inferiority. Scott says in her song “Womanifesto”:

*Clearly I am not a fat ass
I am active brain
And lip smacking peach deep
Sometimes too aggressive in its honesty
And heart sweet
That loves wholly and completely
Whom it may choose
Whomever it may choose³⁷*

This critical incident is evidence of the lie of white superiority that continues in the church today. A middle-class white woman involved in community engagement sat with her middle-class African American Pastor of the Rock Church to consult about end-of-life matters. The woman, whose health was failing, was concerned about her emotionally challenged daughter and what might be the daughter’s fate upon the eventual

³⁵ Barnes offers the intentionally combined term “*strongblackwoman*” as diagnosis for the unusual burden black women bear. Each word unto itself is worthy of embracing but together yield some outcomes that can be physically, mentally and spiritually destructive.

³⁶ Chanequa Walker-Barnes, *Too Heavy a Yoke: Black Women and the Burden of Strength* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014), 11.

³⁷ Jill Scott et al., writers, *Light of the Moon*, 2011, MP3.

death of the mother. The mother had another daughter who was emotionally and financially stable enough to care for her sister should such become necessary.

The pastor inquired with the mother about the possibility of the one sister going to live with the other, but the mother immediately dismissed the idea, citing concerns that others would look upon it negatively. The idea that a married woman would invite her adult sister to live with her would be shameful. The pastor attempted to reframe the option as fitting of one demonstrating Christian character. The pastor continued by reminding her that many people invite distressed relatives into their homes; even she, the pastor, had welcomed individuals who were unrelated to herself into her home to live. The mother immediately responded, "I know you people do that but what would it look like if we Americans did something like that?" The problem with this statement by the daughter of Dutch immigrants does not lie solely with her blatant nationalism. The real problem is the lie that separates middle-class white women and black women such that even the pastor/parishioner relationship is compromised by the apartheid. The white mother in the critical incident excused the surrogacy and caretaking of African Americans as something less than appropriate for a white middle-class Christian woman to demonstrate even toward her own biological sister.

White women change agents have historically withheld the right to be considered a woman from black women in America. As the primary agents in Christian helping professions, white women have allowed the lie of white women's supremacy to masculinize, domesticate, and dismiss the black woman's right to exercise dominion, in the world.

Lies about People Outside the Church

Jewish theologian Abraham Joshua Heschel issues what can be received as a warning to the evangelical Christian church in America, “words create worlds.”³⁸ Dehumanizing labels like “the lost,” “the unchurched,” and “the unbeliever” are frequently applied to fellow image bearers of God and sustain a Christian world that objectifies. Although labels that lack human qualifiers like “the saved,” “believers” and “churchgoers” are sometimes applied to persons who regularly attend church, these labels are secondary to the aforementioned humanizing ones. The people who do not regularly attend church have a right to fully embodied labels that explicitly acknowledge their humanity.

Mainline ecclesiology could benefit from a more porous line between sacred and secular, to posit the church not as more than a physical manifestation but an “eschatological fellowship.”³⁹ Some scholars fault Reformers like Martin Luther and John Calvin. They maintain that Luther created the division in Protestantism when he argued that the church is “both saint, and sinner.” Fellow reformer John Calvin considered the visible church to be “the totality of the elect before God,” leading to a double predestination that automatically damned any and all who were outside the visible church.⁴⁰ Later, the Enlightenment in Europe, with its rationality, forged the way for early twentieth-century fundamentalism, which according to Dr. Soong-Chan Rah “prioritized individualism at the cost of recognizing the corporate nature and corporate

³⁸ Abraham Joshua Heschel and Susannah Heschel, “Introduction,” in *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity: Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1996), viii.

³⁹ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical and Global Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 119.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 52.

role of Christianity.”⁴¹ American evangelicalism is the descendant of previous church movements and posits itself as being concerned with personal sin and responsibility as opposed to the corporate responsibility of the whole. The eschatological church has, over centuries, been replaced by a church obsessed with the great commission while stiff-arming the great commandment that calls for the church’s rejection of social apartheid.

Colonizers in the New World used lies and dehumanizing labels to identify the very people they would exploit and ultimately exterminate. Native peoples were named “savages” and “heathens” and were compared by Christians to wild animals. Chattel slavery was maintained by devout Christians who propagated the claim that the negro was three-fifths of a person. This stripping of humanity relegated certain groups of people to the nameless, voiceless, and objectified side of the apartheid.

The voices from outside of the church dispel the lies of the church’s dominion-denying labels by claiming their relationship to the Creator, albeit outside of the institutional church. David Kinnaman offers three names to identify groups of people those who exist outside the church: nomads, prodigals, and exiles.⁴² These names are to intending to be used applied to individuals but exist as a to identify and codify different groups of people vis-à-vis their relationship to the church. These labels though unacceptable for individual application are useful to signal that these groups contain persons with full humanity predicated on God’s created design not by their proximity to the church.

⁴¹ Soong-Chan Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism: Releasing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009), 30.

⁴² Notice the difference between labels and names. Labels are applied to a thing. Names come as the result of dominion which gives the right to name for oneself.

Nomads like pop star Rihanna have wandered away from the church but don't stray too far. They are inclined to attend special services, like Easter or Mother's Day. Rihanna literally wears words like "fearless" and "chalice" on her naked body on the cover of her award-winning musical release *Unapologetic*, brandishing all the indicators of the "lost" label the church would place upon her. However, buried behind track eleven, "Love without Tragedy," she bears the soul of a nomad in the song "Mother Mary":

*Mother Mary I swear I wanna change
Mister Jesus I'd love to be queen
But I'm from the left side of an island
Never thought this many people would even know my name
As time flies, way above me
For you I've cried, tears sea deep,
Oh glory, the prayers carry me
I'll be a star you keep directing me
Let's make the best scene they've ever seen
Let's capture the moment⁴³*

Rihanna would never be mistaken for a Christian music artist. Because of their explicit lyrics and sexual content, her songs would not be played on Christian radio stations. She might easily find herself counted among the "lost" by those who inhabit the church. Nevertheless, Rihanna has a prayer that lives deep in the fabric of her *Unapologetic* musical project. Her prayerful song could be the sincere cry of any nomad who is born into poverty and then given an opportunity to rise to stardom. Unfortunately, she would have to exchange her pursuit of a highly respected Grammy award for one of the less acclaimed Christian music awards in order for the church to no longer consider her to be one of the "lost."

Prodigals, Kinnaman's second name for those outside the church, have run far

⁴³ Rihanna, *Love Without Tragedy/Mother Mary*, by Terius Nash and Carlos McKinney, Rihanna, Def Jam, 2012, accessed June 23, 2014, Spotify.

away from church with no intent to return, refusing to identify as Christian and, like the alternative rock group Sabbath, not afraid to openly criticize the church. In their song “The Church Bizarre,” Sabbath’s disdain for the church is apparent:

*The curtain never falls on the show,
that has it all,
taken in you can’t begin to see their lies,
for the people who are clapping
are the ones who will be laughing at your fate,
they just can’t wait to bleed you dry⁴⁴*

Their critique of the Sunday service is quite typical of prodigals, who once were close enough to the church to now be able to draw conclusions about its abuses and lies.

Exiles, Kinnaman’s third group, are still committed to their faith but wrestle with finding a place between culture and church.⁴⁵ Rhythm and blues artist Brian McKnight bellows a smooth, sultry lyric fit for slow dancing and love making but unfit for any traditional worship service. However, every musical project this exile produces contains at least one invitation for listeners to join his conversation with God. While prosperity preachers promise the kind of wealth he has already obtained, McKnight’s longs for presence of God in a world that to him seems “so cold.”

*Can You see me
I’m down on my knees, oh Lord
I’m lost and I’m so alone
Does Your world have a heart of stone?
Oh Lord, am I destined to be what I’ve been
Never a thick and barely a thin
Where do I fit in?
I am waiting here for You to answer my call.⁴⁶*

⁴⁴ Andy Sneap et al., writers, *History of a Time to Come*, Sabbath, Sanctuary, 2007, accessed November 3, 2014, <http://www.metrolyrics.com/the-church-bizzare-lyrics-sabbat.html>.

⁴⁵ All three categories commend humanity and therefore human agency in ways that “the lost,” and “unchurched” fail. David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church—and Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 61.

⁴⁶ Brian Kelly McKnight, *Oh Lord*, by Brandon Barnes, Brian McKnight, Mercury Records, 1992, accessed

Conclusion

From one side of the chasm those who receive soup, coat, and prayer may appear to be uninterested, unorthodox, or un-informed, but more and more the trend is changing. A closer look reveals the faces of sons and daughters of the church who have grown weary of “slick or half-baked answers to their thorny, honest questions,” causing them to conclude that the church has failed them.⁴⁰ The lies about who is poor, who gets to be a woman, and who gets to claim names that confer dominion perpetuate an apartheid between the served and the server, both of whom lay claim to the title image bearer of God.

The evangelical church in America has deep roots that help perpetuate systems of apartheid with lies about image bearers of God at the center. Poor people are victims of the lie that there is only one kind of poor person and that one’s need to appease God is a sufficient motivation for helping poor people.

Black women have historically been denied womanhood by middle-class white women working as Christian change agents—from abolitionists to suffragettes to feminists, and even today in the church and outreach programs where white women serve. Finally, people who do not attend church are often labeled “the lost” or “unchurched,” while the people inside the church receive full personhood and standing with God and get to claim a proud identity as “children of God” or “people of God.” These labels applied to people outside the church “diminish the image of God on earth” and demand a demonstration of the gospel that will redirect current outreach practices toward a more faithful model for Christian community engagement.

May 6, 2014, Spotify.

Chapter 2: The Normative Move

This chapter engages Richard Osmer's normative move for practical theology, which invites "theological interpretation," "ethical norms," or "good practice" as a means of pointing toward a more faithful exit from the problems identified in the interpretive task.¹ It first offers a theological interpretation borrowed from Archbishop Desmond Tutu's theology of *Ubuntu*, a concept that became a key proponent of overturning and transforming to of South Africa's system of apartheid. Relative to the interpretive task's claim of apartheid-perpetuating lies about poor people, black women, and people outside the church, this section borrows three of Tutu's apartheid-condemning claims:

- All people are created by God to determine their own means
- Persons of all skin tones as created to be God's "viceroys or representers on earth, from which they gain their worth.
- Reconciliation of all people to God and to one another is the central act of Christ.

Biblical scholar Raymond Brown's commentary on the gospel of John will then make the case for John's gospel in particular as the epistemological hermeneutic for a posture of embracing in community engagement. Brown maintains that while the synoptics are primarily missional in purpose, John's gospel is intended to "[root] the believer deeper in faith."² It is an ethical gospel intended to interrogate the soul of the

¹ According to Osmer, theological interpretation "use(s) theological concepts to interpret episodes, situations, and contexts, including those in which we are actors." Ethical norms are those that "reflect on and guide practice," and the third provides examples of good practice normatively. Osmer, *Introduction to Practical Theology*, 85.

² Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, Anchor Bible 29 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), lxxviii.

practitioner as he goes forth to bear fruit. John's Jesus is God's eternal Word who does more than reveal the kingdom of God, like the synoptics, but actually embodies life, truth, and light as an example for the witness of the church.

This project intends to challenge the faith of the church to appeal to the person of Christ as well as the mission of Christ. An exploration of the problem of the synoptics with their missional thrust will make the case for a close reading of John 4, with hints toward John 5 and 9. It will also explicate this project's four-step embracing model that frees the church from apartheid-perpetuating outreach practices to allow all human beings to exercise dominion.

Theological Interpretation

The first Europeans settled on the shores of south Cape Town in South Africa in 1652 and organized the South African state that would for centuries systematically subjugate native peoples. In 1913 South Africa imposed its strictest political injunction yet, relegating native Africans to a small portion of barren land, while whites maintained the majority of territory. This piece of legislation was called the Native's Land Act and would be the beginning of a system forever known as apartheid.

Apartheid is an Afrikaans word basically meaning "separate system," which essentially set oppressive boundaries for native peoples in order to allow Dutch settlers to claim their land—and their human dignity. 1949 would bring the passage of the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, preventing nuptials between whites and Africans. 1950 would demand classification of individuals by race and would see the passage of laws prohibiting sexual relations between people of different races and later the rise of the African National Congress and Nelson Mandela's fight against the apartheid.

In 1931, in a small town west of Johannesburg, Archbishop Desmond Tutu was born to become a centrifugal force during apartheid and a lightning rod for peace in the world. Throughout his writings and career, Tutu consistently offers a biblical and theological framework that resonated deeply with the message of the fourth gospel and Jesus as an anti-apartheid figure.

Tutu continues to sharpen his prophetic voice on the tool of scripture and the deeply held belief that “we are what we are in obedience to God and in response to the gracious Gospel of his son our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ alone.”³ He has been a prophetic voice in the post-apartheid movement toward truth and reconciliation in South Africa, brandishing an old African concept called *Ubuntu*.

Ubuntu

The African concept of *Ubuntu* by definition simply maintains “I in You and You in Me,” deriving from a theological understanding of codependence that mirrors the relationship of the Godhead in the Trinity who is both individual and interdependent, simultaneously.⁴ *Ubuntu* invites all image bearers of the triune God to be fully embodied individuals while also committing to *kenosis*, “a self-emptying” that acknowledges the full personhood of others. Philippians 2 describes the act of *kenosis* as demonstrated by Christ this way:

*Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God
something to be used to his own advantage;
rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,*

³ Desmond Tutu and John Allen, *The Rainbow People of God: The Making of a Peaceful Revolution* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 54.

⁴ Michael Battle, *Ubuntu: I in You and You in Me* (New York: Seabury Books, 2009), 3.

*being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!*

Kenosis on one hand leads those with power to deliberately give up power, as an act of sacrificial generosity, for the sake of the powerless, while apartheid “manipulates persons and treats them as if they were less” than human beings because of external factors and values.⁵ For example, city missions in some cities espouse a Christian mission while requiring homeless individuals to enter back doors and relinquish their entire financial subsidies while being subjected to harsh treatment like eating out-of-date food. These organizations seem to assume that just because these persons are homeless they are necessarily unworthy of respect and the kind of provision their subsidy would afford them if they were in their own home.

Christ was born in a humble manger, poor and vulnerable like many who arrive on the doorsteps of helping agencies. Tutu cites the incarnation as evidence of “God [who] takes the whole of human history and the whole of human life seriously.” In fact, God embellished each human being with the privilege to be his “viceroy,” indeed God’s own representers on earth with all the honor and respect thereunto appertaining.⁶ The pastor and prophet reminded his pro-apartheid audience of the dehumanized and resurrected Jesus who stated in John 12:32, “if I be lifted up I will draw all humans to me.” He led South Africa to the reconciling gospel of Jesus Christ, believing “all are to

⁵ Ibid., 66.

⁶ Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 102, Googlebooks.

be held in the incredible embrace of the love that won't let us go.”⁷

This “incredible embrace” of which Tutu speaks stems from a theology of abundance that resonates with his understanding of general revelation, in which God displays enormous splendor through the natural resources of Tutu’s beloved South Africa. The God of all creation, who is and was the eternal Word revealed in Christ, is “full of grace and truth”—indeed *full*, not lacking.⁸ Out of that abundance God dispenses “wholeness, justice, good health, righteousness, peace, harmony, and reconciliation” to all for whom he was lifted up, yea, even the whole world whom he came to save through faith.⁹ Ubuntu calls for a reconfiguring of actions and attitudes toward poor people, a reconfiguring that resonates with a faith that locates every human being’s worth in his standing as image bearer of the triune God.

Beyond Biology

Apartheid in South Africa separated groups of people into four categories based on the color of their skin—Whites, Africans, Indians, and Colored people, with the latter three often considered black. Black people were differentiated based on skin color and forced to live in poverty-stricken ghettos where they were systematically stripped of their South African citizenship and left to become aliens in their own land. White people considered black people to be intellectually inferior based on phenotype manifested in skin color.

This sole factor caused black people to be seen as childlike individuals in need of

⁷ Desmond Tutu, “And God Smiles,” sermon preached at All Saints Church, Pasadena, California, 6 November 2005.

⁸ John 14.

⁹ Tutu and Allen, *Rainbow People of God*, 71.

a white guardian and therefore incapable of exercising dominion outright. This posture was supported by the belief that there were “distinct and immutable cultural differences between races” that had to be maintained according to the will of God.¹⁰

This ideology made a home in the colonization of America in the seventeenth century when slave uprisings called for the classification of skin color amidst what was believed to be a threatening multi-ethnic majority.¹¹ Supported by biblical misrepresentations like the curse of Cain and manifest destiny, the enslavement of dark-skinned people became normalized with the tantamount demonization of all things black. History gave way to the myth of the negro lacking a soul, being only three-fifths of a person, unfit to vote, marry, or even have religion. In time the master’s religion made room for the slave to preach in the fields, listen from the balcony, and finally establish his own black church. Jim Crow laws eventually marked water fountains, restrooms, and other public spaces as ground zero for anti-black apartheid in many states in America. The negro’s refusal to comply with unjust laws led to frequent imprisonment, police brutality, and the burning of black churches. Currently, the values of the western white church prevail as central while black and brown theologies remain marginalized.

The Archbishop compares this *pigmentocracy* that places (or withholds) value based on a biological quality such as skin color to the monster Frankenstein who cannot be reformed but must be destroyed.¹² This *pigmentocracy* names well one of the concerns of the interpretative task namely the preeminence of the values of white womanhood in

¹⁰ Rian Malan, *My Traitor’s Heart: A South African Exile Returned to Face His Country, His Tribe and His Conscience*. (New York: Grove Press, 1990), 190, Kindle.

¹¹ Paul Kivel, *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice*, 3rd ed. (Gabriola, BC: New Society Publishers, 2011), 158.

¹² Tutu and Allen, *Rainbow People of God*, 99.

Christian outreach.

Ubuntu invites peoples to exercise self-determination absent of individual self-centeredness in so far as the African self is always couched in the collective. Self-determination “presupposes the free genuine expression of the will of the peoples in question.”¹³ This freedom allows them collectively “to determine without external interference, their political status, and to pursue their economic, social and cultural development.”¹⁴ It recognizes the right of the recipient to work, shop, and flourish in their gifts alongside community organizations who share in the abundance of God’s gifts also. Kenosis demands that helping professionals think beyond meeting the immediate need and explore ways to empty themselves of self-gratification and polarization for the sake of the flourishing of the other.

Reconciliation

In Ephesians 2, the Apostle Paul deals with the matter of division in the church by describing Christ, who “broke down the dividing wall” so that there would be no more division between people.¹⁵ Insofar as apartheid “denies and repudiates the central act of Jesus”—reconciliation—it is “unchristian and unbiblical,” according to Desmond Tutu. In Christ, God is “restoring human community,” not just Christian or church community to the exclusion of those outside.¹⁶ Outreach practices, with their tendency to label prodigals, nomads, and exiles, work against the restoring and reconciling work of Christ,

¹³ Richard Ennals, *From Slavery to Citizenship* (Chichester: John Wiley, 2007), 218.

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ Ephesians 2:14.

¹⁶ Tutu and Allen, *Rainbow People of God*, 64.

servicing as a fence around the dividing wall that Christ has broken down.

Kenosis, a self- emptying of any claim or right that a person has on the basis of his or her own merit, well describes the work that Christ has done and is doing by emptying himself of all the benefits of heaven and coming into the womb of a virgin, having no crown, castle, or place to lay his head. He came to his own, the children of Abraham, the descendants of David, but his own did not receive him. He came to a despised and exiled Samaritan woman who became an evangelist, to a crippled nomad by a pool who after being healed refused to leave his side, and to a prodigal blind man who came to faithfully believe in the emptied out one. “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free,” in Christ, just one humanity targeted for reconciliation.¹⁷

Biblical Interpretations

The Synoptic Problem

The problem with the synoptics is not with the gospels themselves but rather the ways they have been used to justify a posture that often perpetuates “us” vs “them” in community engagement. To be clear, community outreach programs have successfully moved Christians into faithful mission to meet spiritual, physical, and structural needs in desperate communities. The Bible has undoubtedly shaped and propelled the American Christian church to act as a resource for global and local needs. However, the Bible is also used as a worthy tool to justify apartheid, separation of peoples, and subjugation of women, as well as a great deal of other activity, including outreach programs for the poor and needy in the evangelical church in America.

¹⁷ Galatians 3:28.

These outreach efforts, rooted mostly in the synoptics, use the first three gospels to meet the needs of individuals, but neglect to challenge the heart and actions of the very persons launched to serve.¹⁸ Biblical scholar Raymond Brown found the synoptics to be mostly concerned with launching disciples into mission.¹⁹

In the first chapter of Mark Jesus, who drives out an impure spirit from a man, causing others to inquire with wonder whether his is a “new teaching—and with authority!”²⁰ Mark’s Christ has power over everything, including the winds, demons, and ultimately death, and upon resurrection commends his power to the disciples who now have full ability to do missions in supernatural ways.²¹ Outreach efforts from Mark want immediate and powerful results; anything short of this risks being written of as failure on the part of the of the faithful and hurting.

Matthew confirms Jesus as the promised Messiah who commissioned his primary Jewish audience to “go therefore and make disciples of all nations.”²² These words alone have motivated missionaries to descend upon underdeveloped communities abroad, laser-focused on converting the world to Christianity. However, “one cannot follow Jesus, according to Matthew, except by becoming part of the community that he trained to carry out his mission in the world.”²³ Matthew is the only gospel to mention *ekklesia*, the Greek word for “the church” commissioned *to bring* others into full discipleship. Here

¹⁸ To say that the synoptics have been used this way is not to say that they are limited in themselves to provide a faithful ethic for practitioners.

¹⁹ Brown, *Gospel according to John*, lxxvii-lxxviii.

²⁰ Mark 1:27.

²¹ Mark 16:15-16.

²² Matthew 28:19.

²³ Matthew 28.

the dichotomy of apartheid thinking finds a home as Jesus in this gospel states “he who is not for me, is against me.”²⁴ The church concludes that those who “go therefore” are clearly “for” Jesus and that “all nations” *are against* until they become those who “go therefore,” also.²⁵ One must read beyond the gospel of Matthew to gain a fuller understanding of who indeed is “for Jesus” and who might be “against.”

Luke has been used to pull the church back to domestic matters, with Christ who by the power of the Spirit is anointed to “bring good news to the poor, heal the broken-hearted, recover sight to the blind, set the captives free and proclaim the year of God’s favor.”²⁶ Christian agencies, national organizations, and grassroots initiatives are encouraged daily to see the entire world as a mission field. Luke’s Jesus has been offered in practice as a Moses-like leader who leads the people to “dare, and hope great things, seeing visions, dreaming dreams, turning the world upside-down” for themselves when they do even the least.²⁷

Collectively the synoptics prove faithful and fruitful as an atlas for missions and outreach, but the use of the synoptics empower the very actions and motives of the practitioners who allow apartheid-perpetuating lies to tether others to the needy side of the chasm. The Church in apartheid needs a gospel witness that interrogates the motives and ideals of outreach programs and practices to dispel the lies that keep the recipients of outreach programs from fully exercising dominion.

²⁴ Matthew 12:30.

²⁵ Matthew 28:16-20 has been named “The Great Commission” because of the risen Savior’s charge to his disciples to proclaim the gospel at home and abroad.

²⁶ Luke 4:18-19.

²⁷ Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 135.

The Case for John's Gospel

The Johannine gospel provides a very different form than that of the synoptic gospels and in fact exists as its very own genre.²⁸ Whereas the synoptics focus on the kingdom of God, which is *like* a vineyard, a tree, and a shepherd, John focuses less on the kingdom and more on Jesus, who actually *is* the vine, the bread, and the shepherd. As such, John's Jesus engages in ways that supersede typical outreach practices that maintain distance between the server and the served.²⁹ John's gospel is less of a reference guide for missional engagement and more of an ethical guide that reveals the soul of Jesus for the sake of the church. John's Jesus enters apartheid deliberately and incrementally and in the fourth chapter embodies an embracing model for community engagement with motivation, initiation, escalation, and invitation by degrees to make way for a fuller revelation of Christ.

The Setting

The Johannine community finds its historical context in or near Palestine, where followers of John the Baptist and various other Jews, including one who would come to be known as the beloved disciple, came to follow Jesus. These believers were soon accompanied by non-temple dwellers known as Samaritans who reached beyond the Davidic background to claim the Mosaic context as their link to God. These associations caused converted Jews to be accused of exchanging Jewish monotheism for Samaritan idolatry. The leaders of the Jewish community therefore rejected converted Jews and

²⁸ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel and Epistles of John: A Concise Commentary* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1988), 13.

²⁹ Raymond Edward Brown, "The Kerygma of the Gospel according to John: The Johannine View of Jesus in Modern Studies," in *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology*, 4th ed., vol. 21 (Richmond, VA: Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, 1967), 388.

eventually had them expelled from the temple. In this way John's community differs from that of the synoptics; it is a persecuted community cast outside of the temple and under severe persecution. John presents a fully embodied Jesus who is aware of his divine and missional purpose, for us and "among us" in a world torn apart.³⁰

John's gospel includes narratives that do not exist in the synoptics: an ostracized Samaritan woman (chap. 4), a man who had lost his hope beside an enchanted pool (chap. 5), and a blind man indirectly implicated in the disciples' hamartiological inquiry (chap. 9).³¹ Each narrative lives outside of the synoptic communities where Emmanuel gradually entered into a loving embrace with them.

The people who met Jesus in these three Johannine narratives resemble some of the people served by outreach programs in today's church communities. Samaritans, like the woman in chapter 4, were regarded by Jews as unclean, spiritually misguided people with whom Jews were not permitted to share anything. In fact, Jews avoided Samaria at all costs. To compound matters, this woman's moral practices marginalized her within her own community. She arrived at the well under the same kind of stigma and oppression many black women come to outreach programs with today.

The man at the pool (chap. 5) was ill and on the brink of hope as he sat on a mat waiting for an angel to stir the water into a healing state for whoever was fast enough to touch the water first. He appears to be close to the source of his greatest need, but he had no one to help him obtain it. Today he would be considered one of "the poor," although

³⁰ John 1:14.

³¹ The disciples ask Jesus a question concerning sin: "who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Hamartiology is the study of sin, deriving from the Greek word *hamartia*, meaning "sin," and "-ology," meaning "the study of."

no reference is made to his economic state.

The man born blind (chap. 9) stood at a distance at the opening of the narrative, nameless and voiceless. He had fallen victim to the blame game in a context where sickness meant that either the one afflicted or his parents had sinned and warranted his condition. The community around him, including the disciples, refused to address him directly; he was clearly an “outsider.” They spoke of him openly as though he had no ears to hear, and even after his healing, the religious leaders joined the disciples by denying his ability to speak on behalf of himself. Like the nomads, exiles, and prodigals, he wore a label—“blind man”—but was otherwise nameless, voiceless, and faceless.

These three pericopes mirror the complexity of modern life when apartheid based on social location, physical characteristics, and proximity to the sources of power dictates one’s value, worth, and ability to exercise dominion.

From Outreach to Embracing

John 4 is a setting for outreach in the New Testament. The Samaritan woman was in a spiritual darkness on account of her physical, spiritual, and ethnic location as far as Jesus was concerned. She lived in a land Jews avoided for centuries. Samaritans were regarded by Jews as unclean, spiritually misguided people with whom Jews were not permitted to share anything. To compound matters, she had been married many times, and the man she lived with was not one of her husbands. She might fit in well with those who frequent soup kitchens, clothing closets, and city missions administered by Christians in America today. She came to the well with a pot in hand as had probably been her custom. Ultimately she returned home, leaving the same water pot behind. After encountering the embracing Jesus, she would return home proclaiming, “Come and meet

a man...” This once needy woman encountered the embracing Jesus in whom she finds the freedom to explore her own theological questions amidst an unsecured profession of true faith expressed in her closing question, “He cannot be the Messiah, can he?”³²

A close reading of John 4 unearths four significant degrees or moves: motivation, initiation, escalation, and invitation to redirect the church from outreach to embracing.

Motivation

Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard, ‘Jesus is making and baptizing more disciples than John’—although it was not Jesus himself but his disciples who baptized—he left Judea and started back to Galilee. But he had to go through Samaria. (John 4:1-4)

Jesus challenged ancient and contemporary assumptions about needy people by ripping back the darkness of objectification and exposing the light of God, whose motivation is intending toward reconciliation and wholeness.³³ Jesus revealed the objectified as a person in whom the will of God has been at work and the truth that the disciples are the ones affected by their own blindness.

Motivation has more to do with the heart than the actions of an individual according to Proverbs 21:2 “All deeds are right in the sight of the doer, but the Lord weighs the heart.” The heart in Hebrew is not the seat of emotions as it tends to be understood the context of the American. Instead, the Hebrew heart is *lev*, is the seat of volition and will.³⁴ It is what

³² John 4:29.

³³ Tutu and Allen, *Rainbow People of God*, 64.

³⁴ “When the Seat of the words ‘heart’ and ‘soul’ are used in connection with each other (Deut. vi. 5), they are not used merely as synonymous terms in order to add force to the expression, for the phrase ‘with all your heart’ denotes the love of conscious resolve, in which the whole being consents, and which must at once become a natural inclination.” Isidore Singer, Cyrus Adler, and Susan Rothchild, *The Jewish Encyclopedia: a descriptive record of the history, religion, literature, and customs of the Jewish people from the earliest times. Prepared under the direction of Cyrus Adler Isidore Singer, projector and managing editor, assisted by American and foreign boards of consulting editors* (New York: Ktav

the psalmist makes known in 51, “You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.” The secret heart is the place from which motivation arises. Here is where God begins in His instruction to Israel, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.”³⁵ It could be said, Jesus was led by the heart to go to Samaria, for in his heart was the motivation to do the Father’s will.

It is no wonder the decisive path to embracing commences from the body’s center where holiness is centralized. According to Jerry Bridges “Holiness has to do with more than mere acts. Our motives must be holy, that is, arising from a desire to do something simply because it is the will of God.”³⁶ Jesus “had to go through Samaria.” It was geographically sensible to travel through Samaria, but Jews would customarily take the longer route to avoid the land of the Samaritans. Jesus was not motivated by cultural norms to avoid Samaria, nor was he motivated by his own “poverty-alleviating efforts” to travel through it. The phrase “Jesus had to go through Samaria” used the small Greek word *edei*, meaning “had to go,” to signal the urgency of Jesus’ choice to take the road less traveled. Whenever *edei* appears in John’s gospel it connotes an urgency propelled by the mission of the Father.³⁷ Here in John 4, Jesus’ singular motivation is on full display in John 4, it is to participate in the mission of the Father.³⁸ John reminds us that

Publishing House, 1964), 296, Googlebooks.

³⁵ Deuteronomy 6:5.

³⁶ Jerry Bridges, *The Pursuit of Holiness* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1996), 43.

³⁷ Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: a commentary* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2014), 176.

³⁸ Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 21-25.

no one has seen the Father except the Son, who makes the Father known to us.

Throughout the gospel Jesus repeats the Father/Son motif that allows the disciples to know the heart of the Father through the teaching, action, and motivations of Jesus. This first movement invites outreach practitioners to interrogate their own motivations for entering communities and engaging people they would customarily avoid otherwise to find more faithful motivations rooted in a commitment to participate with God.

John 9 is more explicit about Jesus responding to the disciples' attempt to objectify a blind man in order to gain a deeper understanding of sin. Their inquiry had little to do with the blind man himself or with his healing, flourishing, or right to exercise dominion. Instead, it was completely self-serving in its intent, as though this man was an object useful for an object lesson.

This self-serving posture is resonant in church benevolence ministries today when disciples of Jesus give to poor people in order to fulfill a biblical mandate to give to the poor and gain for themselves favor from God. Jesus elevates his disciples to a higher plane where sin is not the only reason for this person's particular station in life. Jesus proves that a person might be blind or poor for reasons encapsulated in the will of God at work in the world. Indeed sometimes a man is in need "so that God's works might be revealed in him."³⁹

Jesus challenged ancient and contemporary assumptions about needy people by ripping back the darkness of objectification and exposing the light of God, whose motivation is intending toward reconciliation and wholeness.⁴⁰ Jesus revealed the

³⁹ John 9:3

⁴⁰ Tutu and Allen, *Rainbow People of God*, 64.

objectified as a person in whom the will of God has been at work and the truth that the disciples are the ones affected by their own blindness.

Initiation

7 A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." 8 (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) 9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) 10 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." (John 4:7-10)

To initiate engagement across the apartheid requires the person holding the most power to practice kenosis, or the "giving up power voluntarily without external coercion."⁴¹ Jesus first exercised kenosis when he "emptied himself" of his equality with God, taking on the form of vulnerable flesh and fully submitting to the will of the Father.⁴² John reveals a snapshot of kenosis at work when Jesus arrives at a well one day, thirsty from the journey to Samaria. There he met a woman and initiated contact with her in ways far more substantive than outreach ever does.

Outreach programs tend to find practitioners waiting to be approached, putting out signs of invitation and standing behind tables to serve, all the while maintaining a safe distance from the recipients of services. Jesus is the Word of God made flesh. He clearly has much more to offer the Samaritan woman than she could provide him, yet in a true demonstration of kenosis Jesus approaches by exposing his own true human need: thirst. "Give me a drink" is an instrument of initiation requiring the vulnerability of the pre-

⁴¹ Michael Battle, *Ubuntu: I in You and You in Me*, 29.

⁴² Ephesians 2:6-11.

existent Word emptied of the luxuries of heaven to become thirsty flesh. Christ gave her to exercise dominion, indeed to resist his request, which she does, pointedly asking, “‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?’ (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.)” She becomes the one asking the questions and holding the power he has emptied himself of. He actually initiates the first step by avoiding the lie of superiority, but in fact approaches “long[ing] as one about to receive; and abound[ing] as one about to satisfy.”⁴³ This move invites the evangelical church in America in her outreach practices to relinquish her power in order to become vulnerable to the volition and questions of recipients of benevolence and services. This is the kind of gesture one church took to embrace their neighborhood.

Escalation

The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?’ (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” The woman said to him, “Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?” (John 4:9-12)

Conflict is an inevitable reality when individuals cross the boundaries of apartheid. Implicit bias causes individuals to strongly defend their particular values, and sin allows defense often to become violent (verbally and physically).⁴⁴ Outreach programs tend to maintain such a relational distance from recipients that the possibility of

⁴³ Saint Augustine, *Lectures or Tractates on the Gospel According to St. John*, trans. John Gibb and James Innes, in *The Complete Works of Saint Augustine*, ed. Philip Schaff (2011), 3216, Kindle.

⁴⁴ Harper, *Very Good Gospel*, 2339-2366.

even healthy conflict is unlikely.

One embracing ministry holds onto a hard embracing truth that generally eludes outreach programs. It intends to engage in community relations in a tough community knowing the nature of addiction and conflict will “break their hearts, again and again.”⁴⁵ This is not the glorious, rewarding mirage of personal fulfillment that often lures people into doing outreach; however, this ministry is committed to embracing the challenge.

Jesus waded into the complex waters of human relationships and let the waves of tension rise as the woman raised hard cultural, religious, and social questions that held up the mirror of apartheid. She asked: “‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?’ (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.)”⁴⁶ Her question could have led Jesus to a defensive posture or shame-laden response, but Jesus is unwavering in his commitment to embrace. Jesus allows the conflict as she illumines the apartheid even more: “‘Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?’”⁴⁷ Jesus stands loving with only the gentle truth as his defense. Brown claims Jesus all the while knows “she is knocking not with earnest purpose; she is still an object of pity, not yet of instruction.”⁴⁸

Through the Samaritan woman, John elevates our hearts in his gospel where Jesus stands in the conflict between Jews and Samaritans, males and females, differing worship practices. He is the bridge in the middle of the apartheid. Jesus lingers at the well long enough to escalate the relationship beyond resource sharing and pity to truth and

⁴⁵ See chapter three to learn more about First Metropolitan Church as a success case model for Embracing.

⁴⁶ John 4:9.

⁴⁷ John 4:12.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 3226.

reconciliation preparing a breeding ground for mutual embrace, made possible by standing in the tension.

Invitation

Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.”

Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come back.” The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!” (John 4:13-18)

Miroslav Volf’s work is committed to an invitational model that does not conquer. He writes, “open arms are a sign that I have created space in myself for the other to come in and that I have made a movement out of myself so as to enter the space created by the other.”⁴⁹ The point of embracing is to prove there is no threat, no power, indeed nothing to prevent a wholehearted embrace. This assurance opens the door for outsiders to be identical to insiders, and insiders must forsake the safe, secure confines of an inward focusing salvation. Outreach programs often maintain boundaries that label some “insiders” and others “outsiders,” so that invitations are half-hearted and limit embrace. Outsiders know the limitations of the half-hearted invitation and sing about it in pop songs like this one performed by award-winning rapper LeCrae.

*You probably couldn't tell we over here
Cause you hardly sober*

⁴⁹ Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), Nook, 149.

*Double shots of that ego
They laughin' at us, yeah we know
May be at the bottom but we not forgotten
The director's plotting that sequel
'Till then we live on the outside
And it might storm and we might die
But I'd rather go with my fist high
Standing outside of your inside⁵⁰*

This self-proclaimed outsider represents the voices of a frustrated demographic, limited by the church's tendency to make decisions for them without extending an invitation to participate with God's action in their lives and the world.

Jesus, however, provides opens arms in his invitation to the Samaritan woman, as he does several other times in John's gospel. In John 5 the crippled man had no one to put him in the water when the enchanted pool promised healing. Jesus could have spoken a word of healing or offered a healing touch as was his custom in the synoptics. However, John's embracing Jesus invited the disabled man to participate with God for himself, saying "take up his own bed and walk."

The invitation to participation is more explicit in chapter 9, where Jesus first spits on the ground and applies a mud paste on the eyes of the blind man, then invites him to participate in his own healing. "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam."

In John 4, Jesus goes so far as to invite the woman to bring her husband to also participate in the living water he offers to her. He who knows her past and her present invites her into a future that "will become in [her] a spring of water gushing up to eternal life," such that within her will be everything needed to exercise dominion. All three narratives offer John's Jesus as one who dispels the lies of apartheid based on social location, physical condition, and proximity to sources of power.

⁵⁰ <http://www.metrolyrics.com/outside-lyrics-lecrae.html>, viewed January 24, 2017.

Christ the Ultimate Embracing Figure

The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem."

Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us."

Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you."

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with her?" Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?"

They left the city and were on their way to him. (John 4:19-30)

When Christ is lifted up all are drawn to his loving embrace. Each story in John's gospel disproves the oft held myth that acknowledgement of faith in Jesus should be the telos of all Christian outreach. Whereas the synoptics offer Jesus who commonly asks "do you believe" prior to healing, John's Jesus heals prior to asking for a profession of faith.⁵¹ The man born blind in John 9 did not ask to be healed; Jesus simply spat upon him and requested he go wash his eyes, after which the man returned with full vision.

Later, when the religious leaders interrogated the once blind man because his healing was performed on the Sabbath, he made clear by his lack of knowledge that he certainly had not demonstrated faith in Jesus. It wasn't until sometime after the healing that he and the man who once sat at the pool encountered Jesus and professed faith in him.

Jesus took his cues from the Father, who showed his great love for us by this: while we were still sinners he sent Christ to die for us. He did not consider the woman's worthiness as a factor for embracing her; it was simply her human presence standing in

⁵¹ Matthew 9:29; Mark 9:23.

the will of the Father who motivated him to go through Samaria. His obedience and her physical presence as an image bearer of God made the place of the well a breeding ground for initiation, escalation, and invitation.

Jesus did not compromise truth in the process. “Go, call your husband” and “you [Samaritans] worship what you do not know . . . , for salvation is from the Jews” are both truths that are nevertheless implicit in the invitation to participate with God. That truth leads to a place of mutuality and reciprocity as Jesus opens his invitational arms to reveal that true worship is neither a thing of place or people but a mutual sharing in the Father’s will to be worshipped “in spirit and truth.”

Ultimately, the woman at the well never acknowledges true faith in Jesus, but after the embrace she does return home with a question that marks the true intention of community engagement, indeed the freedom to raise her own theological and existential questions: “He cannot be the Messiah, can he?” Christian outreach risks perpetuating systems of apartheid if it does not reveal Christ as a model for moving beyond outreach efforts to replicate Jesus, the ultimate embracing figure. John’s Jesus gives recipients freedom to exercise dominion according to their God-given purpose.

Conclusion

Apartheid in the evangelical Christian church in America must be destroyed and replaced by a model of community engagement that looks and acts like Jesus does in John’s gospel. The synoptics have been used to thrust the church into self-justifying missions but have not leveraged the practitioner to deepen her faith as she approaches poor people, black women, and people outside the church.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu offers a theological framework of *Ubuntu* that

includes all human beings in the invitation to embrace Christ and other image bearers of God. This embrace is most clearly recognized in John's gospel where Jesus meets a Samaritan woman at a well. Raymond Brown helps make the case that Jesus' way of embracing came with patience by degrees, first through motivation prompted by the will of the Father, then initiation that required vulnerability, next escalation sufficient to bridge the boundaries of conflict, and then invitation to participate with the ongoing work of the Father in the world and in one's life.

Finally, embracing leads to a revelation of Christ that allows those who did not yet believe to nevertheless be good stewards who exercise dominion by formulating their own theological and existential questions. In this way faithful followers elevate Jesus, believing that when he is lifted up, indeed he will draw all people to complete faith in Himself.

Chapter 3: The Descriptive/Empirical Task

Many Christian churches and ministries practice outreach in ways that perpetuate apartheid; however, there are some exceptions of ministries that practice embracing. This section offers Richard Osmer Descriptive/Empirical Task which “helps discern patterns and dynamics in particular episodes, situations, or contexts.”¹ It utilizes Robert Brinkerhoff’s Success Case method to introduce three ministries that embody all or part of the embracing model for community engagement. These contexts were chosen not only because of their diversity but also because of their constitutive elements that make replication for others possible for other churches and ministries. Each context’s success is based upon its demonstration of some parts of the embracing model but not necessarily the whole.

Core Research Questions

The problems with outreach practices are detailed in books, at conferences, and seminars.² The church needs pictures of ministries who demonstrate a commitment to move from a primarily synoptic missionary model of community outreach toward a more Johannine influenced practice that removes apartheid and allows all image bearers of God to exercise dominion. Three ministries were selected from lists given by practitioners and colleagues based to their witness to the ministry for justice. The ministries were selected because they demonstrate an ethic and understanding of community engagement

¹ Richard Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), Kindle Reader, 94.

² Robert D. Lupton, *Toxic Charity: How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help (and How to Reverse It)* (New York: HarperOne, 2012); Paul Kivel, *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice* (Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers, 1995). Christian Community Development Association (www.cdda.org) offers a national conference annually that uncovers the dangerous outreach practices.

that embodies parts of the embracing model of ministry that combats social apartheid in the evangelical Christian church in America. All three ministries come from a Reformed theological background allowing for comparisons among their ways of embodying an embracing model.

Brinkerhoff's method invites appreciative research questions addressed to each successful ministry to help extrapolate the ways in which they, in big or small ways, foster learning about this model called embracing. The four key questions are these:

- What is happening?
- What is being achieved?
- What is the value?
- How can it be improved?

Strategies of Inquiry

For the sake of clarity and ease, these three ministries will be classified for this project as “The Rock Church,” “Emmaus Ministries,” and “Holy Trinity Metropolitan Church,” respectively. It is important for the purpose of this project that the ministries selected be comparable enough to recognize their patterns yet diverse enough in size, location, and expression to empower other churches in varying scales to shift from outreach to embracing practices in their own particular contexts.

At The Rock Church, two focus interviews include leadership, laity, longtime members and neighbors who became fully enfolded members. Emmaus Ministries has a staff of five their focus group included three participants, the executive director, a former recipient of services who is now staff, and another staff member who was a second career hire who presents as a long term member of the very church this ministry is housed

within. At Holy Trinity Metropolitan, two focus groups consisted of the director and five direct staff workers, three former and/or present program participants, and the director. Most interviews were no more than an hour and were audio recorded. Prior to each set of interviews, each group was informed about the scope of the project.

Focus group interviews, published documents and first-hand observations constitute the three forms of inquiry employed in this project. Focus group and individual interviews with executive directors, lead pastors, direct service workers and key participants from the varying contexts provided the primary sources of information. The inquiry also included attention to each ministry's websites, media presence and in one case a book written about the ministry's movement from inward focused, to outward reaching to community embracing. Noteworthy is the fact that the researcher is a participant observer in two of the three contexts, with first-hand knowledge of events, this note is acknowledged in the section on bias.

Case Study: The Rock Church

Context

The Rock Church is approximately one hundred twenty-five member multi-ethnic, multi-generational, and economically diverse congregation that is affiliated with both the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church in North America.³ This ministry meets weekly for a worship service that blends contemporary, traditional, and multiethnic expressions of music, liturgy, and preaching. The one

³ The researcher is senior pastor of "The Rock Church" and served for three years at one of the churches who partner with the Emmaus Ministries. She is attentive to the implications of being a participant researcher, as discussed below under ethical considerations.

hundred and four-year old church was once a mono-ethnic working class congregation for Dutch immigrants who lived and worked in the neighborhood.

The 1950's welcomed the first great exodus from the church and neighborhood when "the city annexed part of three surrounding townships" making room for more contemporary churches to emerge.⁴ New churches had updated buildings and programs available for younger families who also were anxious to flee the changing demographics of the neighborhood surrounding the church. The last fifty years continued to bring significant change to the church's neighborhood, welcoming more racial, socioeconomic, and religious diversity. The change forced those who once inhabited the church and neighborhoods to move to more recently developed areas of town and churches. In response, this church adopted as its mission "*Centered in Christ, Called to the Core City and Committed to Reconciliation.*"⁵ Their current pastor entered their congregation as a layperson whose husband was on staff full-time. She later attended seminary and served as ministry intern at this church before graduating seminary. After serving another church in the same town, this church called her to return to become their pastor, which she has been for over six years now.

Success Case

Motivation

The Rock Church has an four year old volunteer lead afterschool program, called *NIA*, that operates in their church three days a week. *NIA* is the swahili word for Purpose. A posted sign describes *NIA* as a way of "Faithfully Participating with God to

⁴ John D. Cox, *The City in Its Heart: The First Hundred Years of Maple Avenue Ministries, Holland, Michigan, 1913-2013* (Holland: Reformed Church Press, 2016), 66.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 98.

bring to fruition God's perfect plan. Focusing on education, life skills and arts as necessary tools for a successful future. Finding new and innovative ways to love and be loved by the children God entrusts to us." The motivation for this program is clearly driven by a commitment to follow God's leading in the lives of these children. It is not focused on babysitting or homework alone but on facilitating holistic flourishing in the life of every child who attends.

Initiation

One year a single mother in her twenties-- who had come to the church via outreach programs when she was a child had her name submitted to be a deacon. She had been working alongside the pastor in areas of community engagement and was always available to contribute to the life of the church. In many cases the possibility of a leadership role in the church would have been discounted on account of her being a young single mother. In fact, even she was inclined to reject the invitation to be a deacon for this reason. However, the Rock Church knew her gifts and spiritual maturity and decided to initiate the process of asking her to join the leadership team.

*I came to (The Rock Church) when I was 15
(through an outreach youth program)...now I'm 33,
co-direct children's ministry. I was formally a deacon for three years."
She moved from the recipient to the participant simply she
"...had a conversation with the pastor" who
"saw something in me that I didn't see for myself.*

Invitation

For five years a ever changing group of middle and high School students of Cambodian, Laotian, African American, Dutch, and Mexican descent traveled to many places around the world spreading the good news through song. Most of these children did not attend The Rock church, they were members at the church that coincided with

their languages and family of origin. The music director at The Rock Church would teach choirs at public schools and thereby find the opportunity to invite students to sing with him on Thursday night. Some of these children had experienced patterns of homelessness, academic challenges and social isolation. The Rock Church did not require them to be believers or to even understand the songs they would sing about. They were being invited to enter into life with Christ as witnesses before their confession like the woman at the well.

Two of the young women who went to South Africa are still active members leading children's ministries, dance and worship teams at The Rock Church. They described how they were invited to participation with God in an orphanage in South Africa.

"We had gone and took our own money and brought all these items. We cleaned up the facilities...sang songs to the children."

"We want wanted to fulfill the mission why we came,...we wanted to make a difference"

*"Wow God is so amazing" we thought "Look what God is doing here (in South Africa)."*⁶

Conclusion

The Rock Church is motivated by the commitment to see God revealed in the least expected places. Young people who don't go to church, single mothers and ethnic minorities are invited to see and use their God-given gifts. The Rock Church is committed to inviting those who come to receive resources and inspiration from the church to rise as leaders in the church and communities regardless of age, race and social condition. The children who have come to the afterschool program, the choir and the community youth programs are met with the expectation that they will use their gifts if

⁶ This focused group interview was conducted with three subjects from The Rock Church on January 10, 2017. Their Informed Consent form is on file according to the stipulations on the consent form. See Appendix A.

they are willing. The church had to relax the church's usual standards for leadership which once invited older people who had been committed to their faith for some time. Embracing ministries like The Rock Church espouse a commitment to invite, engage and launch indigenous leaders from the pool of constituencies they serve regardless of age and background.

Case Study: Emmaus Ministries

Context

Emmaus Ministries is a para-church organization in a mid-western town that invites neighboring churches to embrace particular neighbors living in apartment complexes nearby. This ministry emerged from an affluent white church who longed for ways to engage aimless children during summers. This neighborhood and its churches were products of white flight. As the city developed annexes away its center, communities like this offered newer homes, and nuanced worship practices. Those who attended the lived in the surrounding neighborhood tended to be those who also worshipped there.

Less than a mile away from the church is a neighborhood consisting of numerous multi-dwelling apartment complexes owned by absentee landlords and rented mostly by people of color, single mothers, and families with a lower income. Almost ten years ago the church decided to hire an *Americorp* community worker to help with the outreach ministry to that neighborhood. Having just returned from missions in Costa Rica, this twenty two year old, white middle class girl from Iowa was learning the ways of the Christian Community Development Association (CCDA) under the leadership of John

Perkins and his conference facilitators. Instead of commuting from a suburban condo across town, she decided to move into an apartment in the neighborhood and live among the people as a neighbor. She has since become the Executive Director of the ministry and continues to live in the same neighborhood.

Emmaus Ministry is now a thriving ministry who raises its own money every summer through a 5k race/bike-a-thon incorporating neighborhood children, parents, and church participants. The neighbors organized to purchase their own bus shelter for children waiting for school buses and adults for city transportation. When weeds at the entrance of their complex obstructed their view as drivers, the neighbors petitioned the city to have the weed removed.

The majority of the staff at Emmaus Ministries live in the neighborhood where they work. Some have always been residents of that community while others hail from more affluent places to land together in this rich neighborhood.

Success Case

Evonne is the current Executive Director of Emmaus Ministries, whose home is an apartment in the heart of her neighborhood. She was a middle class early twenty-four year old white lady from a town of corn fields in the Midwest. She had attended a local liberal arts college established to educate others like herself. After college she moved to Costa Rica to do missions, and while there she learned to find God at work in places with little financial resources.

Upon returning to the states she began working with Americorps, and she was assigned to work with a local church to reach out to the neighborhood she now calls home. Motivated by her experience of God at work in Costa Rica she immediately knew

outreach would not be effective for her in this context. She moved into an apartment in this complex for people with lower incomes, where the police received more calls than to any other place in the city at that time. It was considered a high crime, high drug trafficking area. This young, single, Midwest, middle class white lady moved into the neighborhood to be with the people who lived there. Upon moving she knew she would have to be the one to initiate relationship with the people who were so different from her. Instead of busying herself with flyers and programs, she went right to work trying to build relationships across apartheid. She would invite the ladies to coffee at her apartment, set up basketball rims in the circle at the end of the street. More than anything else, she found places and reasons to initiate listening. She had simple solutions to what seemed like hard problems but she withheld them in order to allow neighbors to brainstorm their own solutions. Some black women in the community would discredit her at first introduction creating a first rate escalation in anxiety and tension between. Evonne admits she was intimidated by some of the ways black women dismissed her as too young, too white and too wealthy to be trusted. Her willingness to acknowledge the tension and continue to show up with her neighbors won her the right to ask those same women to join the neighborhood initiatives she heard them long for like community clean-ups, beautification awards and currently purchasing an apartment unit to transform into a community center.

Evonne has since duplicated herself alongside dozens of neighbors who have become staff and allies for embracing the neighborhood.

Embracing

Initiation

“I was pursued by the community worker (Evonne)...became a volunteer...eventually I served on the board,” reported one neighbor who happens to also be a woman of color. *“We are now in the process of renovating our community center”* sounds less like apartheid and more like embracing. This interviewee also recalls how disillusioned with church she was before she was *“pursued”* by Evonne to engage with her community. Now this interviewee boldly professes faith in Christ, sings in the choir and is a very active member of one of the local congregations.

Invitation

The Christmas Store at Emmaus Ministries has been transformed from an outreach effort to one that invites participation from recipients. “Families who are registered for the Christmas Store have the opportunity to accrue “credit” through volunteer hours. The credit can be applied to purchases made at The Christmas Store. The executive director offers this assessment of the project “we have found it to help families maintain their dignity and feel like contributors to the church and community.”

Conclusion

Emmaus Ministries is a para-church organization who lives in its own neighborhood, initiating and inviting neighbors to engage in ways that *“empower people to use the wonderful talents that God has given them, but that the world often ignores.”* Emmaus wants all people to *“know that they are valued and loved.”* In order to communicate their intent, Emmaus Ministries had to make themselves vulnerable by leaving the comfort of the church office and newly constructed condominiums to actually live in the neighborhood with people they didn’t know. To be clear, these middle class staff persons who moved into the Emmaus neighborhood had not grown in such a humble community. However, they too humbled themselves and committed to listening

to and with neighbors. Embracing ministries like this are not anxious about programs or outcomes, just relationships.

Case Study: Holy Trinity Metropolitan Church

Context

Holy Trinity Metropolitan Church is located in the beautiful bay area of California. It is multi-faceted church in the Reformed Church in America that worships approximately 300-400 mostly upper middle class people of varying ethnicities and backgrounds. It rents a massive worship space for Sunday morning worship services but has all of its office space in the downtown section of the city.

For several years now one of the pastors has been doing vital ministry in the poorest neighborhood in the city, *The Tenderloin*. This section of town is overrun with mental illness, drug addiction and single residence occupancies (SRO's) where people pay at least five hundred dollars a month for a small room and a shared bathroom. These SRO's have no kitchen spaces and often are ill kept and infested with bugs, drugs and despair. First Metropolitan Church has acquired a warehouse that is now being re-purposed into a community center. This center will be equipped with showers, meeting spaces for community professionals such as doctors or therapists who meet with neighbors, an industrial kitchen, and will provide well actual office space for the fulltime staff of five who work in The Tenderloin.

Yellow footprints painted on the ground leads school aged children through the SRO's and streets lined with homeless people to arrive home safely. This is the path

mostly patrolled by city police; the prints mark the path where they are less likely to be shot, assaulted or abducted. Pastor Abe from First Metropolitan knows the Tenderloin like it is his home. There his team established a home for rehabilitating women and men to re-establish themselves after relapse.

The work in the Tenderloin is a long way from the pristine worship hall of Sunday mornings or the modern decor of the church offices. For Holy Trinity Metropolitan, it is ground zero, the place where it gets to live out its stated mission per their website: *“to be a church for the city and for its renewal, partnering with God in the work that is already being done here.”*

Embracing

Initiation

The contrast in their city between this neighborhood and the rest of the metropolis is stark. This ministry has an enduring presence in the county jail where the pastor and staff are fully aware they they will have their “hearts broken again and again.” They welcome relapse and re-entry to jail as the nature of things. They bring their own brokenness to the county jail in mutual relationship with inmates and together they learn to accept the grace of God in Bible study, story sharing and fellowship.

Escalation

To simply show up in the Tenderloin causes its own internal and external conflict. Holy Trinity has set up a community center in the Tenderloin because they realize human relationships are the key to embracing. “We are not social workers, we just don’t have the capacity or the experience to do that but we work well with people who are already in a programs.” The community center is a place to build trust across the

escalating apartheid that their differences have afforded. Space for services by day give way nights that usher in the freedom to transform the center into a place for date night, games and movies, the places where embracing is evident.

Conclusion

First Metropolitan Church had to travel a long way from their upper class church office downtown to commit to initiate relationship with the ever escalating complexity of the section of the city called *The Tenderloin*. They live in the tension with addiction, relapse and hope, in a mutual sharing of life on the most basic level of faithful human relationship, embrace. It's a hard place to live but this church is not afraid of the difficulty of embracing the Tenderloin community. Embracing ministries like First Metropolitan must be courageous in the face of conflict and sober in judgement. They must stand in the place of conflict hoping, trusting and most of all loving the tension as it rises and fall.

Final Things

These three success cases offer these conclusions:

- Embracing requires key leaders in the church or ministry to commit to its values and practices. In all three contexts the pastors and executive director lead by embodying some of the embracing practices within themselves.⁷
- An easily accessible place for embracing in close proximity to

⁷ Further research could be done to show if and how embracing can be practiced by individuals and organizations in interpersonal ways without senior leadership buy-in. The success models show how embracing happens when decisions, organizational structures and best practices demonstrate the values of embracing from the leader to the laity or staff.

people considered least, lost and last is necessary for encounter and embracing. The gathering place can be the church, a community center or a well in Samaria,

- Relationships are both the vehicle and the destination when it comes to embracing. This is not a program like outreach offers, embracing is a way of being that thrives in the timely, patient confines of human relationships.
- Embracing looks different in each setting based on staff size, content and scope of ministry. For Emmaus and First Metropolitan initiation simply meant moving into the neighborhood. Christ-centered motivation might not be as explicit in more community based ministries although the ones that operate inside the walls of churches might find it easier than others.

Data Collection/ Analysis/Storage

Data from individual and focus group interviews is collected at individual interviews through notes. I audio recorded the focus group and was attentive to taking field notes during and after interviews. This information is being stored in a password-protected computer. An outside company who is ethically bound to confidentiality will make transcriptions. The data will be analyzed to discover themes, stories, and images of consistent patterns and differences in each ministry in order to discover what aspect of the embracing model these ministries embody. All notes, interviews and audio recording will be sorted and gathered according to themes of the embracing model and will be kept until May 12, 2025.

Ethical Considerations

All parties were verbally informed that information received during interviews would be kept confidential prior to focused group interviews. Although parties were assured all names and identifiable information would be omitted in the final project, participants were also warned of the unlikely possibility that data could be mishandled.

All parties were informed of any and all audio recordings and were informed of their right to ask to have the recorder paused or removed at any given time during the interview for any reason without penalty. The recorder was placed in full view so the beginning and end of the recording was clear to all participants.

Power Dynamics

Power dynamics are important to be considered in this ethical analysis. There is a clear potential dynamic present with two of the ministries who previously and/or presently recognize the researcher as pastor. Subsequently, all parties being interviewed were informed that each interview was being held for the purpose of Doctorate in Ministry research. The researcher understands the benefits of having a pastoral relationship and history with two of the ministries. She functions as a complete insider at the multiethnic ministry and a partial insider/outsider to the smallest ministry as she once serves as pastor to the church wherein the ministry is currently located and all interviewees are a member. The liability of these pastoral relationships certainly exists for the interviewees, participants might be inclined to embellish information to gain the approval of the researcher/pastor. They might also withhold information to not offend the researcher/pastor.

Conclusions

Successful embracing ministries can be parachurch organizations who work alongside neighbors and churches. They might also be churches who embody embracing practices throughout their ministries in ways that shape the entire ethos of the congregation. Larger churches might also decide to commit to embracing individual portions of their ministry to the values of embrace as opposed to outreach. Each ministry gets to decide how outreach will be replaced by embracing in its own community and context.

Ministries committed to embracing will find that all of the individual steps might not fit with the particularity of their demographic and context. Successful ministries might find that certain parts of the embracing model already exists in their setting or fits more seamlessly with their mission and vision than others. The model is intended to serve the context not the reverse.

Embracing ministries function well when they are led by embracing leaders. Leaders set vision, inspire mission and create policy in churches and ministries. When embracing lives in the heart of pastors, executive directors and key leaders, the outcomes for that ministry have been found to be more amenable to embracing practices. When leaders become embracing disciple-makers in their own communities the impact has the latitude to be greater in that same community.

Chapter 4: The Pragmatic Task

The pragmatic task forms and enacts strategies of action that influence events in ways that are desirable. It invites questions, introspection, and interrogation of current practices in order to offer a model for ministries that embrace. It fundamentally answers the preceding chapters with a resounding “so what?” The first portion of this chapter will offer practical steps for moving the church from apartheid-perpetuating practices to more embracing ones. Each practical offering of the pragmatic task will integrate portions of the “priestly listening” of the descriptive/empirical task, the “sagely wisdom” of the interpretive task, and the “prophetic discernment” of the normative task, including conclusions gleaned from three successful embracing ministries.

The pragmatic task will ultimately produce a workbook to assist the evangelical church in America in understanding the history of apartheid in its outreach programs and the lies that often perpetuate these systems of separation. It integrates the three former tasks to offer a practical tool for embracing along with helpful steps for listening to the culture, the scripture and to God. This workbook is not intended to instruct on the work of mission per se but rather exists as an ethical guide intending to calibrate the heart of the missionary. It will be most useful for practitioners who are either already engaged in some sort of outreach ministry or poised to begin engagement. To be clear, this workbook is less of a methodical guide directing its subjects toward a new program but is more of an ethical workbook to cultivate the heart of Christians who do outreach in their communities and neighborhoods.

Making the Move

Motivation

Some of the information in this project is new to practitioners who have been doing the very best they can to do what makes for better outcomes for people with felt needs in their communities. It seems fair to say most Christians lead outreach efforts with their best intentions. The movement from outreach to embracing begins there, in the heart, where intentions are born. The faithful move to embracing requires a heart intent on holiness that honors God by honoring God's image on earth as it is reflected in all human beings. That means the point of departure is not the need, or the latest trend; it is the commitment to join God at work, especially in those people who live on the receiving end of evangelical Christian outreach efforts.

Emmaus Ministries came to be by way of a well intending church member who wanted to reach out to the children in the neighborhood. She intended this effort to correspond with the army of church members who would visit the apartment complex weekly to glean stories, prayer requests, and extend invitations to attend church on Sundays.

Evonne was hired to continue the patterns of outreach that preceded her, but she had a very different idea. She had learned how to listen to her community, listen with her community, and listen for God in her community. Embracing requires retiring one's own motive, be it ever so valiant at times, to listen well and often.

Listening to the community requires one to be immersed in it with patience. Evonne lives in the community, hosts tea time, and invites neighbors to meet around what matters to them. Once a group of neighbors were frustrated about weeds that obstructed their view at the entrance of the complex. The place where the weeds grew was public property that belonged to the city. Instead of offering a solution or using her connections

to get the weeds cut down, she asked the group what they wanted to do about it themselves. After a few days of talking and listening to each other, the neighbors decided to write a letter to the city. The city apologized for its oversight and removed the obstruction immediately. The neighbors learned that their voices mattered to the city and began brainstorming bigger issues in their apartment complex.

Emmaus Ministries recognizes each individual as an asset with the God-given gifting to contribute to their own and their community's flourishing, regardless of their background, race, or social location. The assets and gifts can be seen and heard by anyone who turns the ear to listen.

Apartheid is so real that outreach practitioners seldom engage with recipients of services outside of the walls of the program. Most suburbanites will not consider relocating their entire family to an under-resourced housing development. These realities make it seem impossible to listen to and with people. Sometimes program organizers do interviews and collect stories about the struggles of poor people or the plight of the prodigal. These efforts get data but fail to immerse listeners in ways that change their motivation. If physical immersion is not possible, then consider using media as a means for listening

This project provides opportunities for practitioners to immerse themselves in the pieces of media that give an ear to the communities served. The songs or artistic offerings are seldom the songs played on the radio. They are often tucked behind another track or tacked on at the end of a project. Sometimes one has to listen to the entire project several times to get the heartbeat and the longing in the lyrics. Right motivation begins at the ear with listening.

Initiation

Lots of programs start with a sign-up sheet. Depending on the scope of the resources given, there might be additional documents needed to receive services. It's a vulnerable place to be, to have to give every ounce of information about yourself over to strangers. Back doors often provide entry to homeless people who must submit to alcohol screening before re-entering the program at the end of the day. Outreach recipients have no privacy, but the ones reaching out might not even offer so much as their last name to those who come for services.

The Rock Church makes no distinction between "us" and "them" in their programs. Their summer program invited neighborhood children and adults, church families and city officials. In summers when gang violence was on the rise, The Rock Church opened their parking lot, erected basketball goals, and initiated embrace with the entire community. Some of the children had been home all day while parents were working. Some adults came from mega churches in the city. Children sold snacks alongside seniors, adults initiated kickball games with pastors and neighbors, and at the end of the night everybody picked up trash before departing. This was a rare place in this city, so rare that gang members would lay aside their animosity with each other to protect the place where embracing was on display during summer months at The Rock Church.

The second step to embracing requires vulnerability on the part of those accustomed to reaching out. Initiation provides the opportunity to be taken advantage of, for one's worst fears to be realized, and even more to be rejected by the very ones being resourced. Initiation gives "them" the advantage. Initiation is best exercised when marked by a

specific place. For Jesus the place was the well in Samaria. For First Metropolitan, the rough and tumble streets of the worst neighborhood in the city was the place.

Practitioners may have to create space in their church building, rent space in the community, or venture into the marketplace where recipients of goods and services are attending to daily tasks. The Rock Church would attend ethnic festivals and local block parties to enjoy food and music prepared by those who would otherwise be just a number in a line. They report feeling out of place and uncomfortable at times, like they didn't belong in those unfamiliar places with unfamiliar people. They soon found that showing up without judgment, eating the food, and learning the dances were ways of initiating embrace. In one sense they had everything to offer, but in another they had much also to receive.

Escalation

Anywhere relationships are bred there will be conflict, mostly around difference. All three success cases had to navigate the painful terrain of conflict. The staff at Emmaus and The Rock Church have been confronted with the historical schism between white women and black women, but in different ways. Whereas the staff at Emmaus consists mostly of white women committed to embracing a neighborhood filled with women of color, The Rock Church has a black female pastor who at one time led a predominately white female laity. The struggle was definitely real for both ministries, especially amidst the campaign and election of the first black president, the slaying of black bodies at the hands of police in America, and the relentless argument about whether “black lives matter” or “all lives matter.” These women led in a rising battlefield of rhetoric and conflict, yet did not give in to it.

Embracing ministries must learn to stand in the rising tension of conflict based on cultural difference. Holy Trinity invites renowned speakers to their campus to help them become aware of their biases. Emmaus and The Rock are members of Christian Community Development Association, where they teach about asset-based community development, strategies for doing “with” instead of “for,” and biblical truths about race, class, and gender inequities. This sort of training will give language, context, and definitions that will be essential to balance the rising tide of conflict that leads to embracing.

Invitation

Flyers line the screen doors of homes in the low-income neighborhood. They don invitations to come weekly, monthly, annually to partake of the services or program provided. Billboards in big cities flash attractive pictures of pastors of churches or beautiful cathedrals inviting people who don’t go to church to try again, or maybe to try for the first time. All of these are methods of invitation, to get someone outside to come inside and partake of what is being offered. Outreach programs are set up that way, to extend an invitation to come get something.

Holy Trinity sends out the invitation to incarcerated people to prepare for them to come. They go into the jail, and instead of taking the reins of evangelism, they invite inmates to participate with God together with them. This invitation does not require either party to conceal their weaknesses, deny their brokenness, or refuse the means of grace because of their sin. Likewise, the young adults who came to the choir at The Rock Church came with their visceral worship inspired by the shameful or painful life they

lived. In their brokenness and without a full confession of faith they were invited to participate in sharing a gospel they might not have even fully believed yet.

A longtime resident of Emmaus Ministries reported being “pursued” by Evonne’s invitation first to come to tea. The invitations kept coming to serve in various leadership capacities and finally to become full-time staff to Emmaus Ministries. Invitation has led her from disconnected resident to staff in the neighborhood. Invitation does not require a profession of faith; it simply requires an extended arm that gestures toward the direction of God’s loving embrace with all humanity.

It must be said that the practices modeled by the success cases should be paired with spiritual disciplines, including scripture reading, prayer of confession, and personal reflection. In order to marry all of the moving parts of this project, practitioners can use the Embracing Workbook to solidify the process in their hearts and minds.

The Workbook Explained

Books are everywhere. Church offices, home offices, night tables, in the back seat of cars and on electronic book readers: books are everywhere. Then there is the Christian bookstore, which, on top of hundreds of evangelical book offerings, also provides mugs, scarves, gifts about books turned into movies and movies turned into book. This project could not faithfully render another book to stimulate the mind but rather offers a workbook to invite spiritual exercises that invites the heart, mind, soul and spirit to engage. The workbook begins with a glossary of terms before each chapter of the workbook provides five sections: “The Historical,” “The Lies,” “The Movements,” “The Success Cases” and “The Work.”

Glossary of Terms

A few key terms in the workbook require clear definitions for the sake of continuity and clarity for pastors, leaders and practitioners for whom these might be new themes. Each definition provides scholarly and practical interpretations to make this workbook as accessible as possible.

Introduction

The first chapter of the workbook exposes the historical roots of outreach and deeply held beliefs that motivate community engagement agents to prevent other image bearers of God from exercising dominion, according to the Creator's design. It captures the self-centered value embedded in the evangelical church in America's outreach practices and offers John's Jesus as the embracing figure who is motivated only by the Father's will. The remaining chapters engage Archbishop Desmond Tutu's claim, that three particular lies about God and others must be met with three *ubuntu* perpetuating truths. The *bantu* concept *Ubuntu* literally meaning personhood, will challenge the individualism of western evangelical mentalities to offer a collective construct that acknowledges "each individual's humanity is ideally expressed in relationship with other."⁸

The second chapter informs how all people are created by God to determine their own ends. It highlights the history of apartheid in South Africa to introduce Archbishop Desmond Tutu's theology in context. This chapter offers a lens through which to reconsider lies related to poor people and how these lies maintain apartheid in our communities. It also recognizes the true vulnerability of Jesus who initiates contact with the poor woman at the well by exposing the degree to which he too was in need of the

⁸ Battle, *Ubuntu: I in You and You in Me*, 3.

most basic human substance, water.

The third chapter will highlight the apartheid perpetuating *pigmentocracy*, whereby a human is vested with worth on the basis of skin color. Tutu's claims, a human being gains his value not from his skin color but from his identity as an image bearer of God. This chapter invites bell hooks to accentuate the historical relationship between middle class white women in helping professions and black women, in order to name the *pigmentocracy* that escalates conflict in outreach programs between these two groups. John's Jesus exemplifies how to stand in the rising tension of historical and social differences to get to the embracing truth that equalizes.

The fourth chapter will borrow Archbishop Tutu's third claim against apartheid that Christ's work of reconciliation was never intending "separateness," "disunity," "enmity" or "alienation. Instead he will offer a vision of Christ who "restores human community" with intention toward mutual sharing amidst "cultural otherness." This chapter will explore the church's relationship with those outside of the church and the way names like "the lost," and "unchurched" dehumanize and reinforce the separate system. John's Jesus gestures an invitation to participation with God; toward a preferred future for all.

Finally, the conclusion will summarize the four embracing moves, providing three helpful conclusions and suggestions for how the contents in this workbook might be used.

The Historical

The church did not arrive at its separate development overnight, it has grown out of a long history of segregation, dehumanization and name calling. Each section opens with a historical survey of apartheid, presented in a way that considers South Africa's heinous system as well as the one often perpetuated by the evangelical church in America. This

section unveils deeply held beliefs and practices in the fabric of the church in South Africa and here in America that objectifies poor people, black women and people outside of the church. These history lessons chronicle patterns of white flight and white women's bias', as well as the emergence of the evangelical church in America as one concerned primarily with personal piety.

The Lies

The interpretive task plays an important role in this section of the workbook that tells sin creates an abiding lie that prevents image bearers of God from exercising dominion according to God command in Genesis 1:13-14. This lie is exacerbated by implicit bias which withholds dignity from poor people, black woman and people outside of the church.

The Success Cases

The descriptive/empirical task and its success cases point the church toward other ministries who have modeled the embracing process. These examples will provide helpful images for ministries and practitioners to recognize ways to do replace objectifying outreach practices.

The Work

The Work offers an opportunity to interact with the four embracing moves. It extends the invitation to listen, reflect, engage, pray and respond.

Listen

In order to faithfully engage in relationship one must take on a posture of listening.

Listening provides a faithful means by which to:

Hear from God

Consider the experiences of others

Attend to one's own soul

This section offers words and lyrics from pop culture to invite practitioners to hear what nomads, prodigals and exiles are saying on the other side of the apartheid.⁹

The lyrics were all gleaned from www.metrolyrics.com and can be found at the back of the workbook. This section does require access to a music search engine like www.spotify.com, www.apple.com/music or www.youtube.com/user/googlemusic, hearing the voices are as important as reading the lyrics.

Reflect

After listening to the voices and words, hearers are invited to sit with the words for a few moments, hours or even days before moving to the next step. It might be helpful to listen to the media several times before moving on. Listening and reflecting are important steps to embracing because it allows the experience with the populace to move beyond an intellectual engagement to a place where deep compassion can be manifested.

Engage

Now read the biblical text provided in the movement.

⁹ The matter of objectification is critical to this project, especially the way it uses lies to rob people of their own voices. In order to avoid the attitudes, it seeks to redirect, this section offers lyrics at the back of the workbook. Multimedia via spoken word, music and lyrics allow nomads, prodigals, and exiles to tell practitioners their own stories of life on the other side of the apartheid. These lyrics appear throughout the project as sign and witness to the perpetual harm outreach can do when it allows implicit bias and objectification to prevail in its programs.

Read it slowly.

Read it aloud

Read it in different translations, if possible.

Pray:

Ask God for illumination and insight to understand the experience of those on the receiving end of outreach practices. Clarify points of confession, and pray for a way forward from outreach to embracing.

Respond:

Prepare a response to the song based on the revelation received in the process.

Write the response in a journal entry, a letter, a song, a blog post, use whatever creative medium you desire.

Possible Uses

This workbook intends to be a traveling companion for pastors, leaders, and Christians who are or intend to be involved in outreach ministries. This workbook can be used as a daily exercise by visiting a different movement each day for five days or just one movement for a whole week before moving on to the next. It can also be used as a bible study resource, part of a classroom curriculum or sermon series.

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This bibliography will be identical to the one provided for the entire project as the same sources inform this workbook.

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Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

This project will be useful for churches and ministries who have developed outreach programs to meet the needs of those considered less fortunate. This glossary is provided for definition of terms and clarity.

Apartheid: Its roots are planted in South African soil (1948-1994), where native South African peoples were systemically oppressed by Christian colonizers and forced to live, pray, and work within segregated systems. The term *apartheid* is used in this project with respect for freedom fighters like Archbishop Desmond Tutu. In his December 11, 1984, Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, Tutu declared that “apartheid has ...ensured that God’s children, just because they are black, should be treated as if they were things, and not as of infinite value as being created in the image of God.”¹

The term *apartheid* goes beyond that geographical context. Apartheid also describes the demarcation in American Christian society based on race, class, and socioeconomic location.

Dominion: Genesis 1:26-27 rationalizes every individual’s right to exercise dominion according to God’s command:

*Then God said,
“Let us make humankind[c] in our image, according to our likeness;
and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air,
and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth,
and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”
27 So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;*

¹ Desmond Tutu and John Allen, *The Rainbow People of God: The Making of a Peaceful Revolution* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 88.

*male and female he created them.*²

Lisa Sharon Harper's definition of dominion prevails in this project in so far as it denounces imperial ideals of the dominion that "force(s) weaker subjects to bend to the will of empire or be broken."³ She used dominion according to its Hebrew word, *radah*. *Radah* has to do with the belief that "all humanity is created with the call and the capacity" to operate in a way that "equalizes power."⁴ This God given capacity is implicit in every individual's standing as image bearers of God. As such, all created beings have the authority to exercise agency and determine their own telos or ends.

Embracing: Willie Jennings presents embracing as "a vision of Christian intellectual identity that is compelling and attractive, embodying not simply the cunning of reason but the power of love that constantly gestures toward joining, toward the desire to hear, to know, and to embrace."⁵ Miroslav Volf defines embracing as "the will to give ourselves to others and 'welcome' them, to readjust our identities to make space for them..."⁶ The term will be used in this project to describe the incremental way Jesus reveals himself to persons who then find freedom to fully exercise dominion.

Outreach: *Toxic Charity* author Bob Lupton describes outreach as a relationship of

² All Scripture derives from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise stated.

³ Lisa Sharon Harper, *The Very Good Gospel: How Everything Wrong Can Be Made Right* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Waterbook, 2016), 555, Kindle.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 491.

⁵ Willie James Jennings, *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 6426-6427, Kindle.

⁶ Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 30, Nook.

dependence that demands the existence of two groups, a giver and a receiver.⁷ It assumes a set of habits and perspectives mobilized to disseminate resources to peoples and communities in need. Outreach is the evangelical church in America's chief method for providing goods and services to communities and people in need.

⁷ Robert Lupton, *Toxic Charity: Book Summary* (Carol Stream, IL: Growing Leader, 2014), 69, Kindle.

Appendix B: The Embracing Workbook

A Proposed Draft

FROM OUTREACH TO
EMBRACING

A Workbook to Tune the Heart for
Community Engagement

Rev. Dr. Denise Kingdom Grier, DMin, MDiv, BA

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Introduction to the Workbook

Books are everywhere. Church offices, home offices, night tables, in the back seat of cars and on electronic book readers, books are everywhere. Then there is the Christian bookstore, which, on top of hundreds of evangelical book offerings, provide mugs, scarves, gifts about books turned into movies and movies turned into books. This project offers another book to stimulate the mind but adds a workbook to invite spiritual exercises that invites the heart, mind, soul, and spirit to engage.

Chapter one exposes the historical roots of outreach and deeply held beliefs that motivate community engagement agents to prevent other image bearers of God from exercising dominion according to the Creator's design. It captures the self centered value imbedded in the evangelical church in America's outreach practices. and offers John's Jesus as the embracing figure who is only motivated by the Father's will.

The remaining chapters engage Archbishop Desmond Tutu's claim, that three particular lies about God and others must be met with three *ubuntu* perpetuating truths. The *bantu* concept *ubuntu* literally means personhood, it will challenge the individualism of western evangelical mentalities to offer a collective construct that acknowledges "each individual's humanity is ideally expressed in relationship with other."¹

Chapter two will inform how all people are created by God to determine their own ends.² It highlights the history of apartheid in South Africa to introduce Archbishop Desmond Tutu's theology in context. This chapter offers a lens through which to

¹ Michael Battle, *Ubuntu: I in You and You in Me* (New York: Seabury Books, 2009), 2-3.

² Desmond Tutu and John Allen, *The Rainbow People of God: The Making of a Peaceful Revolution* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 66.

reconsider lies related to poor people and how these lies maintain apartheid in our communities. It also recognizes the true vulnerability of Jesus who initiates contact with the poor woman at the well by exposing the degree to which he too was in need of the most basic human substance, water.

The third chapter will highlight the apartheid perpetuating lie Tutu calls “pigmentocracy,” whereby a human is vested with worth on the basis of skin color. Tutu’s claims, a human being gains his value not from his skin color but from his identity as an image bearer of God.³ This chapter invites bell hooks to accentuate the historical relationship between middle class white women in helping professions and black women, in order to name the pigmentocracy that escalates conflict in outreach programs between these two groups. John’s Jesus exemplifies how to stand in the rising tension of historical and social differences to get to the embracing truth that equalizes.

Chapter four, will borrow Archbishop Tutu’s third claim against apartheid that Christ’s work of reconciliation was never intending “separateness,” “disunity,” “enmity” or “alienation. Instead he will offer a vision of Christ who “restores human community” with intention toward mutual sharing amidst “cultural otherness.”⁴ This chapter will explore the church’s relationship with those outside of the church and the way names like “the lost,” and “unchurched” dehumanize and reinforce the separate system. John’s Jesus gestures an invitation to participation with God, toward a preferred future for all.

Finally, the conclusion will summarize the four embracing moves, provide three helpful conclusions and suggestions for how the contents in this workbook might be used.

³ Ibid., 99.

⁴ Ibid., 64.

Glossary of Terms

A few key terms in the workbook require clear definitions for the sake of continuity and clarity for pastors, leaders and practitioners for whom these might be new terms. Each definition provides scholarly and practical interpretations to make this workbook as accessible as possible.

The Sections

Each chapter of the workbook includes four sections: “The Historical,” “The Lies,” “The Movements,” “The Success Cases” and “The Work.”

The Historical

The church did not arrive at its separate development overnight, it has grown out of a long history of segregation, dehumanization and name calling. Each section opens with a historical survey of apartheid, presented in a way that considers South Africa’s heinous system as well as the one often perpetuated by the evangelical church in America. This section unveils deeply held beliefs and practices in the fabric of the church in South Africa and here in America that objectifies poor people, black women and people outside of the church. These history lessons chronicle patterns of white flight and white women’s bias’, as well as the emergence of the evangelical church in America as one concerned primarily with personal piety.

The Lies

The interpretive task plays an important role in this section of the workbook that tells sin creates an abiding lie that prevents image bearers of God from exercising dominion

according to God command in Genesis 1:13-14. This lie is exacerbated by implicit bias which withholds dignity from poor people, black woman and people outside of the church.

The Success Cases

The Work

Each section of *The Work* offers an opportunity to interact with the four embracing moves.

It begins with:

Listen: The matter of objectification is critical to this project, especially the way it uses lies to

rob people of their own voices. In order to avoid the very attitudes it seeks to redirect,

this section offers lyrics at the back of the workbook. Multimedia via spoken word, music

and lyrics allow nomads, prodigals, and exiles to tell practitioners their own stories of life

on the other side of the apartheid.

These lyrics appear throughout the project as sign and witness to the perpetual harm

outreach can do when it allows implicit bias and objectification to prevail in its programs.

It reveals the works and messages spoken in the spaces where outreach programs and services tend to target. The lyrics were all gleaned from www.metrolyrics.com and can be found in this section of the workbook. This section does require access

to a music search engine as hearing the voices are as important as reading the lyrics.⁵

In order to faithfully engage in community one must take on a posture of listening.

Listening provides a faithful means by which to:

Hear from God

Consider well the experiences of others

Attend to one's own soul

Reflect: After listening to the voices and words, hearers are invited to sit with the words

for a few moments, hours or even days before moving to the next step. It might be helpful to listen to the media several times before moving on. Listening and reflecting are important steps to embracing because it allows the experience with the populace to move beyond an intellectual engagement to a place where deep compassion can be manifested.

Engage: Read the biblical text provided in the movement.

Read it slowly.

Read it aloud

Read it in different translations, if possible.

Pray: Ask God for illumination and insight to understand the

experience of those on the receiving end of outreach practices. Clarify points of confession, and pray for a way forward from outreach to embracing.

⁵ www.spotify.com, www.applemusic.com, www.youtube.com

Respond: Prepare a response to the song based on the revelation received in the process.

Write the response in a journal entry, a letter, a song, a blog post, use whatever creative

medium you desire.

Possible Uses

This workbook intends to be a traveling companion for pastors, leaders and Christians who are or intend to be involved in outreach ministries. This workbook can be used as a daily exercise by visiting a different movement each day for five days or just one movement for a whole week before moving on to the next. It can also be used as a Bible study resource, part of a classroom curriculum or sermon series.

Bibliography

This bibliography will be identical to the one provided for the entire project as all these sources culminate in this workbook.

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⁶ Tutu and Allen, *Rainbow People of God*, 88.

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⁹ *Ibid.*, 491

¹⁰ Willie James Jennings, *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 6426-6427, Kindle.

¹¹ Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 30, Nook.

dependence that demands the existence of two groups, a giver and a receiver.¹² It assumes a set of habits and perspectives mobilized to disseminate resources to peoples and communities in need. Outreach is the evangelical church in America's chief method for providing goods and services to communities and people in need.

The Case for John

This workbook introduces a biblical model for community engagement rooted in the gospel of John. Let's be honest, the Bible through the ages has been a worthy tool to justify chattel slavery, subjugation of women, social apartheid in South Africa and a great deal of other activity including outreach programs for the poor and needy in the evangelical church in America. These outreach efforts inspired mostly by the synoptics prove fruitful in missional efforts, but neglect to challenge the heart and actions of the persons being launched into mission.

Collectively the synoptics prove faithful and fruitful atlas for missions and outreach, but have been used in ways that allow apartheid perpetuating lies to tether others to the needy side of the chasm. The church in apartheid needs a gospel witness that interrogates the motives and ideals of outreach programs, to dispel the lies that keep the recipients of outreach programs from exercising dominion according to God's created design.

The Johannine gospel provides an opportunity to offer a very different model of engagement, in fact, it exists as its very own genre apart from the synoptics. Whereas the synoptics have been used to focus on the kingdom of God which is like a vineyard, a tree and shepherd, John focus' more on Jesus who actually is the vine, the bread, the shepherd. John's Jesus engages in ways that supersede typical outreach practices and their tendency to maintain distance between the server and the served. John's gospel is

¹² Robert Lupton, *Toxic Charity: Book Summary* (Carol Stream, IL: Growing Leader, 2014), 69, Kindle.

less of a reference guide for missional engagement and more of an ethical one that reveals Jesus for the sake of the church. John's Jesus enters the apartheid deliberately and incrementally and in the fourth chapter informs an embracing model for community engagement with motivation, initiation, escalation, and invitation by degrees as the way toward embracing.

The Setting

The Johannine community finds its historical context in or near Palestine where followers of John the Baptist and various other Jews, including one who would come to be known as the beloved disciple, decided to follow Jesus. These believers were soon accompanied by non-temple dwellers known as Samaritans who overlooked the Davidic background but focused on the Mosaic context instead. These associations caused converted Johannine Jews to be accused of exchanging Jewish monotheism for Samaritan idolatry. The leaders of the Jews therefore caused the community to reject converted Jews by ultimately having them expelled from the temple. In this way John's gospel differs from the synoptic communities as a persecuted community cast outside of the temple and under severe persecution. The form of the gospel of John presents Jesus who is aware of both his divine and missional nature, for us and "with us" in a world torn apart.

The very good news of John's gospel is that it includes characters like an ostracized Samaritan woman who lived outside of the synoptic communities where John's Christ who is Emmanuel for and with the entire world loved her enough to gradually enter into a loving embrace with her.

The people who met Jesus in these Johannine narratives resemble some of the people

often objectified by outreach programs in today's church communities. Samaritans, like the woman in John 4, were regarded by Jews as unclean, spiritually misguided people, with whom Jews were not permitted to share anything. In fact, Jews avoided Samaria at all costs. To compound matters this woman's moral practices marginalized her, leaving her socially impoverished within her own community. She arrived at the well under the same kind of stigma and oppression many black women come to outreach programs with today.

This and other narratives reflect the complexity of modern life when apartheid based on social location, physical characteristics and proximity to the sources of power dictates one's value, worth and ability to exercise dominion.

For the sake of clarity and ease, the workbook offers three successful embracing ministries. "The Rock Church," "Emmaus Ministries," and "Holy Trinity Metropolitan Church" are real church/ministries whose names have been changed for the purpose of this workbook. They were selected because they successfully demonstrate in whole or in part the ethic and understanding of the embracing model of ministry that combats social apartheid in the Christian church. All three ministries represent a similar theological background, allowing for close comparisons among their ways of embodying this model. These ministries are diverse enough in size, location, and expression to empower other churches in varying scales to shift from outreach to embracing practices as they serve particular contexts.

Chapter 1: Motivation

The decisive path to embracing commences where holiness is centralized. “Holiness has to do with more than mere acts. Our motives must be holy, that is, arising from a desire to do something simply because it is the will of God.”¹ Jesus “had to go through Samaria,” because it was the will of God.

This chapter will provide a historical account of the social apartheid in American cities. It will identify the lies that motivate some people to prevent other people from exercising dominion according to God’s design in Genesis 1. John’s gospel will then illumine Jesus as one motivated to go to Samaria solely by the will of the Father who sent him. Finally, *The Work* will invite readers to interrogate their own motivations for community engagement to move them from outreach to embracing.

Historical

Willie Jennings traces the church’s system of apartheid all the way back to colonization of America which “drove an abiding wedge between the land and peoples,” rendering a first order apartheid that made “creation into private property.”² Colonizers then began to resist patterns of discipleship reflective of pentecost’s all encompassing mutuality in exchange for patterns that demanded “spatial commodification and social segregation.” The seeds of apartheid would bury themselves in the soil of the evangelical church in America and bear fruit in the latter portion of the nineteenth century and well into the middle of the twentieth when the metropolis underwent social and economic shifts.

¹ Jerry Bridges, *The Pursuit of Holiness* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1996), 43.

² Willie James. Jennings, *Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 6443, Kindle.

The metropolis was once occupied by “native-born white Protestants” who were able during reconstruction to “upgrade” from manual farm labor to non-manual work in other parts of the metropolis. As business and industry began to explode poorer populations of people began to flood the innermost parts of the city causing those who had moved outward to migrate further away from the center. This was the beginning of the social divide between “the haves and the have-nots” as it were. The only people left in the center city were blue-collar white people who with the shift could finally afford to live there. The exodus of those who would become middle class white people had a huge impact on city churches that were depleted of the resources of highly skilled laity and the economic ability to maintain buildings and budgets.

Each decade seemed to usher in a new breed of immigrants to the metropolis. First, blue-collar workers, then the once despised Catholic people, followed by non-English speaking immigrants, finally there was “the Negro invasion.”³ Each new group’s need provided the suburbs with a mission and the central part of the city with a nuanced ecclesiological expression. Neighborhoods were redlined and the suburbanites decided who could live in their neighborhood, and more importantly, who could not. Even after the 1948 Supreme Court decision against restrictive covenants (*Shelley v. Kraemer*), suburban communities continued to mark invisible lines separating the served from the serving, the employee from the employed and the middle-class white Protestant church from everyone else. This left one conclusion, “the long tradition of social apartheid had eventuated a schism of the first magnitude in metropolitan Protestantism.”⁴ In this way

³ Gibson Winter, *The Suburban Captivity of the Churches* (New York, 1961), 51.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 52.

the mainline American churches resembled their apartheid perpetuating kin in South Africa.

As the metropolis became more populated the suburbs flourished with their practiced uniformity and active affability. The Protestant church in the suburbs had come so far from the Petrine and Pauline ideology which championed the church as the household of God and the priesthood of all believers. Historians fault American Puritanism, who in his their opinion turned the church into a classroom and turned preaching into instruction thereby separating the teacher from the taught, where truth yields only obedience and faith demands hard work. These common ideals set suburban churches on the road to economic integration such that people began to relate to each other primarily on the basis of similarity.

The negro invasion of the metropolis caused a problem for blue-collar whites who endeavored to move as close to the suburbs as their budgets would allow, though often stretching them thin financially. Even though they were not economically middle class, they were provided access to middle-class association on the basis of being white, Protestant, English speaking and most importantly not negro.

The problem with the negro was his four hundred years as a slave to white owners who now had built an island of safety, which would only be jeopardized by racial inclusiveness. Furthermore, he worshipped differently, held differing values and had a great deal to overcome to cast off the mental bonds chattel slavery had placed on his mind and community.

This separation gave birth to the emergence of calls the introverted church.⁵ The

⁵ Ibid., 104.

introverted church was comprised of other ethnic congregations with their own languages and expressions, the black church and its rising middle class and the sects who were mostly poor believing Christians whose only hope was in the hereafter. Having been crowded into the urban centers, each of these groups turned to its own interests. In the case of the black church “the black bourgeoisie” would manage to obtain economic middle-class standing by servicing their own communities as funeral directors, barbers, and so forth.⁶ This emerging group was economically equipped to live in the suburbs but was never given the middle-class access that blue-collar workers with less economical standing were offered in the suburbs. The suburban church continued its vehement resistance to integration although the world around it had begun to change rapidly.

The 1950s gave birth to the civil rights movement, which exposed the painful division between whites and blacks, including black clergy and white clergy as depicted in Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*.⁷ The chasm also existed amongst blue collar and white-collar sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee where apartheid claimed King’s life with an assassin’s bullet in 1968. Unfortunately, the gap of segregation grows wider as the Protestant church continues to draw indelible distinctions between peoples, classes, political ideals, races and communities. Apartheid in American cities and subsequently in her churches is maintained by deeply held lies.

The Lies

Bold lines of division exist in neighborhoods and communities where outreach programs hold recipients of goods and services at bay. Lisa Sharon Harper in *The Very*

⁶ Ibid., 115.

⁷ Martin Luther King, *A Letter from a Birmingham Jail* (Andover, MA: Publisher not identified, 1968).

Good Gospel implicates certain lies about other image bearers of God as one of the key protagonists in the church's apartheid today.⁸ There are lies that allow image bearers of God to deny others the most significant aspect of what it means to be human-- namely, the right to exercise dominion according to God's command in Genesis 1.

Since the serpent persuaded the first humans to partake of the forbidden tree in Genesis 2, humanity have been in a constant battle with the lies of the enemy. It all began with a lie about God; when the serpent assured Adam and Eve that they would not surely die if they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This lie attempted to pick away at humanity's trust in God by creating an apartheid between themselves and God--an apartheid called sin.

Sin, once embedded in the soul of an individual, organization or system begins to produce shame in that place. According to Harper, the core lie of shame is "I am not enough," which gets communicated to the human soul at work, in family systems, through media, and various other ways.⁹ Shame causes withdrawal from community and ultimately lashing out against those who are around. This lashing out denies recipients their right as image bearers of God to execute the one simple God-given act endowed upon every human being at creation, the right to exercise dominion.

The hebrew word for dominion is *radah* which Harper defines as "the right to exercise agency to steward God's creation."¹⁰ It makes all people "equally powerful and equally

⁸ Lisa Sharon Harper, *The Very Good Gospel: How Everything Wrong Can Be Made Right* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Waterbook, 2016), Kindle Reader, 1144.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

vulnerable,” leaving no justification for separate systems in society, church or life.¹¹ However, she sees the core lie of Western civilization in particular to be that, “God reserved the power of dominion for some, not all.”¹² This lie lead to abuse, powered by explicit bias against Natives Americans who were annihilated, Africans who were enslaved and continues to deny citizens full rights under the law. Far deeper in the fabric of Western culture, is the existence of implicit bias. Harper defines implicit bias as; “What the mind does when it makes quick associations in order to shorten its thought process.” Implicit bias is a non-intentional source that substantiates lies about others to legitimize denying them the right to exercise dominion. Lies about God, lies about ourselves and lies about others explicitly and implicitly provide the recipe for apartheid-perpetuating practices in the church’s outreach programs and play out in the ways we are motivated to serve.

Objectification

Nineteenth century philosopher Immanuel Kant, grew up a poor child in Prussia where he formulated the moral theory that introduced objectification to the subject of ethics. Although Kant’s theory is couched in sexual ethics in particular, his claim is useful and applicable to the claim of this workbook. In the context of sexual love Kant claims, “Sexual love makes of the loved person an object of appetite, as soon as that appetite has been stilled, the person is cast aside as one casts away a lemon which has been sucked

¹¹ Ibid, 2339.

¹² Ibid, 2346. Harper uses the example of a table to explain implicit bias (ibid.) When one sees it he does not register four legs, a top and then a table. The mind takes in the whole and deduces based on data it must be a table. This is useful when deducing a table but the Implicit bias test done with people showed 75% of people tested showed racial bias toward European-ness and away from African-ness. European or closest to white was associated with goodness, leadership, and other positive qualities while African or closest to black was associated with criminality, dishonesty, and other negative qualities.

dry, as soon as a person becomes an object of appetite for another, all motives of moral relationship cease to function, because as an object of appetite for another a person becomes a thing and can be treated and used as such by everyone.”¹³ Christian outreach programs tend to satisfy the appetite of practitioners whose ultimate goal is to fulfill their own purposes and cast aside the persons being served when the service is complete.

The director of Emmaus Ministries, Evonne, saw this unhealthy pattern at Christmas time when partner churches would launch an Angel Tree initiative for needy families. The churches would erect a tree with tiny angel shaped labels on them upon which would be written gift requests from parents and children in the low-income apartment complex in the neighborhood. Here the apartheid was clear, there were those who lived in the apartments who were asking for gifts and those who went to the church who gave the gifts. There’s something about Christmas that motivates people to give generously and this effort was evidence of it.

Evonne soon recognized the way in which this way of operating perpetuated the divide and made certain assumptions about the neighbors in the apartment complex. It assumed they had no money to buy gifts for themselves, when in fact they did have some money though maybe not a lot. It assumed that the lack of money excluded them from the process of shopping, selecting and wrapping gifts for their loved ones.

Emmaus Ministries was no longer motivated by the ends, getting gifts in the hands of the people but by the means that acknowledges the dignity and rights given to every image bearer of God. The Christmas store would take the angel tree gifts and allow people to purchase them at significantly less than actual retail prices. Parents and children

¹³ Immanuel Kant and Louis Infield, *Lectures on Ethics* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 163.

could also receive coupons for working in the store or in the neighborhood, applicable to purchases from the Christmas store. People with low income became shoppers who could make selections, challenge prices and take home their own gifts to wrap and give.

Emmaus ministries rejects outreach on its head with its noble attempts that tend to lean towards the ends and means of the server over and against the served.

Kant's theory of objectification reflects the value of the Hebrew word *radah* and its permission for all humanity to set and pursue their own ends. One interpreter of Kant maintains "the capacity to determine one's own end is not just a christian right but the very thing that distinguishes humans from animals and inanimate objects."¹⁴ However, the christian church in America has denied certain human beings the right to determine their own end in its outreach practices.

Embracing Move

Motivation

John's gospel offers Jesus with one primary simple motivation as proclaimed in John 6:38 "...for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me."

John 4:6 makes clear that Jesus "had to go through Samaria" though there were alternative routes from the Judean Valley to Galilee. In fact, the rift between Samaritan and Jews which will be fleshed out later have lead some biblical theologians to believed that Jews would rather take a much longer route from Judea to Galilee in order to avoid passing through Samaria.

¹⁴ Evangelia (Lina) Papadaki, "Feminist Perspectives on Objectification," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, March 10, 2010, accessed February 10, 2015, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-objectification/>.

So why did Jesus have to go through Samaria? The answer is captured in the Greek word “edei” which is translated “had to go.”¹⁵ It describes when “a given moment seems to be necessary or inevitable to a man or group of men” out of logical/scientific necessity or by ethical/religious obligations. In John in particular it tends to be an “expression of necessity that God’s will or plan is involved.”¹⁶ Jesus was motivated to go to Samaria for a reason his disciples could not understand, because the will of the Father invited him to participate in mission there.

The whole gospel makes clear that Jesus is always compelled by the Father. “The Father is in me and I am in the Father,” and “I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father.”¹⁷

Jesus must do what has only been revealed to Him by the Father. God is redeeming the whole world through Him, even the much despised Samaritans, therefore Jesus was motivated to go where no other Jewish person would go, to Samaria in submission to God’s will.

The Rock Church has an four year old volunteer lead afterschool program, called *NIA*, that operates in their church three days a week. *NIA* is the swahili word for Purpose. A posted sign describes *NIA* as a way of “Faithfully Participating with God to bring to fruition God’s perfect plan. Focusing on education, life skills and arts as necessary tools for a successful future. Finding new and innovative ways to love and be loved by the children God entrusts to us.” The motivation for this program comes from is a

¹⁵ Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 21–25.

¹⁶ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, The Anchor Bible 29 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 169.

¹⁷ John 10:38, 14:31, respectively.

commitment to follow God's leading in the lives of these children. It is not focused on babysitting or homework primarily but on facilitating holistic flourishing in the life of every child who attends.

The Work

Listen: *The Church Bizarre* Sabbat
Losing My Religion Kirk Franklin

The Church Bizarre¹⁸

The stage is set my friends for the play that never ends -
this comedy we call the Church Bizarre,
once you enetr(enter) you are bound to find salvation by the pound,
assured the more you pay the nearer God you are.

Your mouth so paralysed with fear you dare not speak,
your eyes so blind and hypnotised you cannot weep,
so blinkered to reality that you no longer care,
that profit is the prophet of corruption and despair.

Bring on the dancers - bring on the clowns,
who invite you to ride on their merry-go-rounds,
they make the money and they make the rules,
you 'Born-Again-Christians' are born again fools.

THE EVANGELIST PRAYER:

God of wealth and God of might guide me to your paradise,
for many lives were bought and sold that I may walk your streets of gold,
though my heart is cold and still I rest in peace my pockets filled,
and bear the smile of one who knows

A 'salvation salesman's dream - guillible(gullible) to the extreme,
easy pickings for the charm and 'savoir faire',
of these charlatans and theives(thieves) whose delight is to decieve(deceive) - all the

¹⁸ <http://www.metrolyrics.com/the-church-bizzare-lyrics-sabbat.html> viewed January 24, 2017.

fools who
still believe they really care.

And if all the Devil's minions were let loose to do their will,
I think they'd be hard pressed to match
in diabolic skill,
the wickedness and treachery of this evangelic horde,
who sheler(shelter) their corruption with the banner of their Lord.
(Repeat 3 & 4)The curtain never falls on the show that has it all,
taken in you can't begin to see their lies,
for the people who are clapping are the ones who will be laughing
at your fate,
they just can't wait to bleed you dry.

Losing My Religion¹⁹

I'm losing my religion
Thank God
I prayed about my decision
How odd

For the man with the mic
To be the man all his life
While Christ-like stipes did with REM
Rev up the RPMs

How do I begin to try to paint this sin, of rules?
That divides God's people in two
In the beginning, religion created a mask
The reformation helped but soon the patch didn't last
I don't tell, you don't ask

So we created a lie
And for generations, church was where we went to go hide
Or we no longer tried
Because rules read our relationship was empty inside

Leaves you bitter, dry
Swift to cut like a razor

¹⁹ <http://www.metrolyrics.com/losing-my-religion-lyrics-kirk-franklin.html> viewed January 24, 2017.

Swift to call you a traitor
'Cause you're swift to love Taylor
Now we got bad blood with our neighbor

Who's wrong, who's right
Every Sunday we're divided
Who's black, who's white, C'mon

Now the man in the mirror never gets race right
He'll never be Christ-like
Never receive good pay
So your faith never rises above minimum wage

So when it's time to save the world
You don't know what to say
To your brother that you love when he tells you he's gay
Do you push him away?
Judge him down till he leaves?
Give him a gospel he hears or a gospel he sees
Love wrapped in truth is the gospel he needs
There's room at the cross for everyone, even me

Well, my sins are now clean
The loss now redeemed
Religion is a prison but truth sets us free
Helps us believe
That the world we're in now is not the world that will be
Terror, famine, disease

Millions in poverty
Hungry, can't sleep
With all of this religion, why these babies can't eat?
And if the middle class is gone, how can America see?
How can America breathe?
When the oxygen is gone from the American dream

And these American streets listen close as they speak
The next time you think America please include me
Help the ones that are weak
All they want is a piece
Of the pie that you keep

Is that too much to ask of those who lay the concrete?

Still laying on concrete
Pop, pop by police
See, they the foundation of the nation
Not the 2%
Not the ones that own the building that the middle class rent

Because they make sense
Tell me how do you feel?
I'm the new Franklin and I have the new deal
I fight and do right
FDR for real

One nation under God
God, show us the way
The science of opinion
God is not a buffet
You pick what you want so no God on your plate
The preacher isn't God
Religion's first mistake
Serving stewards, shepherds, not kings
Has to die to his flesh everyday like me

One VIP
All the other seats in church are free
We're just groupies
God's the celebrity
Before 313 AD
Before Constantine
Before the council of Nacia (Nicea)
Before Romans and Greeks
Before Calvin (Calvin) Alexander, Luther
Before let there be
Before history
To the last century
Before the death on the tree

Before the fall of man
Was a picture of me
Now to his heart

Right before the last three
Words he would speak
It is finished

Can you believe?
I'm losing my religion
Thank God
Helping you lose yours
Is my job

Reflect

On the Lyrics and these questions:

What motivates you to engage in outreach? Name the self serving motivations.

How might God's plan be different from your plan as you reconsider your outreach efforts?

Engage: John 4: 1-6

Reading it slowly, aloud and in different translations.

Pray

Confess your self-serving motives and ask God to change your heart.

Respond

In whatever way suits you capture a response to the work done in this section.

Chapter 2: Initiation

This chapter will give a historical snapshot of apartheid in South Africa to reveal how the treatment of poor people in outreach programs reflects the heinous system of separation. It will offer Desmond Tutu's ubuntu as a theological framework to combat the lie that assigns and withholds human worth according to the ideals of those in power. This chapter will: take up the issue of the treatment of poor people as recipients of outreach, explicate Tutu's assertion that "all humans are created by God to determine their own ends," and offer Jesus as the initiator of the embrace across lines of separation.

The Historical

The first Europeans settled on the shores of the south Cape Town in South Africa in 1652 and organized the South African state that would for centuries who systematically subjugate native peoples. In 1913 South Africa imposed its strictest political injunction by relegating native Africans to a small portion of barren land while whites maintained the majority of the territory. This piece of legislation was called the Native's Land Act and would be the beginning of a system forever known as apartheid.¹

Apartheid is an Afrikaans word basically meaning "separate system," which essentially set oppressive boundaries for native peoples in order to allow Dutch settlers to claim their land—and their human dignity. 1949 would bring the passage of the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, preventing nuptials between whites and Africans. 1950 would demand classification of individuals by race and would see the passage of laws prohibiting sexual relations between people of different races and later the rise of the African National Congress and Nelson Mandela's fight against the apartheid.

¹ Rian Malan, *My Traitor's Heart: A South African Exile Returned to Face His Country, His Tribe and His Conscience* (New York: Grove Press, 1990), Kindle.

In 1931 in a small town west of Johannesburg, Archbishop Desmond Tutu was born to become a centrifugal force during apartheid and a lightning rod for peace in the world. Throughout his writings and career, Tutu would consistently offer a biblical and theological framework that resonated deeply with the message of the fourth gospel and Jesus as an anti-apartheid figure.

Tutu sharpened his prophetic voice on the tool of scripture and the deeply held belief that “we are what we are in obedience to God and in response to the gracious Gospel of his Son our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ alone.”² Tutu has been a prophetic voice in the post-apartheid movement toward truth and reconciliation in South Africa, brandishing an old African concept, *ubuntu*.

Ubuntu

The African concept of *ubuntu* by definition simply maintains “I in You and You in Me,” deriving from a theological understanding of codependence that mirrors the relationship of the Godhead in the Trinity who is both individual and interdependent, simultaneously.³ Ubuntu invites all image bearers of the triune God to be fully embodied individuals while also committing to kenosis, “a self-emptying” that acknowledges the full personhood of others. Philippians 2 describes the act of kenosis as demonstrated by Christ this way:

*“Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something
to be used to his own advantage;
rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.*

² Ibid., 54.

³ Michael Battle, *Ubuntu: I in You and You in Me* (Seabury Books: New York, 2009), 3.

*And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!*

Kenosis on one hand leads those with power to deliberately give up power for the sake of the powerless, while apartheid “manipulates persons and treats them as if they were less” than human beings because of external factors and values.⁴ For example, city missions in some cities espouse a Christian mission while requiring homeless individuals to enter back doors and relinquish their entire financial subsidies while being subjected to harsh treatment like eating out-of-date food. These organizations seem to assume that just because these persons are homeless they are necessarily unworthy of respect and the caliber of provision their subsidy would afford them if they were in their own homes.

Christ was born in a humble manger, poor and vulnerable like many who arrive on the doorsteps of helping agencies. Tutu cites the incarnation as evidence of “God [who] takes the whole of human history and the whole of human life seriously.” In fact, God embellished each human being with the privilege to be his “viceroy,” indeed God’s own representatives on earth with all the honor and respect thereunto appertaining.⁵ The pastor and prophet reminded his pro-apartheid audience of the dehumanized and resurrected Jesus who stated in John 12:32, “if I be lifted up I will draw all humans to me.” He led South Africa to the reconciling gospel of Jesus Christ, believing “all are to be held in the incredible embrace of the love that won’t let us go.”⁶

⁴ Ibid., 66.

⁵ Desmond Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness*, 102, Google Books.

⁶ Desmond Tutu, “And God Smiles,” sermon preached at All Saints Church, Pasadena, California, 6 November 2005.

This “incredible embrace” of which Tutu speaks stems from a theology of abundance that resonates with his understanding of general revelation, in which God displays enormous splendor through the natural resources of Tutu’s beloved South Africa. The God of all creation, who is and was the eternal Word revealed in Christ, is “full of grace and truth”—indeed *full*, not lacking.⁷ Out of that abundance God dispenses “wholeness, justice, good health, righteousness, peace, harmony, and reconciliation” to all for whom he was lifted up, yea, even the whole world whom he came to save through faith.⁸ Ubuntu calls for a reconfiguring of actions and attitudes toward poor people, a reconfiguring that resonates with a faith that locates every human being’s worth in his standing as image bearer of the triune God.

The Lies

*There is something about poverty that smells like death.
Dead dreams dropping off the heart like leaves
in a dry season and rotting around the feet;
impulses smothered too long in the fetid air of underground caves.
The soul lives in sickly air. People can be slave ships in shoes.⁹*

Poor people are the primary recipients of the church’s outreach practices and bear the weight of the effects of the lies the church has come to believe about poor people. The lies of apartheid turn poor people into pawns that the church uses to appease a god who demands that they help the poor without necessarily acknowledging the complexity and dimensions that contribute to the state of poverty. There are in fact many kinds of poor

⁷ John 14.

⁸ Tutu and Allen, *Rainbow People of God*, 71.

⁹ Zora Neale Hurston, *Dust Tracks on a Road* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996), 87.

people in society. Some are in the local homeless shelter after losing their homes for one reason or another. Some live on the streets in metropolitan cities. Still others are senior citizens who live in their own homes but whose retirement benefits and social security are not enough to sustain them in their latter years. There are working poor people with low-paying jobs who can barely afford to keep food on the table. Poor people are high-school dropouts and college professors; they live in slums in urban centers and in fancy suburbs on the sofas of relatives.

The truth is, poor people are not just one particular kind of person captured by the use of one simple label: “the poor.” Poor people are human beings, image bearers of God, worthy of more than being used by others to gain and maintain God’s approval.

The deeper implication of the lie about poor people is that Christian outreach practices in America prevent them from flourishing as image bearers of God. In fact, “no one is too low”—or in this case, too poor—to use her voice to guide, direct, and make choices that impact the world.¹⁰

The separate development between poor people and outreach practitioners often begins with the lie that poor people are useful to appease a god who demands that its subjects care for the poor in order to secure a place in heaven.¹¹ This deeply held belief is exacerbated in part by implicit and explicit biases that categorize poor people as a single group of people who on the basis of their economic location are unable and unfit to enact their God-given right to exercise dominion and agency.

¹⁰ Lisa Sharon Harper, *The Very Good Gospel: How Everything Wrong Can Be Made Right* (Crown Publishing Group), 580-581, Kindle.

¹¹ In Matthew 25 Jesus rendered a rebuke at the end of time to those who refused to provide for the sick, needy, and imprisoned. “Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. . . . Whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.”

Sometimes bias becomes explicit in pastoral engagement like when the pastor of the Rock Church consulted with an upper middle-aged woman from an affluent church. Her church partnered with a neighborhood school to help tutor students labeled “at-risk.” She had been mentoring a certain high school senior since he was in kindergarten, although the program officially ended at fifth grade. Over the years she consistently tutored, transported, and supported him in every aspect. He had moved around a great deal and was faced with many of the challenges that children living in poverty often have to deal with, but she was with him through it all. At the time of the consult, he had taken a difficult turn in his life, and the woman was looking to the pastor for direction.

She admitted to the pastor that her commitment to this child had been her only act of service to humanity. The lie surfaced quickly when she admitted, “If there is a ‘good and faithful servant’ in heaven for me, it’s because of what I’m doing for [him].” The stakes in this relationship were extremely high for this woman. Outreach programs like the tutoring program she was involved with invite Christians to fulfill their God-given mandate to help poor people at the risk of using them to gain God’s approval.

Another lie about poor people is that they are lazy people who prey upon the kindness of well-intending citizens. Hip-hop artist Kendrick Lamar offers a lyrical demonstration of this claim in “How Much a Dollar Cost,” about a panhandler outside of a gas station who encounters a self-righteous man who allows the lies about poor people to direct his actions and emotions.

*So I'mma tell you like I told the last bum
Crumbs and pennies, I need all of mines
And I recognize this type of panhandlin' all the time
I got better judgement, I know when nigga's hustlin'¹²*

¹² Kendrick Lamar et al., writers, “How Much a Dollar Cost,” *To Pimp a Butterfly*, Aftermath/Interscope

The lyrics reveal the lie that poor people are likely drug abusers, lazy and “hustlin,” and therefore worthy of the apartheid that sidelines their voice, body, and volition. The panhandler who asks for “a single dollar, nothing less nothing more,” reveals himself at the end of the song:

*He looked at me and said, “Know the truth, it’ll set you free
You’re lookin’ at the Messiah, the son of Jehovah, the higher power
The choir that spoke the word, the Holy Spirit
The nerve of Nazareth, and I’ll tell you just how much a dollar cost
The price of having a spot in Heaven, embrace your loss, I am God”*

This self-righteous man’s implicit bias against poor people caused him to make assumptions about the panhandling man’s intentions, motives, and identity. These assumptions lead the self-righteous man to become angry, to the extent that he even contemplated “if [he] had a bat [he] would aim it at his neck,” just because the man asked him for a dollar. This self-righteous man failed to see the panhandling man as an image bearer of God with the right to stand on the street corner and exercise dominion according to God’s design. The song’s final verse affirms Lisa Sharon Harper’s claim that to deny poor people the right to exercise dominion is to “diminish the image of God on earth.”¹³

Embracing Move

Initiation

7 A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” 8 (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) 9 The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” (Jews do not share

Records, 2015, MP3.

¹³ Harper, *Very Good Gospel*, 649, Kindle.

things in common with Samaritans.) 10 Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” (John 4:7-10)

Jesus arrived in Samaria tired, thirsty and vulnerable. His disciples had gone to town to get food and left him sitting beside a well. The divine one initiates an encounter with a woman drawing water from a well there. Although the reservoir of his resources were bottomless he acquiesced to his humanity and located one of the few natural longings they shared in common, the need for water. “*Give me a drink?*” he asked her thus giving her the first opportunity to accept or deny him, which is central to maintaining human dignity and exercising dominion.

Jacob was a poor man living in the Tenderloin, an excessively impoverished neighborhood in San Francisco, California. Poor people line the streets of the Tenderloin where yellow painted footprints on the sidewalk to show school children the safest route from school to home. First Metropolitan Church holds its offices in the safety of downtown San Francisco but has an active presence in the Tenderloin beside a “*mom and pop*” chicken restaurant and a sea of *Single Residence Occupancy* or *SROs*.

Jacob has a rough exterior and a rough history to match. His past is plagued by drug abuse, imprisonment and homelessness. He became friends with Caleb, who is committed to God’s mission in the Tenderloin. Caleb is one of the pastor’s on staff at the First Metropolitan Church, his church is the streets and his congregation includes people like Jacob. Caleb initiated a relationship with Jacob, despite the fact that Jacob is sometimes clean and sometimes not. To some Jacob is just a poor man, a junkie, who won’t kick the stuff, but to Caleb, Jacob is a guide, a brother and image bearer of God who happens also

to be poor.

Tutu cites the incarnation, that is “the Word became flesh and dwelled among us,” as evidence that, “God takes the whole of human history and the whole of human life seriously.” In fact, he contends God embellished each human being with the privilege to be his “viceroy,” indeed God’s own representers on earth with all the honor and respect thereunto appertaining.¹⁴ Even Jacob is God’s representer on earth and Caleb knows it even before they ever make direct contact. .

There is no exclusion in Christ’s embrace, pastor and prophet Tuu reminded his pro-apartheid audience citing the dehumanized and resurrected Jesus who proclaimed in John 12:32 “if I be lifted up I will draw all humans to me.” The Archbishop led South Africa to the reconciling gospel of Jesus Christ believing “all are to be held in the incredible embrace of the love that won’t let us go.”¹⁵

For Jesus this “all” included even a Samaritan woman although he knew Samaritans, like the woman in chapter four, were regarded by Jews as unclean, spiritually misguided people, with whom Jews were not permitted to share anything. He leaned into the embrace by making himself vulnerable, by doing what St. Augustine described; “long(ing) as one about to receive; and abound(ing) as one about to satisfy.”¹⁶ This embrace would be an act of reciprocity initiated by the one who perceives he has the most to offer. Jesus assumes the emotional risk of rejection by initiating the encounter with the Samaritan people offering in example for the Christian outreach practitioners to

¹⁴ Tutu and Allen, *Rainbow People of God*, 66.

¹⁵ Desmond Tutu, “And God Smiles,” sermon preached at All Saints Church, Pasadena, California, 6 November 2005.

¹⁶ Augustine et al., *St. Augustine*, 3216.

demonstrate when engaging with poor people in their context

Success Case

Evonne is the current Executive Director of Emmaus Ministries, whose home is an apartment in the heart of her neighborhood. She was a middle class early twenty-four year old white lady from a town of corn fields in the midwest. She had attended a local liberal arts college established to educate others like herself. After college she moved to Costa Rica to do missions, and while there she learned to find God at work in places with little financial resources.

Upon returning to the states she began working with Americorp, and was assigned to work with a local church to reach out to the neighborhood she now calls home. Motivated by her experience of God at work in Costa Rica she immediately knew outreach would not be effective for her in this context. She moved into an apartment in this complex for people with lower incomes, where the police received more calls than to any other place in the city at that time. It was considered a high crime, high drug trafficking area. This young, single, midwest, middle class white lady moved into the neighborhood to be with the people who lived there. Upon moving she knew she would have to be the one to initiate relationship with the people who were so different from her. Instead of busying herself with flyers and programs, she went right to work trying to build relationships across apartheid. She would invite the ladies to coffee at her apartment, set up basketball rims in the circle at the end of the street. More than anything else, she found places and reasons to initiate listening. She had simple solutions to what seemed like hard problems but she withheld them in order to allow neighbors to brainstorm their own solutions.

Some black women in the community would discredit her at first introduction creating a first rate escalation in anxiety and tension between. Evonne admits she was intimidated by some of the ways black women dismissed her as too young, too white and too wealthy to be trusted. Her willingness to acknowledge the tension and continue to show up with her neighbors won her the right to ask those same women to join the neighborhood initiatives she heard them long for like community clean-ups, beautification awards and currently purchasing an apartment unit to transform into a community center.

Evonne has since duplicated herself alongside dozens of neighbors who have become staff and allies for embracing the neighborhood.

The Work

Listen

How Much a Dollar Cost¹⁷

How much a dollar really cost?
The question is detrimental, paralyzin' my thoughts
Parasites in my stomach keep me with a gut feeling, y'all
Gotta see how I'm chillin' once I park this luxury car

Hopping out feeling big as Mutombo
Twenty on pump six dirty Marcellus called me Dumbo
Twenty years ago, can't forget
Now I can lend 'em a ear or two how to stack these residuals
Tenfold, the liberal concept of what men'll do

Twenty on six, he didn't hear me
Indigenous African only spoke Zulu
My American tongue was slurry
Walked out the gas station
A homeless man with a silly tan complexion
Asked me for ten grand
Stressin' about dry land
Deep water, powder blue skies that crack open

A piece of crack that he wanted, I knew he was smokin'
He begged and pleaded
Asked me to feed him twice, I didn't believe it
Told him, beat it
Contributin' money just for his pipe, I couldn't see it

He said, my son, temptation is one thing that I've defeated
Listen to me, I want a single bill from you
Nothin' less, nothin' more
I told him I ain't have it and closed my door
Tell me how much a dollar cost

It's more to feed your mind

¹⁷ <http://www.metrolyrics.com/how-much-a-dollar-cost-lyrics-kendrick-lamar.html>, viewed January 24, 2017.

Water, sun and love, the one you love
All you need, the air you breathe

He's starin' at me in disbelief
My temper is buildin', he's starin' at me, I grab my key
He's starin' at me, I started the car and tried to leave
And somethin' told me to keep it in park until I could see
A reason why he was mad at a stranger like I was supposed to save him
Like I'm the reason he's homeless and askin' me for a favor
He's starin' at me, his eyes followed me with no laser
He's starin' at me, I notice that his stare is contagious
'Cause now I'm starin' back at him, feelin' some type of disrespect
If I could throw a bat at him, it'd be aimin' at his neck

I never understood someone beggin' for goods
Askin' for handouts, takin' it if they could
And this particular person just had it down pat
Starin' at me for the longest until he finally asked
Have you ever opened to Exodus 14?
A humble man is all that we ever need
Tell me how much a dollar cost

It's more to feed your mind
Water, sun and love, the one you love
All you need, the air you breathe

Guilt trippin' and feelin' resentment
I never met a transient that demanded attention
They got me frustrated, indecisive and power trippin'
Sour emotions got me lookin' at the universe different

I should distance myself, I should keep it relentless
My selfishness is what got me here, who the fuck I'm kiddin'?
So I'ma tell you like I told the last bum, crumbs and pennies
I need all of mines, and I recognize this type of panhandlin' all the time
I got better judgement, I know when nigga's hustlin'
Keep in mind, when I was strugglin', I did compromise
Now I comprehend, I smell grandpa's old medicine
Reekin' from your skin, moonshine and gin
Nigga your babblin', your words ain't flatterin', I'm imaginin'
Denzel be lookin' at O'Neal

'Cause now I'm in sad thrills, your gimmick is mediocre, the jig is up
I seen you from a mile away losin' focus
And I'm insensitive, and I lack empathy
You looked at me and said, your potential is bittersweet
I looked at him and said, every nickel is mines to keep
He looked at me and said, know the truth, it'll set you free
You're lookin' at the Messiah, the son of Jehova, the higher power
The choir that spoke the word, the Holy Spirit, the nerve
Of Nazareth, and I'll tell you just how much a dollar cost
The price of having a spot in Heaven, embrace your loss, I am God
I wash my hands, I said my grace, what more do you want from me?
Tears of a clown, guess I'm not all what is meant to be
Shades of grey will never change if I condone
Turn this page, help me change, so right my wrongs

Mother Mary¹⁸

Mother Mary, I swear I wanna change
Mister Jesus, I'd love to be a queen
But I'm from the left side of an island
Never thought this many people would even know my name

As time flies, way above me
For you I've cried, tears sea-deep
Oh glory, the prayers carry me
I'll be a star, you keep directing me
Let's make the best scene they've ever seen

Let's capture the moment
Cause even forever ain't forever
I swear by the moment
'Cause together ain't promised forever
Let's live in the moment
As long as we got each other
Die in the moment

I'm prepared to die in the moment

'Cause even forever ain't forever
I swear by the moment
'Cause together ain't promised forever
I swear by the moment
As long as we got each other
Die in the moment

I'm prepared to die in the moment
To die in the moment

Mother Mary, I swear I wanna change
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¹⁸ <http://www.metrolyrics.com/love-without-tragedy-mother-mary-lyrics-rihanna.html>, viewed January 24, 2017.

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Die in the moment

I'm prepared to die in the moment
I'm prepared to die in the moment
I'm prepared to die in the moment

'Cause even forever ain't forever
I swear by the moment
I'm prepared to die in the moment

Reflect

on the Lyrics and these questions:

What are your deeply held beliefs about poor people? How do they show up in your ministry/church?

What needs does your ministry have that those perceived to have less might be able to help meet?

In what ways might you and your ministry demonstrate vulnerability in community engagement efforts?

Engage

John 4:7-10

Read it slowly, aloud and in different translations.

Pray

For clarity, points of confession, and courage to initiate the embrace.

Respond

In whatever way suits you capture a response to the work done in this section.

Chapter 3: Escalation

This chapter will illumine the lie perpetuating system of “pigmentocracy” whereby human worth is assigned on the basis of biological characteristics such as skin color.¹ It will focus primarily on the pigmentocracy of middle class white women who are the leading demographic of helping hands in outreach ministries. This chapter will show how white women have historically hijacked the title woman to mean white woman, thus escalating the conflict between them and black women, the most served people groups in outreach programs in America. This next embracing move finds Jesus standing on the escalator of gender, culture, religion and social difference in order to elevate the relationship between he and the Samaritan woman to common ground.

Historical

Apartheid in South Africa separated groups of people into four categories based on the color of their skin, Whites, Africans, Indians and Colored people, with the latter three often considered black. In time black people were differentiated based on skin color and forced to live in poverty stricken ghettos where they were systematically stripped of their South African citizenship, left to become aliens in their own land. They were considered by whites to be intellectually inferior based on phenotype manifested in skin color. This sole factor caused black people to be seen as childlike individuals in need of a white guardian and therefore incapable of exercising dominion outright.

Feminist and scholar bell hooks in *Ain't I Woman* provides a helpful historical survey

¹ Desmond Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 101, Google Books.

of perpetual apartheid in America created and maintained by middle class white women vis-a-vis black women in particular, dating back to the abolitionist movement of the early 19th century. “While they strongly advocated an end to slavery they never advocated a change in the racial hierarchy that allowed their caste status to be higher than that of black women or men.”² When slavery was abolished, black women continued to maintain their status beneath that of white women. Even the women’s suffrage movement was primarily intended to acquire the vote for white women. The same white women who set up kindergartens for blacks in the south and considered themselves “a friend to the Negro” denied black women like Josephine Ruffin full participation in the suffrage movement by maintaining they “simply cannot recognize the colored women socially.”³

These clear lines of distinction beg the question suffragette Sojourner Truth so pointedly raised in her iconic speech where she asks: “Ain’t I A Woman?” Southern Baptist women and their national training schools in early twentieth century established the school of “the Bible, bath and broom” as training to advance the black race. While white women were being trained to be better wives and mothers, black women were being trained by middle class white Christian women to acclimate to the lie that they were to be domestic workers, indeed objects for the purpose of service. During the industrial revolution white women refused to eat or wash with black women citing a unsubstantiated lie that black women were necessarily diseased and immoral. In tobacco factories black women were relegated to the work of “loosening” and other tasks that had historically been done by men thereby constructing a lie that black women were,

² bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1981), 125.

³ Ibid, 129.

”masculinized sub-human creatures.”⁴

T. Laine Scales notes how black women weren’t the only subjects of the Southern Baptist women’s lies in the early 1900s. They also viewed Southern and eastern European immigrants “as a different species that was morally, socially and intellectually inferior.” The women used evangelism as a means to uphold the middle class and the “Anglo Saxon way of life.”⁵ Outreach programs engaged immigrant women with the ultimate goal of changing a “species” into “white women.” Women of color, however, faced the reality that no matter how they were re-socialized they would never become (white) women.

In 1951 talented actress and note-able activist Beah Richards confirms the lies and the apparent apartheid in her dramatic poem “A Black Woman Speaks of White Womanhood”:

*But now, since 'tis deemed a thing apart
supreme,
I must in searching honesty report
how it seems to me.
White womanhood stands in bloodied skirt
and willing slavery
reaching out adulterous hand
killing mine and crushing me.
What then is this superior thing
that in order to be sustained must needs feed upon my flesh?
How came this horror to be?
Let's look to history.⁶*

Richardson then goes on to dole out segments of history that juxtapose the experiences of

⁴ T. Laine Scales, *All That Fits a Woman: Training Southern Baptist Women for Charity and Mission, 1907-1926* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2000), 129.

⁵ *Ibid*, 200.

⁶ Beulah Richardson, *A Black woman speaks: of white womanhood, of white supremacy, of peace: a poem* (New York: American Women for Peace, 1951).

black women alongside her white women woman counterpart.

This historical analysis is important because of the implication of the lie of white woman superiority for outreach programs currently administered by the daughters and grand daughters of the aforementioned middle class white women. Recent studies by the National Association for Christian Social Workers and the National Association for Social Workers show that middle class white women are the leading population operating in direct care with helping professions in both secular and Christian arenas.⁷

Corresponding data concerning those who utilize these services reveal predominantly non-white and/or obviously poor women as the primarily recipients of outreach services.

One need only peruse local Christian agencies, missions, thrift stores and human service arenas to find that the majority of front line workers providing outreach and services are middle class white women. Although concrete data to explain and clarify the reason white women tend to be drawn to helping professions is lacking, there is research to show a long standing apartheid between white women and the black women they serve in outreach organizations and programs in America.

Although black women like Neo-Soul artist Jill Scott increasingly move into the middle and upper class alongside white women there continues to be a chasm that implicitly challenges the ability of white women to fully share the place of mutual womanhood. Some womanist scholars find part of the black woman's burden in life is to

⁷ Gaynor Yancey and Diana Garland, "Christian Congregations as Contexts for Social Work," *Social Work and Christianity* 41, no. 4 (2014): pg. #, accessed November 24, 2014, <http://www.nacsw.org/RC/49993339.pdf>; National Association of Social Workers, "What Is NASW's Practice Research Network?," *Practice Research Network: Informing Research and Policy Through Social Work Practice* 2.2 (2003): pg. #, accessed November 24, 2014, <http://www.socialworkers.org/naswprn/surveyTwo/datagram2.pdf>.

constantly grapple with the cult of white womanhood.⁸ This non-religious form of cult has to do with socially constructed models of womanhood steeped in white supremacist ideals of body image, manner and decorum. Artists like Scott are exercising full dominion by exposing the explicit and implicit lies of black woman inferiority in her song titled Womanifesto:

*“Clearly I am not a fat ass
I am active brain
And lip smacking peach deep
Sometimes too aggressive in its honesty
And heart sweet
That loves wholly and completely
Whom it may choose
Whomever it may choose”⁹*

This critical incident is evidence of the lie of white superiority that continues in the church today. A middle class white woman who held membership at the Rock Church involved sat with her middle-class African American pastor to consult about end of life matters. The woman, whose health was failing, was concerned about her emotionally challenged daughter’s fate upon the eventual death of the mother. The mother had another daughter who was emotionally and financially stable enough to care for her sister should such become necessary.

The pastor inquired with the mother about the possibility of the one sister going to live with the other should the need arise. The mother immediately dismissed the idea citing concerns that others would look upon such an arrangement negatively. She found the idea of a married woman inviting her adult sister to live with her, shameful. The pastor

⁸ Chanequa Walker-Barnes, *Too Heavy a Yoke: The Burden of a Strong Black Woman* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014).

⁹ <http://www.metrolyrics.com/womanifesto-lyrics-jill-scott.html>, viewed January 24, 2017.

attempted to reframe the option as fitting of one demonstrating Christian character. The pastor continued by reminding her that many people invite distressed relatives into their homes, even she, the pastor, had welcomed individuals who were unrelated to herself to live in her home. The mother immediately responded, “I know you people do, that but what would it look like if we Americans did something like that?” The problem with this Dutch immigrant’s statement does not lie solely with her misinterpreted nationalism. The real problem is the lie that separates middle class white women and black women such that even the pastor/parishioner relationship is compromised by the apartheid. The white mother in the critical incident excused the surrogacy and care-taking of African Americans as something less than appropriate for a white middle-class Christian woman to demonstrate even towards her own biological sister. This kind of superiority complex has allowed white women change agents to historically withhold the right to be considered a woman based on a biological quality, that has nothing to do with what it means to be image bearers of God.

The Lies

Apartheid in South Africa separated groups of people into four categories based on the color of their skin—Whites, Africans, Indians, and Colored people, with the latter three often considered black. In time black people were differentiated based on skin color and forced to live in poverty-stricken ghettos where they were systematically stripped of their South African citizenship and left to become aliens in their own land. They were considered by whites to be intellectually inferior based on phenotype manifested in skin color. This sole factor caused black people to be seen as childlike individuals in need of a white guardian and therefore incapable of exercising dominion outright. This posture

was supported by the belief that there were “distinct and immutable cultural differences between races” that had to be maintained according to the will of God.¹⁰

This ideology also made a home in the colonization of America in the seventeenth century when slave uprisings called for the classification of skin color amidst what was believed to be a threatening multi-ethnic majority.¹¹ Supported by biblical misrepresentations like the curse of Cain and manifest destiny, the enslavement of dark-skinned people became normalized with the tantamount demonization of all things black. History gave way to the myth of the negro lacking a soul, being only three-fifths of a person, unfit to vote, marry, or even have religion. In time the master’s religion made room for the slave to preach in the fields, listen from the balcony, and finally establish his own black church. Jim Crow laws eventually marked water fountains, restrooms, and other public spaces as ground zero for anti-black apartheid in many states in America. The negro’s refusal to comply with unjust laws led to frequent imprisonment, police brutality, and the burning of black churches. Currently, the values of the western white church prevail as central while black and brown theologies remain marginalized.

The Archbishop compares this pigmentocracy that places (or withholds) value based on a biological quality such as skin color to the monster Frankenstein who cannot be reformed but must be destroyed.¹² This pigmentocracy names well one of the concerns of the interpretative task concerning the preeminence of the values of white womanhood in Christian outreach, giving rise to a mutually inclusive interdependent vision of woman-

¹⁰ Rian Malan, *My Traitor’s Heart: A South African Exile Returned to Face His Country, His Tribe and His Conscience*. (New York: Grove Press, 1990), 190, Kindle.

¹¹ Paul Kivel, *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice*, 3rd ed. (Gabriola, BC: New Society Publishers, 2011), 158.

¹² Tutu and Allen, *Rainbow People of God*, 99.

ness that looks like this:

“The Christmas Store was set up in a way that families (mostly single moms) signed up for one item that they wanted (per kid), church members bought the items and wrapped them, then the families purchased them back at 20 percent of the cost of the gift. This model was a step away from straight-up charity, but still presented some challenges. Church members (mostly white women) took time to wrap all of the gifts perfectly, but most families ended up unwrapping their gift right away so they could see what was in it before they gave it to their kids. Also, a lot of people were frustrated when it wasn’t the right thing, but there wasn’t a way to return them. Most importantly, there was a complete disconnect between the people receiving the gifts and the greater community.

Several years ago we rolled out a newer model that is a lot more involved. Families can sign up for the Christmas Store and then commit to volunteer 10 hours throughout the year at one of the partner churches or the neighborhood school. For every hour they volunteer, they earn \$10 credit at the store, maxing out at \$100 credit after 10 hours volunteered. The kids of the families also complete a “job” where they earn \$20 to shop for their parents. On Christmas Store day, families come and shop and we have a wide variety of high-quality gifts. All of the gifts at the store are discounted, so essentially the \$100 credit = \$200 worth of gifts. Families are able to shop however they want; they can then wrap their own gifts, and we also have a photographer available taking family photos. After all of the families have used up their credit, we open up the store to cash spending, where families can then spend \$50

of their own cash (if they want).”¹³

This demonstration of ubuntu recognizes the value of the recipient being able to work, shop, and provide for their children’s gifts alongside community organizations who share in the abundance of God’s gifts in the community. Kenosis demands that helping professionals think beyond meeting the immediate need and explore ways to empty themselves of self gratification and polarization for the sake of the flourishing of the other.

Embracing Move

Escalation

9 The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.)**[b]** **10** Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” **11** The woman said to him, “Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? **12** Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?” (John 4:9-12)

Conflict is an inevitable reality when individuals cross the boundaries of apartheid. Implicit bias causes individuals to strongly defend their particular values, and sin allows defense often to become violent (verbally and physically).¹⁴ Outreach programs tend to maintain such a relational distance from recipients that the possibility of even healthy conflict is unlikely.

Outreach programs tend to maintain such a distance that the possibility of conflict that overcomes difference is rare. The director of Holy Trinity Metropolitan

¹³ Emmaus Ministries’ executive director’s email to the author, November 28, 2016.

¹⁴ Harper, *Very Good Gospel*, 2339-2366.

Church's ministry claimed in his interview a hard embracing truth that generally eludes outreach. His ministry overtly invites practitioners to engage in mission in the Tenderloin in ways that will break their hearts, again and again. He reminds staff and volunteers that relapse is a part of recovery that makes the work hard and painful but it is work worth doing for the sake of God's beloved people. This is not the glorious, rewarding lie of personal fulfillment that often lures people into doing outreach but one poised for conflict.

Jesus waded into the complex waters of human relationships and let the waves of tension rise as the woman raised hard cultural, religious, and social questions that held up the mirror of apartheid. "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.)" These questions mirror the contemporary question in the current context like "do black lives matter?" "Are you racist?"

Jesus let the relationship escalate as the woman raised hard cultural, religious and social questions that held up the mirror of apartheid. Jesus found it best to remain present steeped in truth "if you knew who it was who was offering you water you would ask him and he would give you living water..."

Jesus is absolutely committed to embracing this woman and so does not give in to a defensive posture or shame-laden response. He allows the conflict to rise as she illumines the apartheid even more: "Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" Jesus stands loving with only the gentle truth as his defense, knowing "she is knocking not with earnest purpose; she is

still an object of pity, not yet of instruction.”¹⁵

The Rock Church exists on the corner of escalation by virtue of its racially, ethnically, generationally, and socially diverse congregation. They espouse a commitment to be a multiethnic community in worship and life together, which requires extra effort in a community where apartheid is commonplace. Their commitment requires a leadership team who reflects the stated value. In 2008, the leadership team consisted of six middle aged white men and one middle aged white women all of Dutch descent in this historically immigrant congregation.

In 2009, the newly installed pastor noticed how the election process favored age over spiritual maturity for the office of elder and allowed individuals resistant to the mission of the church to sit as deacon. A new process had to be implemented, one that required officers be selected from amongst people who were already active in the life and mission of the church. They then set out to create teams that would make room for fresh faces and voices despite the resistance of some older team members.

In eight years, under the leadership of a pastor committed to embracing, the team moved to a mostly white female team in one year, to a team comprised of beautiful mixes of ethnicities in each person (i.e. Japanese and German, Caribbean and Dutch) and presently has an equal balance of males, female and people of color on its leadership team. This shift demanded an intentional effort to move all worshippers to the table of leadership and an ousting of the former model of election that maintained traditional ideals.

John’s gospel elevates our hearts by offering Jesus who stands in the gap between

¹⁵ Ibid., 3226.

Jews and Samaritans, males and females, and even theological differences. He is the bridge in the middle of the apartheid who lingers at the well long enough to escalate the relationship beyond resource sharing and pity to truth and reconciliation, “a time is coming and now is when we shall worship neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.” Ultimately Jesus raises the heart above gender, ethnicity and place, to the place where embrace happens, “true worshipers will worship in Spirit and in Truth.”

Success Case

To simply show up in the Tenderloin causes its own internal and external conflict.¹⁶ Holy Trinity has set up a community center in the Tenderloin because they realize human relationships are the key to embracing. “We are not social workers, we just don’t have the capacity or the experience to do that but we work well with people who are already in a programs.” The community center is a place to build trust across the escalating apartheid that their differences have afforded. Space for services by day give way nights that usher in the freedom to transform the center into a place for date night, games and movies, the places where embracing is evident.

¹⁶ “There is a lack of safe and sober community spaces for the residents of the Tenderloin, especially for our neighbors living in SRO (Single Room Occupancy) hotels or for those experiencing homelessness. Many in our neighborhood struggle with the isolation and breakdown of healthy community that result from - and compound - issues of addiction, mental and physical illness, poverty, and cycles of incarceration. Without welcoming spaces intentionally designed to facilitate healthy relationships, it is difficult to build community, to get to know one’s neighbors and, for those seeking sobriety, to be surrounded by others who will encourage and support you in your goals.” From this ministry’s website.

The Work

Listen

Womanifesto

A Black Woman Speaks!¹⁷

A Black Woman Speaks...
Of White Womanhood
Of White Supremacy
Of Peace

It is right that I a woman
black,
should speak of white womanhood.
My fathers
my brothers
my husbands
my sons
die for it; because of it.

And their blood chilled in electric chairs,
stopped by hangman's noose,
cooked by lynch mobs' fire,
spilled by white supremacist mad desire to kill for profit,
gives me that right.

I would that I could speak of white womanhood
as it will and should be
when it stands tall in full equality.
But then, womanhood will be womanhood
void of color and of class,
and all necessity for my speaking thus will be past.
Gladly past.

But now, since 'tis deemed a thing apart supreme,
I must in searching honesty report how it seems to me.
White womanhood stands in bloodied skirt and willing slavery
reaching out adulterous hand killing mine and crushing me.

What then is this superior thing
that in order to be sustained must needs feed upon my flesh?
How came this horror to be?

¹⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJnpWUgOLHk>, viewed January 24, 2017.

Let's look to history.

They said, the white supremacist said that you were better than me,
that your fair brow should never know the sweat of slavery.
They lied.

White womanhood too is enslaved,
the difference is degree.
They brought me here in chains.
They brought you here willing
slaves to man.
You, shiploads of women each filled with hope
that she might win with ruby lip and saucy curl
and bright and flashing eye
him to wife who had the largest tender.
Remember?

And they sold you here even as they sold me.
My sisters, there is no room for mockery.
If they counted my teeth
they did appraise your thigh
and sold you to the highest bidder
the same as I.

And you did not fight for your right to choose
whom you would wed
but for whatever bartered price
that was the legal tender
you were sold to a stranger's bed
in a stranger land
Remember?

And you did not fight.
Mind you, I speak not mockingly
but I fought for freedom,
I'm fighting now for our unity.
We are women all,
and what wrongs you murders me
and eventually marks your grave
so we share a mutual death at the hand of tyranny.

They trapped me with the chain and gun.
They trapped you with lying tongue.
For, 'less you see that fault- that male villainy
that robbed you of name, voice and authority,
that murderous greed that wasted you and me,
he, the white supremacist, fixed your minds with poisonous thought:

“white skin is supreme.”

and therewith bought that monstrous change
exiling you to things.
Changed all that nature had ill you wrought of gentle usefulness,
abolishing your spring.
Tore out your heart,
set your good apart from all that you could say,
think,
feel,
know to be right.
And you did not fight,
but set your minds fast on my slavery
the better to endure your own.
'Tis true

my pearls were beads of sweat
wrung from weary bodies' pain,
instead of rings upon my hands
I wore swollen, bursting veins.

My ornaments were the wip-lash's scar
my diamond, perhaps, a tear.
Instead of paint and powder on my face
I wore a solid mask of fear to see my blood so spilled.

And you, women seeing
spoke no protest
but cuddled down in your pink slavery
and thought somehow my wasted blood
confirmed your superiority.

Because your necklace was of gold
you did not notice that it throttled speech.
Because diamond rings bedecked your hands
you did not regret their dictated idleness.

Nor could you see that the platinum bracelets
which graced your wrists were chains
binding you fast to economic slavery.
And though you claimed your husband's name
still could not command his fidelity.

You bore him sons.
I bore him sons.
No, not willingly.
He purchased you.

He raped me,
I fought!
But you fought neither for yourselves nor me.
Sat trapped in your superiority
and spoke no reproach.
Consoled your outrage with an added diamond brooch.

Oh, God, how great is a woman's fear
who for a stone, a cold, cold stone
would not defend honor, love or dignity!
You bore the damning mockery of your marriage
and heaped your hate on me,
a woman too,
a slave more so.
And when your husband disowned his seed
that was my son
and sold him apart from me
you felt avenged.

Understand:
I was not your enemy in this,
I was not the source of your distress.
I was your friend, I fought.
But you would not help me fight
thinking you helped only me.
Your deceived eyes seeing only my slavery
aided your own decay.

Yes, they condemned me to death
and they condemned you to decay.
Your heart whisked away,
consumed in hate,
used up in idleness
playing yet the lady's part
estranged to vanity.

It is justice to you to say your fear equalled your tyranny.
You were afraid to nurse your young
lest fallen breast offend your master's sight
and he should flee to firmer loveliness.

And so you passed them, your children, on to me.
Flesh that was your flesh and blood that was your blood
drank the sustenance of life from me.
And as I gave suckle I knew I nursed my own child's enemy.

I could have lied,

told you your child was fed till it was dead of hunger.
But I could not find the heart to kill orphaned innocence.
For as it fed, it smiled and burped and gurgled with content
and as for color knew no difference.

Yes, in that first while
I kept your sons and daughters alive.
But when they grew strong in blood and bone
that was of my milk
you
taught them to hate me.
Put your decay in their hearts and upon their lips
so that strength that was of myself
turned and spat upon me,
despoiled my daughters, and killed my sons.

You know I speak true.
Though this is not true for all of you.
When I bestirred myself for freedom
and brave Harriet led the way
some of you found heart and played a part
in aiding my escape.

And when I made my big push for freedom
your sons fought at my sons' side,
Your husbands and brothers too fell in that battle
when Crispus Attucks died.

It's unfortunate that you acted not in the way of justice
but to preserve the Union
and for dear sweet pity's sake;
Else how came it to be with me as it is today?

You abhorred slavery yet loathed equality.
I would that the poor among you could have seen
through the scheme
and joined hands with me.
Then, we being the majority, could long ago have rescued
our wasted lives.

But no.
The rich, becoming richer, could be content
while yet the poor had only the pretense of superiority
and sought through murderous brutality
to convince themselves that what was false was true.

So with KKK and fiery cross

and bloodied appetites
set about to prove that “white is right”
forgetting their poverty.
Thus the white supremacist used your skins
to perpetuate slavery.
And woe to me.
Woe to Willie McGee.
Woe to the seven men of Martinsville.
And woe to you.

It was no mistake that your naked body on an Esquire calendar
announced the date, May Eighth.
This is your fate if you do not wake to fight.
They will use your naked bodies to sell their wares
though it be hate, Coca Cola or rape.

When a white mother disdained to teach her children
this doctrine of hate,
but taught them instead of peace
and respect for all men’s dignity
the courts of law did legislate
that they be taken from her
and sent to another state.

To make a Troy Hawkins of the little girl
and a killer of the little boy!
No, it was not for the womanhood of this mother
that Willie McGee died
but for a depraved, enslaved, adulterous woman
whose lustful demands denied,
lied and killed what she could not possess.
Only three months before another such woman lied
and seven black men shuddered and gave up their lives.

These women were upheld in these bloody deeds
by the president of this nation,
thus putting the official seal on the fate
of white womanhood within these United States.
This is what they plan for you.
This is the depravity they would reduce you to.
Death for me
and worse than death for you.
What will you do?

Will you fight with me?
White supremacy is your enemy and mine.
So be careful when you talk with me.

Remind me not of my slavery, I know it well
but rather tell me of your own.

Remember, you have never known me.
You've been busy seeing me
as white supremacist would have me be,
and I will be myself.
Free!

My aim is full equality.
I would usurp their plan!
Justice
peace
and plenty
for every man, woman and child
who walks the earth.

This is my fight!
If you will fight with me then take my hand
and the hand of Rosa Ingram, and Rosalee McGee,
and as we set about our plan
let our wholehearted fight be:
PEACE IN A WORLD WHERE THERE IS EQUALITY.

Womanifesto¹⁸

Clearly I am not a fat ass

I am active brain
And lip smacking peach deep
Sometimes too aggressive in its honesty

And heart sweet
That loves wholly and completely
Whom it may choose
Whom ever it may choose

I am not gonna lie and pacify
I am arms to hold
I am lips to speak
I am a muthafucking "G"

Strong legs that stroll off the 33 bus
Or out of a money green Phantom comfortably

Knees that bend to pray
Clean from Ajax washings
Hair that is thick and soft
Thigh that be-twixt
An amazing all expense grand prize

I am eyes that sing
Smile that brightens
Touch that rings
And supply euphoric release
I am a Grand Dame Queen Beast

I am war
I am peace
From the roads of Botswana to 23rd Street
From the inside third eye
Ever watching this wicked wicked system of things
I do see

¹⁸ <http://www.metrolyrics.com/womanifesto-lyrics-jill-scott.html>, viewed January 24, 2017.

I am friend to pen
And a lover of strong women
A diamond to men
I am curious and interested like children
I welcome the wise to teach
Appreciator of my culture
Thick not just from bone dense and eat

I have a rhythm in my ways
And a practice in my seek
And yes I do crave the rhythm of my space
With a man that rejoices in God's grace

With faith I do hear to listen
Two hands that fist
When forced pushes to shove
And your ego won't submit
I am gifted

I am all of this
And indeed the shit
Clearly I am not just an ass

Reflect

On the Lyrics and these questions:

How does your value of whiteness appear in your ministry?

When were you confronted with racial, class or gender related conflict in your ministry? What words did you use to resist the escalation? In what ways did you embrace the conflict?

Engage

John 4:1-22

Pray

For clarity, points of confession, and courage to initiate the embrace.

Respond

In whatever way suits you capture a response to the work done in this section.

Chapter 4: Invitation

This chapter will allow Archbishop Desmond Tutu's claim that "reconciliation of all people to God and to one another is the central acts of Jesus" to shed light on what he found to be one of the most astounding lies of all in South Africa's apartheid.¹ This lie suggested that God created certain human beings for "separateness," "disunity," "enmity" and "alienation." The evangelical church in America perpetuates the same lies with dehumanizing labels like "the lost", "the un-churched" and "the unbeliever" when they applied to fellow image bearers of God.² The labels perpetuate the lie that keeps people outside of the church at separate, disconnected and at bay. Their only hope to exercise full dominion as image bearers of God is to become one of the label-less people inside of the church. John's Jesus will stand in the escalating conflict in Samaria await the opportunity to offer an authentic invitation for the woman to participate with God.

The Historical

Apartheid has its origin in The Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa who managed to justify apartheid with the use of old testament scriptures that warned against the mixing of peoples.³ Sunday sermons and church wide gatherings called synods were riddled with apartheid supporting messages. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, nevertheless held deeply to his conviction that, "a divided church is a scandal" that ruins the witness of the church in the world.⁴ He believed reconciliation at its core to be a "denial of the

¹ Tutu and Allen, *Rainbow People of God*, 64-65.

² Note: There are no such labels in society as "the churched" or "the found." Actually inside the church, people claim a proud identity rooted in humanity as "children of God", "sons and daughters" and "the people of God."

³ Deuteronomy 7:3-4; Daniel 2:43.

⁴ Tutu and Allen, *Rainbow People of God*, 62.

artificial and ideological separation of people.” in light of Christ who broke down the dividing wall.⁵ He resisted the church’s tendency to separate itself from even politics, citing his strong belief that to deny the reign of God in the public square meant that, “there is a substantial part of human life in which God’s writ does not run.”⁶ According to Tutu, the lie of God ordained separation is dispelled by the gospel of Jesus whose body is to function for the good of the whole.”⁷

This pattern of belief finds its home in the American Evangelical church in the ways we use labels to signal social location vis-a-vis the church. Mainline ecclesiology has moved significantly from the early church’s porous line between sacred and secular which posited the church not as a physical manifestation but an “eschatological fellowship” The reformation created division when Martin Luther argued the church as “both saint and sinner.”⁸ Fellow reformer John Calvin considered the visible church to be “the totality of the elect before God” leading to a double predestination that automatically damned any and all of those outside of the visible church.⁹ Later the enlightenment in Europe with its rationality, forged the way for early 20th century fundamentalism, which according to Dr. Soong-Chan Rah “prioritized individualism at the cost of recognizing the corporate nature and corporate role of Christianity.”¹⁰ American evangelicalism is

⁵ Ibid., 65.

⁶ Ibid., 41.

⁷ Desmond Tutu and John Allen, *God Is Not a Christian* (London: Rider, 2013), 12.

⁸ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical & Global Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 52.

⁹ Ibid., 224.

¹⁰ Soong-Chan Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism: Releasing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009). 30.

the descendent of previous church movements and posits itself as one concerned with personal sin and responsibility as opposed to the corporate responsibility of the whole. The eschatological church has over centuries been replaced by a church obsessed with the great commission while stiff-arming the great commandment that calls for the church's rejection of social apartheid.

The Lies

Colonizers in the New World used lies and dehumanizing labels to typify the very people they would exploit and ultimately exterminate. Native peoples were named "savages", "heathens" and compared to wild animals by Christians.¹¹ Chattel slavery was maintained by many including devout Christians who propagated the claim that the Negro was three fifths of a person. This stripping of humanity relegated certain groups of people to the nameless, voiceless, and objectified side of the apartheid

The voices from outside of the church dispel the lies of the church's dominion denying labels, by claiming their relationship to the Creator albeit outside of the institutional church. David Kinnaman offers Nomads, Prodigals and Exiles as names worth using to avoid lie affirming labels sufficient to frame the voices of those who exist outside of the of the church.¹²

"Nomads walk away from church engagement but still consider themselves Christians." They are inclined to attend special services like Easter or Mother's Day.¹³

¹¹ Paul Kivel, *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice* (Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers, 1995), 81.

¹² Kinnaman, 295.

¹³ Notice the difference between labels and names. Labels are applied to a thing. Names come as the result of dominion which gives one the right to name for herself.

Pop star Rihanna, literally wears words like “fearless” and “chalice” on her naked body on the cover of her award winning musical release “Unapologetic” brandishing all of the indicators of “the lost” label the church would place upon her. However, tucked away behind track eleven *Love Without Tragedy* she bears the soul of a Nomad in the song *Mother Mary*:

*“Mother Mary I swear I wanna change
Mister Jesus I'd love to be queen
But I'm from the left side of an island
Never thought this many people would even know my name
As time flies, way above me
For you i've cried, tears sea deep
Oh glory, the prayers carry me
I'll be a star you keep directing me
Let's make the best scene they've ever seen
Let's capture the moment”¹⁴*

Rihanna would never be mistaken for a christian music artist, her songs would not be played on christian radio stations, based on explicit lyrics and sexual content. She might easily find herself counted among “the lost” by those who inhabit the church.

Nevertheless, Rihanna has a prayer that lives deep in the fabric of her Unapologetic musical project. Her prayerful song could be the sincere cry of any Nomad, born into poverty and then given an opportunity to rise to stardom. Unfortunately, she would have to exchange her pursuit of a highly respected Grammy award for one of the less acclaimed christian music awards for the church to no longer consider her to be one of “the lost.”

“Prodigals lose their faith, describing themselves as “no longer Christian.” They have run far away from church with no intent to return. The prodigal alternative rock group

¹⁴ <http://www.metrolyrics.com/love-without-tragedy-mother-mary-lyrics-rihanna.html>, viewed January 24, 2017.

Sabbat is not afraid to critique the church openly in their lyrics. In the *Church Bizarre* their disdain for the church is apparent:

*“The Curtain Never falls on the show,
that has it all,
taken in you can’t begin to see their lies,
for the people who are clapping
are the ones who will be laughing at your fate,
they just can’t wait to bleed you dry”¹⁵*

Their critique of the Sunday service is quite typical of prodigals who once were close enough to the church to draw conclusions about its abuses and lies.

“Exiles are still invested in their Christian faith but feel stuck (or lost) between culture and the church.” Rhythm and Blues artist Brian McKnight bellows a smooth sultry lyric fit for slow dancing and love making but unfit for any traditional worship service.

However, every musical project this exile produces contains at least one invitation for listeners to join his conversation with God. McKnight’s prayer flows from a deep faith in God where preachers promise the kind of prosperity he has already obtained, he longs for more in a world that to him seems “so cold.”

*“Can You see me
I’m down on my knees, oh Lord
I’m lost and I’m so alone
Does Your world have a heart of stone?

Oh Lord, am I destined to be what I’ve been?
Never a thick and barely a thin
Where do I fit in?
I am waiting here for You to answer my call”¹⁶*

From one side of the chasm they appear to be uninterested, unorthodox or uninformed;

¹⁵ <http://www.metrolyrics.com/the-church-bizzare-lyrics-sabbat.html>, viewed January 24, 2017.

¹⁶ <http://www.metrolyrics.com/oh-lord-lyrics-brian-mcknight.html>, viewed January 24, 2017.

those who receive soup, coat and prayer but more and more the trend is changing. A closer look reveals the faces of sons and daughters of the church who have grown weary of “slick or half-baked answers to their thorny, honest questions” causing them to conclude the church has failed them.¹⁷

Embracing Move

Invitation

There was a crippled man at the pool in John five who was on the brink of hope as he lay on a mat waiting for an angel to stir the water into a healing state for whoever was fast enough to touch the water first. He like McKnight must have also felt alone in a cold world. As close as he was to healing he had no one to provide the support he needed to grasp it. Jesus could have spoken a word of healing or offered a healing touch as was his custom in the synoptics. However, John’s embracing Jesus invited the disabled man to exercise dominion in participation with God by taking up his own bed and walking toward a preferred future that would later be expressed in a profession of faith in Jesus.

The man born blind in John 9 encountered the light of the world who shined light on his physical and spiritual darkness. This man born blind stood at a distance at the opening of the narrative, nameless and voiceless. He had fallen victim to the blame game in a context when sickness meant either the one afflicted or his parents had sinned and warranted his condition. The community around him including the disciples refused to address him directly because he was an “outsider,” and a “sinner.” They spoke of him openly as though he had no ears to hear, and even after his healing the religious leaders joined the disciples by ignoring his voice to speak on behalf of himself. Like the nomads,

¹⁷ Kinnaman, 106-107.

exiles and prodigals he wore an invisible label “sinner” but was otherwise nameless, voiceless and faceless. This nameless man was once blind and thus far in this text mute as well. Even after Jesus placed the mixture of spit and dust on his eyes his condition remained the same. It was not until Jesus invited him to “go wash” that he participated with God and in doing so his eyes were open and so was his mouth. He was then able to speak for himself, without his parent’s advocacy. He could even challenge the systems of power that were trying to speak for him saying “Give God praise, this man is a sinner” as he with full agency retorted “whether he is a sinner or not I do not know. But what I know is I once was blind but now I see.” His washing was a participation with God which did ultimately lead him to see for himself and later confess faith in Jesus saying, “Lord, I believe.”

Jesus approached these men in the same way he did the woman in Samaria, with an eagerness to extend an invitation to participation.

The churches had long held the burden for the neighborhood where Emmaus Ministries is located. They had providing basketball goals, distributed hotdogs and offered Christmas carols for the residents for years. Meanwhile, the summer found children running rampant through the complex aimless and mischievous at times. The churches and city officials saw this neighborhood as a problem related to the highest number of police calls in the city, but Emmaus saw it as an opportunity to invite neighbors to participate in their own preferred future.

They launched a summer program “WHOA” that invited children in the neighborhood to participate in physical activities and healthy eating for points that could later be cashed in for prizes and ultimately a new pair of sneakers. The complex was filled with children

constructively moving and working, they were way too busy for mischief. As the years rolled on the summer program became an all encompassing program that invited the church and surrounding neighborhoods to participate with the healthy initiative. The end of the summer now leverages the hard work into a five kilometer event that raises money and awareness for Emmaus Ministries and their neighbors. One year they decided together to use the money to purchase a bus shelter for kids and residents to have retreat from the elements while awaiting public transportation. Emmaus invited its neighbors to exercise dominion by participating with God for a future of flourishing.

There was a crippled man at the pool in John five who was on the brink of hope as he lay on a mat waiting for an angel to stir the water into a healing state for whoever was fast enough to touch the water first. He might as well had been a neighbor in Emmaus' neighborhood amidst many others on the brink of flourishing. He like McKnight must have also felt alone in a cold world. As close as he was to healing he had no one to provide the support he needed to grasp it. Jesus could have spoken a word of healing or offered a healing touch as was often his practice in the synoptics. However, John's embracing Jesus invited the disabled man to exercise dominion in participation with God by taking up his own bed and walking toward a preferred future that would later be expressed in a profession of faith in Jesus.

The man born blind in John 9 encountered the light of the world who shined light on his physical and spiritual darkness. This man born blind stood at a distance at the opening of the narrative, nameless and voiceless. He had fallen victim to the blame game in a context when sickness meant either the one afflicted or his parents had sinned and warranted his condition. The community around him including the disciples refused to

address him directly because he was an “outsider,” and a “sinner.” They spoke of him openly as though he had no ears to hear, and even after his healing the religious leaders joined the disciples by ignoring his voice to speak on behalf of himself. Like the nomads, exiles and prodigals he wore an invisible label “sinner” but was otherwise nameless, voiceless and faceless. This nameless man was once blind and thus far in this text mute as well. Even after Jesus placed the mixture of spit and dust on his eyes his condition remained the same. It was not until Jesus invited him to “go wash” that he participated with God and in doing so his eyes were open and so was his mouth. He was then able to speak for himself, without his parent’s advocacy. He could even challenge the systems of power that were trying to speak for him saying “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.” Then he with full agency retorted, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” His washing was a participation with God which did ultimately lead him to see for himself and later confess faith in Jesus saying, “Lord, I believe.”

The ministry team approached their neighborhood in the same way as they realized what the city saw them as a problem related to the highest number of police calls in the city, Emmaus saw as an opportunity to invite neighbors to participate in a preferred future. They launched a summer program that invited children in the neighborhood to participate in physical activities and healthy eating for points that could be cashed in for prizes and ultimately a new pair of sneakers. The complex was filled with children constructively moving and working, they were way too busy for mischief. As the years rolled on the summer program became an all encompassing program that invites the church and surrounding neighborhoods to participate with the healthy initiative. The

end of the summer leverages the hard work into a five kilometer event that raises money and awareness for Emmaus Ministries and their neighborhood. One year they decided together to use the money to purchase a bus shelter for kids and residents.

Jesus, motivated by the mission of God, initiated the embrace with the woman at the well and stood in the escalation of differences long enough to offers her an invitation. Go get your husband, this is the pinnacle of the escalation, she had been married five times and the man she was with was not her husband. This is the woman Christ is inviting to drink of his water. The woman we would never have come to know if he had been motivated by his need to meet his own end, or wait for her to beg him for access to his limitedness resource or even had he succumb to the apartheid producing differences that she had raised as a barrier to embracing. “Go get your husband” reveals her weakness and his strength in ways that that make for the ultimate embrace. The time is coming and now is when where we worship is no longer important, he claims but how is the platform for embracing; in Spirit and in Truth.

Success Case

For five years a ever changing group of middle and high School students of Cambodian, Laotian, African American, Dutch, and Mexican descent traveled to many places around the world spreading the good news through song. Most of these children did not attend The Rock church, they were members at the church that coincided with their languages and family of origin. The music director at The Rock Church would teach choirs at public schools and thereby find the opportunity to invite students to sing with him on Thursday night. Some of these children had experienced patterns of homelessness, academic challenges and social isolation. The Rock Church did not require them to be believers or

to even understand the songs they would sing about. They were being invited to enter into life with Christ as witnesses before their confession like the woman at the well.

Two of the young women who went to South Africa are still active members leading children's ministries, dance and worship teams at The Rock Church. They described how they felt having been invited to sing, serve and participate with God in an orphanage in South Africa.

"We had gone and took our own money and brought all these items.

We cleaned up the facilities...sang songs to the children."

"We wanted to fulfill the mission why we came,...we wanted to make a difference"

"Wow God is so amazing" we thought "Look what God is doing here (in South Africa)."

The Work

Listen

Oh Lord¹⁸

Can you hear me
I'm calling your name oh Lord
I can't go on this way
Will I make it another day

Oh Lord, was I made just to beg and crawl
Who will catch me whenever I fall
Do I even matter at all
I am waiting here for you to answer my call

Can you see me
I'm down on my knees oh Lord
I'm lost and I'm so alone
Does your world have a heart of stone

Oh Lord am I destined to be what I've been
Never a thick and barely a thin
Where do I fit in
I am waiting here for you to answer my call

You say it won't be long
So I got to keep holding on
This world just so cold, so cold, so cold, so cold

Oh Lord am I destined to be what I've been
Never a thick and barely a thin
Where do I fit in
I am waiting here for you to answer my call
I am waiting here for you to answer my call

Oh, oh Lord when you gonna answer my call

¹⁸ <http://www.metrolyrics.com/oh-lord-lyrics-brian-mcknight.html>, viewed January 24, 2017.

Outsider¹⁹

I won't stay here another night
If I gotta sacrifice
Who I am on the inside
I'd rather be an outsider

And you can stay if you like
I'll see you on the other side
I wanna live the free life
I'd rather be an outsider

I really can't tell if I'm overdressed or I'm underdressed
If I'm underpaid or just overstressed
If I'm cynical or just over this
Cause I'm tired of tryna get over there
Man it's over there
Party's over

You probably couldn't tell we over here
Cause you hardly sober
Double shots of that ego
They laughin' at us, yeah we know
May be at the bottom but we not forgotten
The director's plotting that sequel

'Til then we live on the outside
And it might storm and we might die
But I'd rather go with my fist high
Standing outside of your inside

I tried my best to fit in
Looking for a suit to fit in
Standing outside of your prison
Tryna find ways I can get in

Now I realize that I'm free
And I realize that I'm me
And I found out that I'm not alone
'Cuz there's plenty people like me
That's right plenty people like me
All love me despite me
And all unashamed and all unafraid
To speak out for what we might see

¹⁹ <http://www.metrolyrics.com/outsidere-lyrics-lecrae.html>, viewed January 24, 2017.

I said there's plenty people like me
All outsiders like me
And all unashamed and all unafraid
To live out what they supposed to be
Outsiders

I won't stay here another night
If I gotta sacrifice
Who I am on the inside
I'd rather be an outsider

And you can stay if you like
I'll see you on the other side
I wanna live the free life
I'd rather be an outsider

I know what they askin' fo'
I know what they askin' fo'
But how you gone cover charge me my life and soul
And then turn around and ask for mo'
Time to go plus the line is long
I'mma color the outside where lines are drawn

If you wanna exclude me for being the true me
It's Gucci
I already found my home
Homesick
Homeless if I'm honest
'Cuz my home is somewhere I ain't never been before

I'mma hone this here gift
Even if it doesn't fit in the box
That'll please these folks
Some of y'all gone need these quotes
I ain't tryna eat I'm tryna feed these folks
Martin, Mandella yeah we need these folks
We believe these folks
We could be these folks

But they want me to take an L
Tired of taking losses so they can call me a failure
I failed at being you
But I'm winning at being me
I'm winning at being free
Ain't no competition but me

See I realize that I'm free

And I realize that I'm me
And I found out that I'm not alone
And there's plenty people like me
I said there's plenty people like me
All outsiders like me
All unashamed and all unafraid
To live out what they supposed to be
Outsiders

Reflect

On these questions

- What critique do these artists make of the church?
- In what ways has your ministry failed to invite the people you reach out to participate with you and with God?

Engage

John 5:1-15; 9

Pray

Ask God for ways to invite Exiles, Prodigals and Nomads to exercise dominion in their own lives, families and communities.

Respond

Write a letter to one of the artists explaining what you have learned about outreach vs embracing relative to his critique.

Conclusion

Only the gospel can scatter the lies of apartheid that make indelible distinctions between image bears of God who serve and those who are being served. Poor people, black women and people who do not attend church needs a good news that gestures towards embrace amidst social apartheid. Christian outreach in America mirrors the apartheid practices of South Africa in so far as it perpetuates practices that prevent image bearers of God from exercising dominion according to God's first command in Genesis two. Both contexts tend to treat certain people as though they are to be used to meet the ends of those who hold perceived power over them. They also hold to a pigmentocracy that assumes that the color of one's skin can be used to determine one's human worth. Finally, they deny the reconciling work of Christ who came to reconcile all human beings to the Father and to each other.

Ubuntu charts the path to embracing, a way of life that understands the interdependence of all human beings that turns apartheid on its head. It is the way of Jesus whose dependence on the Father motivated him to go through Samaria though other Jews would have avoided it. While there he initiated the process of embracing a deeply stained Samaritan woman, although Jews had no dealing with Samaritans. He acknowledged interdependence by initiating an opportunity for her to meet his own need for water although he knew her need was much greater than his own. As the embrace draws closer social and political differences escalate the points of conflict. Jesus stands in the chasm with truth as it escalates to a place where he ultimately invites her, in all her brokenness to participate with in the full embrace.

The embracing model requires a reimagining of outcomes of outreach ministries and

practices that make it harder to measure impact and success. John therefore teaches three things implicit in the call to reveal Christ that demands an embracing model of engagement to replace the outreaching on.

First, faith in Christ is not to be required, demanded or guaranteed if every person is an image bearer of God equipped to exercise dominion. John's Jesus differs from the synoptics where he frequently asks do you believe before administering healing, Here in John four, five and nine, Jesus is the initiator and that without first revealing himself or demanding a profession of faith. It is the nature of God and therefore those who are motivated by His actions to initiate the embrace with those who do not yet believe. Embracing is a demonstration of God's love which is not to earned, withheld or doled out with conditions.

Second, timing is everything, when to reveal Christ is an important matter. Just as John 1 reveals how the Word was in the beginning with God but in due time was revealed in Christ who became flesh and dwelt among us, timing and revelation go hand in hand. Jesus did not reveal himself to the woman at the well, the man at the pool or the man born blind at the beginning of his encounter with them. Jesus is content to lean into the embrace slowly and in a timely manner which is often after a point of conflict. Even in the case of Mary and Martha, who loved Jesus dearly, Jesus measures his timing as he goes to attend to the sickness and eventual death of his friend Lazarus in order to reveal himself more fully. "I am the resurrection and the Life..." comes after the long wait, the death and stench, timing is everything to reveal Christ.

Third, when Christ is truly revealed it will be evident in the life of those who see it. While the church measures by attendance, number of baptisms and membership, John

reveals something more faithful and consistent. When Christ is revealed in John's gospel image bearers of God are able to stand up to religious leaders. They go back into their neighborhoods and communities empowered to ask theological questions that lead to faith like the Samaritan woman's, "could he be the Messiah." Sometimes like the man who once sat at the pool, they will even want to follow Jesus. John's Jesus offers the church a face lift that has not yet been tainted by her one-sided missionary practices. It naturally stands out as the one that calls the missionary deeper and higher in her faith and practice.

This workbook is an ethical guide to be used again and again as a tool for the Holy Spirit to tune your heart to the will of the Father, with John's Jesus as a witness. The songs, texts and contemplative questions will shed new light every time you come to it. Don't just complete the workbook once but come back to it regularly with small groups, adult education classes and personal devotion as a litmus test and a compass forward from outreach to embracing.

The Lyrics

The lyrics provided on these pages were taken from www.metrolyrics.com with the exception of “A Black Woman Speaks...” which comes from a book and can be viewed on YouTube. Any misspelling, grammatical errors or errant lyrics credit to metrolyrics and not to this project, although I have added some corrections in parentheses.

Some of the songs have explicit lyrics and graphic imagery which might be problematic for some; however, I urge you to persevere to hear the fuller meaning and implications for community engagement. The lyrics appear in the same order they are presented in this workbook. Proper citation will appear in the footnotes of each piece.

The Church Bizarre¹

The stage is set my friends for the play that never ends -
this comedy we call the Church Bizarre,
once you enetr(enter) you are bound to find salvation by the pound,
assured the more you pay the nearer God you are.

Your mouth so paralysed with fear you dare not speak,
your eyes so blind and hypnotised you cannot weep,
so blinkered to reality that you no longer care,
that profit is the prophet of corruption and despair.

Bring on the dancers - bring on the clowns,
who invite you to ride on their merry-go-rounds,
they make the money and they make the rules,
you 'Born-Again-Christians' are born again fools.

THE EVANGELIST PRAYER:

God of wealth and God of might guide me to your paradise,
for many lives were bought and sold that I may walk your streets of gold,
though my heart is cold and still I rest in peace my pockets filled,
and bear the smile of one who knows

A 'salvation salesman's dream - guillible(gullible) to the extreme,
easy pickings for the charm and 'savoir faire',
of these charlatans and theives(thieves) whose delight is to decieve(deceive) - all the fools who
still believe they really care.

And if all the Devil's minions were let loose to do their will,
I think they'd be hard pressed to match
in diabolic skill,
the wickedness and treachery of this evangelic horde,
who sheler(shelter) their corruption with the banner of their Lord.
(Repeat 3 & 4)The curtain never falls on the show that has it all,
taken in you can't begin to see their lies,
for the people who are clapping are the ones who will be laughing
at your fate,
they just can't wait to bleed you dry.

¹ <http://www.metrolyrics.com/the-church-bizzare-lyrics-sabbat.html>, viewed January 24, 2017.

Shallow Be Thy Game²

I was not created
In the likeness of a fraud
Your hell is something scary
I prefer a loving god
We are not the center
Of this funny universe
And what is something worse
I do not serve
In fear of such a curse

Shallow be thy game
2000 years look in the mirror
You play the game of shame
And tell your people live in fear

A rival to the way you see
The bible let him be
I'm a threat to your survival
And your control company

[Chorus:]
You'll never burn me
You'll never burn me
I'll be your heretic
You can't contain me
I am the power free
Truth belongs to everybody

To anyone who's listenin'
You're not born into sin
The guilt they try and give you
Puke it in the nearest bin

Missionary maddness
Sweep up culture w/ a broom

² <http://www.metrolyrics.com/shallow-be-thy-game-lyrics-red-hot-chili-peppers.html>.

Trashing ancient ways
Is par for the course
It's fucking rude

To think that you're above
The laws of nature is a joke
Purple sashes feeding masses
Smoke on which to choke

I might be a monkey
When it comes to being holy
Fundamental hatred
Get down on your knees and

[Chorus]

Losing My Religion³

I'm losing my religion
Thank God
I prayed about my decision
How odd

For the man with the mic
To be the man all his life
While Christ-like stipes did with REM
Rev up the RPMs

How do I begin to try to paint this sin, of rules?
That divides God's people in two
In the beginning, religion created a mask
The reformation helped but soon the patch didn't last
I don't tell, you don't ask

So we created a lie
And for generations, church was where we went to go hide
Or we no longer tried
Because rules read our relationship was empty inside

Leaves you bitter, dry
Swift to cut like a razor
Swift to call you a traitor
'Cause you're swift to love Taylor
Now we got bad blood with our neighbor

Who's wrong, who's right
Every Sunday we're divided
Who's black, who's white, C'mon

Now the man in the mirror never gets race right
He'll never be Christ-like
Never receive good pay
So your faith never rises above minimum wage

³ <http://www.metrolyrics.com/losing-my-religion-lyrics-kirk-franklin.html>, viewed January 24, 2017.

So when it's time to save the world
You don't know what to say
To your brother that you love when he tells you he's gay
Do you push him away?
Judge him down till he leaves?
Give him a gospel he hears or a gospel he sees
Love wrapped in truth is the gospel he needs
There's room at the cross for everyone, even me

Well, my sins are now clean
The loss now redeemed
Religion is a prison but truth sets us free
Helps us believe
That the world we're in now is not the world that will be
Terror, famine, disease

Millions in poverty
Hungry, can't sleep
With all of this religion, why these babies can't eat?
And if the middle class is gone, how can America see?
How can America breathe?
When the oxygen is gone from the American dream

And these American streets listen close as they speak
The next time you think America please include me
Help the ones that are weak
All they want is a piece
Of the pie that you keep
Is that too much to ask of those who lay the concrete?

Still laying on concrete
Pop, pop by police
See, they the foundation of the nation
Not the 2%
Not the ones that own the building that the middle class rent

Because they make sense
Tell me how do you feel?
I'm the new Franklin and I have the new deal
I fight and do right
FDR for real

One nation under God
God, show us the way
The science of opinion
God is not a buffet
You pick what you want so no God on your plate
The preacher isn't God
Religion's first mistake
Serving stewards, shepherds, not kings
Has to die to his flesh everyday like me

One VIP
All the other seats in church are free
We're just groupies
God's the celebrity
Before 313 AD
Before Constantine
Before the council of Nacia (Nicea)
Before Romans and Greeks
Before Calvin (Calvin) Alexander, Luther
Before let there be
Before history
To the last century
Before the death on the tree

Before the fall of man
Was a picture of me
Now to his heart
Right before the last three
Words he would speak
It is finished

Can you believe?
I'm losing my religion
Thank God
Helping you lose yours
Is my job

How Much a Dollar Cost⁴

How much a dollar really cost?
The question is detrimental, paralyzin' my thoughts
Parasites in my stomach keep me with a gut feeling, y'all
Gotta see how I'm chillin' once I park this luxury car

Hopping out feeling big as Mutombo
Twenty on pump six dirty Marcellus called me Dumbo
Twenty years ago, can't forget
Now I can lend 'em a ear or two how to stack these residuals
Tenfold, the liberal concept of what men'll do

Twenty on six, he didn't hear me
Indigenous African only spoke Zulu
My American tongue was slurry
Walked out the gas station
A homeless man with a silly tan complexion
Asked me for ten grand
Stressin' about dry land
Deep water, powder blue skies that crack open

A piece of crack that he wanted, I knew he was smokin'
He begged and pleaded
Asked me to feed him twice, I didn't believe it
Told him, beat it
Contributin' money just for his pipe, I couldn't see it

He said, my son, temptation is one thing that I've defeated
Listen to me, I want a single bill from you
Nothin' less, nothin' more
I told him I ain't have it and closed my door
Tell me how much a dollar cost

It's more to feed your mind
Water, sun and love, the one you love
All you need, the air you breathe

⁴ <http://www.metrolyrics.com/how-much-a-dollar-cost-lyrics-kendrick-lamar.html>, viewed January 24, 2017.

He's starin' at me in disbelief
My temper is buildin', he's starin' at me, I grab my key
He's starin' at me, I started the car and tried to leave
And somethin' told me to keep it in park until I could see
A reason why he was mad at a stranger like I was supposed to save him
Like I'm the reason he's homeless and askin' me for a favor
He's starin' at me, his eyes followed me with no laser
He's starin' at me, I notice that his stare is contagious
'Cause now I'm starin' back at him, feelin' some type of disrespect
If I could throw a bat at him, it'd be aimin' at his neck

I never understood someone beggin' for goods
Askin' for handouts, takin' it if they could
And this particular person just had it down pat
Starin' at me for the longest until he finally asked
Have you ever opened to Exodus 14?
A humble man is all that we ever need
Tell me how much a dollar cost

It's more to feed your mind
Water, sun and love, the one you love
All you need, the air you breathe

Guilt trippin' and feelin' resentment
I never met a transient that demanded attention
They got me frustrated, indecisive and power trippin'
Sour emotions got me lookin' at the universe different

I should distance myself, I should keep it relentless
My selfishness is what got me here, who the fuck I'm kiddin'?
So I'ma tell you like I told the last bum, crumbs and pennies
I need all of mines, and I recognize this type of panhandlin' all the time
I got better judgement, I know when nigga's hustlin'
Keep in mind, when I was strugglin', I did compromise
Now I comprehend, I smell grandpa's old medicine
Reekin' from your skin, moonshine and gin
Nigga your babblin', your words ain't flatterin', I'm imaginin'
Denzel be lookin' at O'Neal

'Cause now I'm in sad thrills, your gimmick is mediocre, the jig is up
I seen you from a mile away losin' focus

And I'm insensitive, and I lack empathy
You looked at me and said, your potential is bittersweet
I looked at him and said, every nickel is mine to keep
He looked at me and said, know the truth, it'll set you free
You're lookin' at the Messiah, the son of Jehova, the higher power
The choir that spoke the word, the Holy Spirit, the nerve
Of Nazareth, and I'll tell you just how much a dollar cost
The price of having a spot in Heaven, embrace your loss, I am God
I wash my hands, I said my grace, what more do you want from me?
Tears of a clown, guess I'm not all what is meant to be
Shades of grey will never change if I condone
Turn this page, help me change, so right my wrongs

Mother Mary⁵

Mother Mary, I swear I wanna change
Mister Jesus, I'd love to be a queen
But I'm from the left side of an island
Never thought this many people would even know my name

As time flies, way above me
For you I've cried, tears sea-deep
Oh glory, the prayers carry me
I'll be a star, you keep directing me
Let's make the best scene they've ever seen

Let's capture the moment
Cause even forever ain't forever
I swear by the moment
'Cause together ain't promised forever
Let's live in the moment
As long as we got each other
Die in the moment

I'm prepared to die in the moment

'Cause even forever ain't forever
I swear by the moment
'Cause together ain't promised forever
I swear by the moment
As long as we got each other
Die in the moment

I'm prepared to die in the moment
To die in the moment

Mother Mary, I swear I wanna change
Mister Jesus, I'd love to be a queen
But I'm from the left side of an island
Never thought this many people would even know my name

⁵ <http://www.metrolyrics.com/love-without-tragedy-mother-mary-lyrics-rihanna.html>, viewed January 24, 2017.

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I'm prepared to die in the moment
I'm prepared to die in the moment

'Cause even forever ain't forever
I swear by the moment
I'm prepared to die in the moment

A Black Woman Speaks!⁶

A Black Woman Speaks...
Of White Womanhood
Of White Supremacy
Of Peace

It is right that I a woman
black,
should speak of white womanhood.
My fathers
my brothers
my husbands
my sons
die for it; because of it.

And their blood chilled in electric chairs,
stopped by hangman's noose,
cooked by lynch mobs' fire,
spilled by white supremacist mad desire to kill for profit,
gives me that right.

I would that I could speak of white womanhood
as it will and should be
when it stands tall in full equality.
But then, womanhood will be womanhood
void of color and of class,
and all necessity for my speaking thus will be past.
Gladly past.

But now, since 'tis deemed a thing apart supreme,
I must in searching honesty report how it seems to me.
White womanhood stands in bloodied skirt and willing slavery
reaching out adulterous hand killing mine and crushing me.

What then is this superior thing
that in order to be sustained must needs feed upon my flesh?
How came this horror to be?
Let's look to history.

They said, the white supremacist said that you were better than me,
that your fair brow should never know the sweat of slavery.
They lied.

⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJnpWUgOLHk>, viewed January 24, 2017.

White womanhood too is enslaved,
the difference is degree.
They brought me here in chains.
They brought you here willing
slaves to man.
You, shiploads of women each filled with hope
that she might win with ruby lip and saucy curl
and bright and flashing eye
him to wife who had the largest tender.
Remember?

And they sold you here even as they sold me.
My sisters, there is no room for mockery.
If they counted my teeth
they did appraise your thigh
and sold you to the highest bidder
the same as I.

And you did not fight for your right to choose
whom you would wed
but for whatever bartered price
that was the legal tender
you were sold to a stranger's bed
in a stranger land
Remember?

And you did not fight.
Mind you, I speak not mockingly
but I fought for freedom,
I'm fighting now for our unity.
We are women all,
and what wrongs you murders me
and eventually marks your grave
so we share a mutual death at the hand of tyranny.

They trapped me with the chain and gun.
They trapped you with lying tongue.
For, 'less you see that fault- that male villainy
that robbed you of name, voice and authority,
that murderous greed that wasted you and me,
he, the white supremacist, fixed your minds with poisonous thought:
"white skin is supreme."

and therewith bought that monstrous change
exiling you to things.
Changed all that nature had ill you wrought of gentle usefulness,

abolishing your spring.
Tore out your heart,
set your good apart from all that you could say,
think,
feel,
know to be right.
And you did not fight,
but set your minds fast on my slavery
the better to endure your own.
'Tis true

my pearls were beads of sweat
wrung from weary bodies' pain,
instead of rings upon my hands
I wore swollen, bursting veins.

My ornaments were the wip-lash's scar
my diamond, perhaps, a tear.
Instead of paint and powder on my face
I wore a solid mask of fear to see my blood so spilled.

And you, women seeing
spoke no protest
but cuddled down in your pink slavery
and thought somehow my wasted blood
confirmed your superiority.

Because your necklace was of gold
you did not notice that it throttled speech.
Because diamond rings bedecked your hands
you did not regret their dictated idleness.

Nor could you see that the platinum bracelets
which graced your wrists were chains
binding you fast to economic slavery.
And though you claimed your husband's name
still could not command his fidelity.

You bore him sons.
I bore him sons.
No, not willingly.
He purchased you.
He raped me,
I fought!
But you fought neither for yourselves nor me.
Sat trapped in your superiority
and spoke no reproach.

Consoled your outrage with an added diamond brooch.

Oh, God, how great is a woman's fear
who for a stone, a cold, cold stone
would not defend honor, love or dignity!
You bore the damning mockery of your marriage
and heaped your hate on me,
a woman too,
a slave more so.
And when your husband disowned his seed
that was my son
and sold him apart from me
you felt avenged.

Understand:
I was not your enemy in this,
I was not the source of your distress.
I was your friend, I fought.
But you would not help me fight
thinking you helped only me.
Your deceived eyes seeing only my slavery
aided your own decay.

Yes, they condemned me to death
and they condemned you to decay.
Your heart whisked away,
consumed in hate,
used up in idleness
playing yet the lady's part
estranged to vanity.

It is justice to you to say your fear equalled your tyranny.
You were afraid to nurse your young
lest fallen breast offend your master's sight
and he should flee to firmer loveliness.

And so you passed them, your children, on to me.
Flesh that was your flesh and blood that was your blood
drank the sustenance of life from me.
And as I gave suckle I knew I nursed my own child's enemy.

I could have lied,
told you your child was fed till it was dead of hunger.
But I could not find the heart to kill orphaned innocence.
For as it fed, it smiled and burped and gurgled with content
and as for color knew no difference.

Yes, in that first while
I kept your sons and daughters alive.
But when they grew strong in blood and bone
that was of my milk
you
taught them to hate me.
Put your decay in their hearts and upon their lips
so that strength that was of myself
turned and spat upon me,
despoiled my daughters, and killed my sons.

You know I speak true.
Though this is not true for all of you.
When I bestirred myself for freedom
and brave Harriet led the way
some of you found heart and played a part
in aiding my escape.

And when I made my big push for freedom
your sons fought at my sons' side,
Your husbands and brothers too fell in that battle
when Crispus Attucks died.

It's unfortunate that you acted not in the way of justice
but to preserve the Union
and for dear sweet pity's sake;
Else how came it to be with me as it is today?

You abhorred slavery yet loathed equality.
I would that the poor among you could have seen
through the scheme
and joined hands with me.
Then, we being the majority, could long ago have rescued
our wasted lives.

But no.
The rich, becoming richer, could be content
while yet the poor had only the pretense of superiority
and sought through murderous brutality
to convince themselves that what was false was true.

So with KKK and fiery cross
and bloodied appetites
set about to prove that "white is right"
forgetting their poverty.
Thus the white supremacist used your skins
to perpetuate slavery.

And woe to me.
Woe to Willie McGee.
Woe to the seven men of Martinsville.
And woe to you.

It was no mistake that your naked body on an Esquire calendar
announced the date, May Eighth.
This is your fate if you do not wake to fight.
They will use your naked bodies to sell their wares
though it be hate, Coca Cola or rape.

When a white mother disdained to teach her children
this doctrine of hate,
but taught them instead of peace
and respect for all men's dignity
the courts of law did legislate
that they be taken from her
and sent to another state.

To make a Troy Hawkins of the little girl
and a killer of the little boy!
No, it was not for the womanhood of this mother
that Willie McGee died
but for a depraved, enslaved, adulterous woman
whose lustful demands denied,
lied and killed what she could not possess.
Only three months before another such woman lied
and seven black men shuddered and gave up their lives.

These women were upheld in these bloody deeds
by the president of this nation,
thus putting the official seal on the fate
of white womanhood within these United States.
This is what they plan for you.
This is the depravity they would reduce you to.
Death for me
and worse than death for you.
What will you do?

Will you fight with me?
White supremacy is your enemy and mine.
So be careful when you talk with me.
Remind me not of my slavery, I know it well
but rather tell me of your own.

Remember, you have never known me.
You've been busy seeing me

as white supremacist would have me be,
and I will be myself.
Free!

My aim is full equality.
I would usurp their plan!
Justice
peace
and plenty
for every man, woman and child
who walks the earth.

This is my fight!
If you will fight with me then take my hand
and the hand of Rosa Ingram, and Rosalee McGee,
and as we set about our plan
let our wholehearted fight be:
PEACE IN A WORLD WHERE THERE IS EQUALITY.

Womanifesto⁷

Clearly I am not a fat ass

I am active brain
And lip smacking peach deep
Sometimes too aggressive in its honesty

And heart sweet
That loves wholly and completely
Whom it may choose
Whom ever it may choose

I am not gonna lie and pacify
I am arms to hold
I am lips to speak
I am a muthafucking "G"

Strong legs that stroll off the 33 bus
Or out of a money green Phantom comfortably

Knees that bend to pray
Clean from Ajax washings
Hair that is thick and soft
Thigh that be-twixt
An amazing all expense grand prize

I am eyes that sing
Smile that brightens
Touch that rings
And supply euphoric release
I am a Grand Dame Queen Beast

I am war
I am peace
From the roads of Botswana to 23rd Street
From the inside third eye
Ever watching this wicked wicked system of things

⁷ <http://www.metrolyrics.com/womanifesto-lyrics-jill-scott.html>, viewed January 24, 2017.

I do see

I am friend to pen
And a lover of strong women
A diamond to men
I am curious and interested like children
I welcome the wise to teach
Appreciator of my culture
Thick not just from bone dense and eat

I have a rhythm in my ways
And a practice in my seek
And yes I do crave the rhythm of my space
With a man that rejoices in God's grace

With faith I do hear to listen
Two hands that fist
When forced pushes to shove
And your ego won't submit
I am gifted

I am all of this
And indeed the shit
Clearly I am not just an ass

Oh Lord⁸

Can you hear me
I'm calling your name oh Lord
I can't go on this way
Will I make it another day

Oh Lord, was I made just to beg and crawl
Who will catch me whenever I fall
Do I even matter at all
I am waiting here for you to answer my call

Can you see me
I'm down on my knees oh Lord
I'm lost and I'm so alone
Does your world have a heart of stone

Oh Lord am I destined to be what I've been
Never a thick and barely a thin
Where do I fit in
I am waiting here for you to answer my call

You say it won't be long
So I got to keep holding on
This world just so cold, so cold, so cold, so cold

Oh Lord am I destined to be what I've been
Never a thick and barely a thin
Where do I fit in
I am waiting here for you to answer my call
I am waiting here for you to answer my call

Oh, oh Lord when you gonna answer my call

⁸ <http://www.metrolyrics.com/oh-lord-lyrics-brian-mcknight.html>, viewed January 24, 2017.

Outsider⁹

I won't stay here another night
If I gotta sacrifice
Who I am on the inside
I'd rather be an outsider

And you can stay if you like
I'll see you on the other side
I wanna live the free life
I'd rather be an outsider

I really can't tell if I'm overdressed or I'm underdressed
If I'm underpaid or just overstressed
If I'm cynical or just over this
Cause I'm tired of tryna get over there
Man it's over there
Party's over

You probably couldn't tell we over here
Cause you hardly sober
Double shots of that ego
They laughin' at us, yeah we know
May be at the bottom but we not forgotten
The director's plotting that sequel

'Til then we live on the outside
And it might storm and we might die
But I'd rather go with my fist high
Standing outside of your inside

I tried my best to fit in
Looking for a suit to fit in
Standing outside of your prison
Tryna find ways I can get in

Now I realize that I'm free
And I realize that I'm me
And I found out that I'm not alone
'Cuz there's plenty people like me
That's right plenty people like me
All love me despite me
And all unashamed and all unafraid

⁹ <http://www.metrolyrics.com/outsidere-lyrics-lecrae.html>, viewed January 24, 2017.

To speak out for what we might see

I said there's plenty people like me
All outsiders like me
And all unashamed and all unafraid
To live out what they supposed to be
Outsiders

I won't stay here another night
If I gotta sacrifice
Who I am on the inside
I'd rather be an outsider

And you can stay if you like
I'll see you on the other side
I wanna live the free life
I'd rather be an outsider

I know what they askin' fo'
I know what they askin' fo'
But how you gone cover charge me my life and soul
And then turn around and ask for mo'
Time to go plus the line is long
I'mma color the outside where lines are drawn

If you wanna exclude me for being the true me
It's Gucci
I already found my home
Homesick
Homeless if I'm honest
'Cuz my home is somewhere I ain't never been before

I'mma hone this here gift
Even if it doesn't fit in the box
That'll please these folks
Some of y'all gone need these quotes
I ain't tryna eat I'm tryna feed these folks
Martin, Mandella yeah we need these folks
We believe these folks
We could be these folks

But they want me to take an L
Tired of taking losses so they can call me a failure
I failed at being you
But I'm winning at being me
I'm winning at being free
Ain't no competition but me

See I realize that I'm free
And I realize that I'm me
And I found out that I'm not alone
And there's plenty people like me
I said there's plenty people like me
All outsiders like me
All unashamed and all unafraid
To live out what they supposed to be
Outsiders

Shallow Be Thy Game¹⁰

I was not created
In the likeness of a fraud
Your hell is something scary
I prefer a loving god
We are not the center
Of this funny universe
And what is something worse
I do not serve
In fear of such a curse

Shallow be thy game
2000 years look in the mirror
You play the game of shame
And tell your people live in fear

A rival to the way you see
The bible let him be
I'm a threat to your survival
And your control company

[Chorus:]
You'll never burn me
You'll never burn me
I'll be your heretic
You can't contain me
I am the power free
Truth belongs to everybody

To anyone who's listenin'
You're not born into sin
The guilt they try and give you
Puke it in the nearest bin

Missionary maddness
Sweep up culture w/ a broom
Trashing ancient ways
Is par for the course

¹⁰ <http://www.metrolyrics.com/shallow-be-thy-game-lyrics-red-hot-chili-peppers.html>.

It's fucking rude

To think that you're above
The laws of nature is a joke
Purple sashes feeding masses
Smoke on which to choke

I might be a monkey
When it comes to being holy
Fundamental hatred
Get down on your knees and

[Chorus]

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