

SEEKING RACIAL RECONCILIATION AND JUSTICE IN MULTIRACIAL,
EVANGELICAL CHURCHES OF WASHINGTON, DC

by

Anna Laura Grant
A Thesis
Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty
of
George Mason University
in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree
of
Master of Science
in Conflict Analysis and Resolution

Committee:

_____	Chair of Committee

_____	Graduate Program Director
_____	Dean, School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution
Date: _____	Spring Semester 2018 George Mason University Fairfax, VA

Seeking Racial Reconciliation and Justice in Multiracial, Evangelical Churches of
Washington, DC

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Science at George Mason University

by

Anna Laura Grant
Master of Secondary Education and Teaching
Valencian International University, 2013
Master of Bilingual and Multicultural Education
University of Alcalá, 2011

Director: Marc Gopin, James H. Laue Professor of World Religions, Diplomacy and
Conflict Resolution & Director, Center for World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict
Resolution
George Mason University School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution

Spring Semester 2019
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA

Copyright 2018 Anna Laura Grant
All Rights Reserved

DEDICATION

This is dedicated to those striving for racial reconciliation in the Christian faith. I believe this work of reconciliation is fundamental to our faith, and that it is, indeed, holy work. May we follow the model of Christ himself and seek radical transformation and much needed justice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are so many people I would like to thank and acknowledge for their help and support in this project. First, I would like to thank my thesis committee. I thank Dr. Marc Gopin for serving as my thesis committee chair and being willing to take on the responsibility of guiding me through this process. I have learned so much from working with you and am a better writer and thinker because of your investment in me. I also acknowledge the incredible efforts of Dr. Sara Cobb in supporting my academic pursuits since I took class with her my first semester at S-CAR. Dr. Cobb, you have been my biggest champion and encourager, and I am so thankful for that. Thank you for meeting with me consistently, equipping me to do this work well, and for serving on my committee. Thank you also to Dr. Tehama Lopez-Bunyasi. Thank you for serving on my committee, for challenging the way I think about race and social change, and for your guidance on this project.

Secondly, I would like to thank my pastor. Being a part of this church and under your leadership inspired me to pursue this research. Thank you for your teaching, your humility, and your openness to talking racial reconciliation and justice. God is using you in great ways.

Thank you to all the pastors who chose to participate in this research. I hope you find this project helpful in continuing the good work you are doing in our city.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family who have supported me throughout this process. Thank you for the conversations, prayers, meals, editing, and other countless ways you have kept me going. Thank you to my mom and dad for always believing in me and encouraging me with unconditional love. I am so grateful. Thank you also to Joseph for being a thought partner, dedicated editor, and helping me dream big.

I could not have done this without all of you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
List of Tables	viii
List of Figures	ix
Abstract	x
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter Two: Literature Review and Problem Statement	5
Section One: Churches and Reconciliation	5
Church Segregation as Structural Violence	5
A Historical Overview of Racial Reconciliation in the USA	6
Conceptualizing Reconciliation	8
Section Two: Multiracial Churches	11
Impact of Multiracial Spaces	11
Theorizing Racial Inequality	13
Role of Multiracial Churches	16
Colorblind Approaches	17
White Cultural Normativity	21
Color-conscious Approaches	22
Limitations of Multiracial Churches	23
Section Three: Multiracial Churches Engaging with Racial Reconciliation and Racial Justice	25
Barriers to Reconciliation	25
Alternative Approaches to Racial Reconciliation and Justice	28
Section Four: Impact of an Urban Context	29
Section Five: Problem Statement and Research Questions	31
Chapter Three: Methodology	33
Section One: Design of Study	33
Section Two: Recruitment	35

Section Three: Demographics	35
Section Four: Analysis	36
Chapter Four: Findings	39
Section One: Religious, Racial Reconciliation is an Ongoing Process.....	39
Conceptualizing Reconciliation.....	39
Reconciliation as Holy Work.....	39
Sin and Dignity	40
We Are Never Reconciled, but Always Reconciling.....	42
Theory of Reconciliation	43
The Practice of Reconciliation	53
The Role of Small Groups in Reconciliation.....	53
The Role of the Local Church in Reconciliation.	54
Summary of First Finding.....	54
Section Two: The Practice of Justice in a Specific Place is an Expression of True Faith	55
Place Matters to God	59
There is a Just Way to Interact with the Neighborhood	60
Section Three: Diverse Community is Essential for True Faith	62
Diversity is Needed for Understanding the Faith	62
Maintaining Diversity in a Multiracial Church must be Intentional and Sacrificial .	64
Whose Culture?	65
Role of Heterogeneous and Homogeneous Groups.....	66
Leaders Must Reflect on Their Racial Identity	67
Section Four: Limitations.....	69
Chapter Five: Discussion	70
Section One: Religious, Racial Reconciliation is an Ongoing Process.....	72
Racism as a Sin.....	72
Human Dignity	74
Theory of Reconciliation	75
Section Two: The Practice of Justice in a Specific Place is an Expression of True Faith	81
Section Three: Diverse Community is Essential for True Faith	83
Chapter Six: Conclusion	85

Appendix A.....	88
References.....	90

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
Table 1 Demographics of Churches as Described by Pastors.....	36

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
Figure 1 Model of Reconciliation.....	71

ABSTRACT

SEEKING RACIAL RECONCILIATION AND JUSTICE IN MULTIRACIAL, EVANGELICAL CHURCHES OF WASHINGTON, DC

Anna Laura Grant, M.S.

George Mason University, 2019

Thesis Director: Dr. Marc Gopin

This thesis explores how multiracial churches in Washington, DC engage in racial reconciliation and justice within their congregations and local community. The Christian faith has been used to justify racism and oppression throughout the history of the USA. Furthermore, continued levels of segregation in churches and problematic understandings of race and reconciliation complicate the possibility for religious racial reconciliation. Washington, DC provides the ideal setting for investigating these challenges. Four pastors of multiracial churches within the city were interviewed in-depth. The three major findings included a process and theory of reconciliation, the understanding that faith can be expressed as justice in a place, and the framework that diverse community is essential for true faith. The theory of reconciliation includes an awareness of harm, lament, confession/apology/repentance, reparations, forgiveness, and transformation. The implications for churches include implementing acts of reparations, confronting White cultural normativity, and centering of marginalized voices as essential to reconciliation.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Christian evangelical church in America has a long and troubled relationship with race. From using Christianity as moral justification for slavery to praying and singing while actively lynching bodies, the Christian religion has been manipulated to justify heinous atrocities. Conversely, churches throughout American history have also been a source of racial justice and hope. Some congregations actively supported the Civil Rights Movement, some pushed towards racial reconciliation in the decades that followed, and some choose to engage with contemporary issues of racial injustice such as school segregation or excessive police violence. What remains true through these complicated, historical narratives is that the vast majority of churches continue to be racially segregated.

Less than 6% of Christian churches can be considered as racially mixed, defined as one racial group making up no more than 80% of the congregation (DeYoung, Emerson, Yancey & Kim, 2003; Emerson and Kim, 2003). This measurement is used because

a) the presence of 20% or more of racially different others is, research suggests, a point of critical mass, switching minority presence from that of tokenism to that of having influence on organizational policies and practices, and *(b)* mathematically, this level of diversity means that, under the assumption of

random contact, the probability of cross-race contact is 99%. (Edwards et al., 2013, p. 213)

Like other institutions, both racially homogeneous and racially heterogeneous churches can act as spaces where racist structures are reproduced and colorblind ideology is manifested. Even racially mixed churches can *racialize* their members, explicitly or implicitly ascribing social meaning and significance to physical characteristics.¹ Churches, in turn, can become *racial projects* that create or reproduce structures of domination² (Omi & Winant, 2015). Furthermore, in their work *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*, Emerson and Smith (2000) suggest that the American evangelical faith intensifies societal and interpersonal racial division rather than acting as a conduit for overcoming it. The 2016 US election further illustrates this point. Cited in a New York Times article in March 2018, author and sociology professor Michael Emerson explains, “The election itself was the single most harmful event to the whole movement of reconciliation in at least the past 30 years... It’s about to completely break apart” (Robertson, 2018). With this in mind, is there hope for racial reconciliation in American evangelical churches?

While core tenets of the Christian faith include confession of sins, forgiveness, and reconciliation, these concepts may not transfer from one’s personal relationship with God to a larger, societal context, especially with regard to race. Confession of racial sin,

¹ For example, if only White Americans hold positions of leadership, members in the congregation may start to, consciously or unconsciously, believe that to be a leader, one must be a White American. Furthermore, they may believe that non-Whites should not be leaders.

² To continue with the example above, the church as a racial project means that the institution is systematically reproducing ideas of racial inferiority and superiority.

both individually and corporately, may be deemed irrelevant by those who do not view it as a sin, past or present. Forgiveness and reconciliation may be superficial, focusing only on individual friendships and avoiding systemic structural change. The ability to connect faith and social practice may even be influenced by the culture and race of the individual (Emerson & Smith, 2000). Gaps between individual religious beliefs and wider, social action are a worthwhile area of research in the field of conflict resolution. How does an individual negotiate the connection between theology and practice? What does this process look like for church leaders and for churches as institutions? What implications would this have for reconciliation more broadly? These questions are relevant for conflicts around the world, religious and non-religious, and for more deeply understanding how institutions can contribute to either healing or injustice.

If, as Gopin (2000) asserts, “conflict resolution studies should examine ways of coexistence within the ideal community, as it is expressed in the sacred texts and history” (p. 19), it is worth investigating church congregations that claim to reflect core, Biblical principles. While investigating these congregations and their core principles, it is important to consider the question of what the ideal Christian community may look like. In many of his New Testament letters, the Apostle Paul wrote to churches struggling with this very question. He addressed urban churches in Rome, Galatia, Philippi and Corinth, condemning practices that were excluding certain members based on their culture and ethnicity. He advocated for the inclusion of “Gentiles,” ethnic outsiders to the Jewish community at the time, calling them “fellow citizens” (Ephesians 2:11-22, The New International Version). He extolled the church to not let societal barriers divide but

instead to “become all things to all people” (1 Corinthians 9:19-23, The New International Version) because, “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28, The New International Version). It is in these letters that Paul presented the idea of humans being reconciled to each other in the church, referring to both how Christians should understand their relationship to God and to each other. Each of these city churches was both multi-ethnic and deeply divided. Located in important urban centers of the time, it may be worth inquiring what implications might these letters have for churches in urban settings today, dealing with similar dynamics of racial conflict and need for reconciliation?³ Furthermore, what insights can these churches offer on the dynamics of racial reconciliation in diverse churches, institutions, and societies?

³ This could be a topic for further research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Section One: Churches and Reconciliation

Church Segregation as Structural Violence

While some may claim that as a result of the Civil Rights Movement, racial inequality and injustice are no longer issues in today's society, and certainly not significant in the American evangelical church, others still would offer strong critiques to this idea. When looking specifically at racial segregation in religious congregations, a three wave, national study found that "the percentage of people attending congregations in which no ethnic group constitutes at least 80% of the regular attendees increased from 15% in 1998 to 20% in 2012" (National Congregations Study, 2015, p. 20). Using the 1998 data from the first wave of research, a 2003 study on specifically multiracial American churches found that only 5.5% of Christian congregations are racially mixed, again defining racially mixed as one racial group making up no more than 80% of the congregation (DeYoung et al, 2003).

Churches are not just segregated spaces; they may be spaces in which societal divisions are reinforced. They can contribute to structural violence as, "the organization of American religion into homogenous groups... heightens the importance of racial boundaries, identities, and other differences between groups" and this, in turn, "increases the saliency of group boundaries and... reproduces racial inequality" (Emerson & Smith,

2000, p. 155, 161). Through practices of segregation, Churches can contribute to violence beyond explicit, historical uses of Christianity for justifying slavery and lynching.

In today's America, there are poignant racial implications of both homogeneous and heterogeneous spaces of worship and their power to act as forces of racialization. Omi and Winant (2015) explain racialization as, "the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationships, social practice, or group" (p. 111). This is a process where social meaning is ascribed to people based on their phenotype. As a result, these organizations have the power to give value to racial categories and reproduce racialized ways of thinking, not just in the minds of individual attendees, but also in the very structure of the organization. Galtung (1969) described structural violence as violence that is, "built into the structure and shows up as unequal power" (p. 171). He later warns that such a structure "leaves marks... also on the mind and spirit" (1990, p. 294). Therefore, religious places of worship have the power to influence individual thinking, to reproduce, even implicitly, racist structures and practices, and to partake in structural violence that affects its members and greater community.

A Historical Overview of Racial Reconciliation in the USA

The religious leaders of the Civil Rights Movement knew that they needed to address the ugly, tumultuous history of race in the church. Given that Christianity was used as a justification for White supremacy and the evil, heinous acts of lynching, how would these historical realities influence the church (Ehrenhaus & Owen, 2004)? How could Blacks, Whites, and people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds come together as a country? In a church? What would have to take place for this to even be possible?

Early proponents of the racial reconciliation movement in the church sought to address these questions. Made up, initially, of African American pastors who longed for racial justice, they envisioned a reconciliation process involving the development of meaningful relationships across racial identities and recognizing both the social structures of inequality that existed and resisting them. Additionally, they desired for Whites to repent of personal, historical, and social sin, and for African Americans being willing to forgive and repent of anger and hatred (Emerson & Smith 2000). For true reconciliation to take place, both individual and structural racism needed to be addressed.

Despite the efforts of these leaders, many churches today may still not engage adequately in issues of race and racial justice. If they engage with reconciliation at all, many focus on superficial and/or individual, relationally based efforts, like a having a lunch with a predominantly minority church or having a friend from another racial or ethnic group. Evidence of this approach to reconciliation can be seen in an evangelical men's movement of the mid-90s called Promise Keepers. As Mullin (2014) explains, "For them, reconciliation did not mean tackling the issue systemically through legal or socio-economic channels but encouraging individual repentance and the development of intentional, long-term relationships with men from different ethnic background, preferably in one's local church" (p. 34). Leaders took bits and pieces of the reconciliation outlined by the African American pastors, but in particular, do not address the structural component of reconciliation.

From a conflict resolution perspective, Gopin (2002) explains how it is critical, "...to know what human beings expect in times of reconciliation, which is key to

understanding why their enemies' behavior is so injurious to them; why, in other words, they find their enemies' behavior so repulsive" (p. 116). Contrasting the reconciliation defined by the African American pastors at the end of the Civil Rights Movement and the reconciliation outlined by the Promise Keepers highlights Gopin's point. While both these leaders were using the word "reconciliation" to address racial healing in the US, both groups were also operating from very different definitions of the word and, therefore, understood the usage, application, and measurement of success in different ways. This led to further racial division rather than to racial understanding.

Conceptualizing Reconciliation

Conflict resolution theory offers differing perspectives on what reconciliation is and how it can be manifested in societal conflicts. Lederach (1997) defines reconciliation as a process involving the four, interwoven strands of Truth, Mercy, Justice and Peace (p. 30). Truth is composed of acknowledgement, transparency, revelation, and clarity. He explains that acknowledgement is different than knowing because "acknowledgement through hearing one another's stories validates experience and feelings and represents the first step toward restoration of the person and of the relationship" (p. 26). Mercy involves acceptance, forgiveness, support, compassion, and healing. Justice entails quality, right relationships, making things right, and restitution. Peace is, therefore, harmony, unity, well-being, security, and respect. Lederach conceptualizes reconciliation and its components as the *place* where Truth, Mercy, Justice and Peace come together; it is actually both a *focus* and a *locus*.

[It] involves the creation of the social space where both truth and forgiveness are validated and joined together, rather than being forced into an encounter in which one must win out over the other or envisioned as fragmented and separate parts. (p. 29)

Gopin (2000) draws out the importance of acknowledgement in reconciliation, explaining that victims have

...been deprived of what is essential to healing and developing a renewed trust of the world: the chance to openly face one's injuries, what one has lost, and have this acknowledged by the world, especially by that part of the world that was partly or completely to blame for that loss or perceived to be so by the victims. (p. 117)

Govier (2009) elaborates the meaning of acknowledgement by offering three kinds: existential, aversive, and affirmative. Existential is when the existence of a particular person or group is acknowledged, which "... may seem insignificant or even peculiar until we stop to reflect on how people can be utterly denigrated and ignored to the point where their existence goes unrecognized" (p. 37). In contrast, aversive acknowledgement takes place when something is wrong. This is often difficult to accept, be it a personal hardship or the acknowledgement of a wrong committed to another. Finally, affirmative acknowledgement focuses on the positive actions and attributes of a person.

While not explicitly a part of Lederach's theory on reconciliation, mourning is a key concept that is tied to acknowledgment. Acknowledging harm leads to mourning

over what was lost. Gopin (2000) demonstrates the role of religion in the mourning process of some cultures:

If mourning over loss is to be complete, the peace process itself or that part of it that deals with past wounds should take on an indigenous, religious character. If it does not, if, for example, it smacks of some dominant culture that has been implicated in the persecution of the group (Western Christianity, in the Jewish case), then the mourning process cannot really resonate deeply, at least not for the most wounded members of the group. If, on the other hand, the process has deep cultural roots, then it *affirms* their identity and does honor to them, even as it heals the wounds of the past and simultaneously builds peace. (p. 171)

In the religious framework, mourning can also lead to repentance. Repentance, according to Abrahamic traditions, must involve creating a new relationship that adequately addresses and repairs the injustice committed in the past in addition to repentance (Gopin, 2002). This restorative framework echoes Lederach's concept of justice in reconciliation and leads to the possibility for peace.

Perhaps the first step to achieving racial reconciliation and justice in the American church is to come to a common understanding of the definition and process of reconciliation. If this were to happen, would there still be other barriers that would affect its implementation? The level of segregation in churches and the patterns of racial and ethnic homogeneity in congregations could be such a barrier. In part, churches may choose to engage with or ignore racial identity and justice because of their racial and ethnic makeup. The vast majority (85%) of congregations are racially homogenous

spaces (Edwards, Christerson & Emerson, 2013). The reasons for this segregation are many, including that people tend to choose spaces of worship where the dominant group is similar to their own (DeYoung et al., 2003; Emerson & Smith, 2000), churches have been places of organizing and solidarity for groups confronting discrimination (Blau, Ferber & Winkler, 1998; DeYoung et al., 2003; Emerson & Kim, 2003), churches develop from social networks which, in an American context, also tend to be racially homogenous (DeYoung et al., 2003; Emerson & Kim, 2003), and that residential segregation is a prominent component of American life, causing challenges for churches that want to both serve their neighborhoods and embrace diversity (Emerson & Kim, 2003; Edwards et al., 2013).

Section Two: Multiracial Churches

Impact of Multiracial Spaces

As segregation is common practice across various social spheres of American life, it is relevant and important to consider situations in which successful racial and ethnic integration takes place and understand the possible consequences of multiracial spaces. What can we learn about identity, conflict and peace from such spaces? What does racial integration mean and what are its consequences, positive or negative? Can relationships and empathy emerge from integrated situations? Allport (1954) theorized that under certain conditions, tolerance and understanding could develop between groups through interpersonal contact. Extending this Contact Theory to a modern context, researchers found that people who experienced interracial relationships as children were more likely to maintain this diversity as adults, more likely to attend multiracial congregations, and

more like to be in interracial relationships (Emerson et al., 2002). These findings suggest that even minimal previous interracial contact contributes to future social relationships. Specifically, Whites who attend interracial churches are more socially open to African Americans and are less likely to stereotype them, potentially leading to greater racial understanding and positive relationships (Yancey, 1999). Multiracial organizations, and churches specifically, offer an opportunity to analyze the effects of integration on their members as well because the understanding of key American values like, “freedom, individualism, independence, equality of opportunity, etc.—derive from the blending of evangelical Christianity and Enlightenment philosophy” (Tranby & Hartmann 2008, p. 342).

Religious organizations can have dramatic effects on those who participate in them, including influencing individual racial and ethnic identity, attitudes of other racial and ethnic groups, racial segregation and inequality, and social networks (Emerson & Smith, 2000; Yancey, 1999). The power and implications of religious organizations on American life cannot be ignored; “we simply cannot and will not fully understand race in the United States without understanding race and religion” (Edwards et al., 2013, p. 212). Part of their influence on those who attend comes from the power of churches to act as spaces where racialization takes place. Through their structures, members, decisions, and values, they give meaning to societal racial categories and ideologies, though the extent to which this occurs is not known (Barron, 2016; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Omi & Winant, 2015). Some research has suggested that White-dominated evangelical spaces can play a role in influencing what leadership positions minority group members are allowed to

have (Garces-Foley & Jeung, 2013; Barron, 2016). Addressing the realities and consequences of structural racism in the church can be particularly challenging because many “Christians do not believe racism is a sin systemically. They see it more as an individual issue that should therefore be address on an individual level, looking at effects on the individual rather than the group” (Jeung, 2005, p. 68). As a result, there is a need for analyzing this racialization process, especially in urban, multiracial churches that use their location in the city as a guiding principle of values and as a way to draw in members (Barron, 2016).

Theorizing Racial Inequality

The theoretical framework of Critical Race Theory is a useful tool for analyzing this racialization process and its impact on people and structure. It can help illuminate the influence, power and dominance of different racial identities in the church. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2012), there are six basic tenets of critical race theory. The first is that racism is the normal way that society functions. In a US context, this results as White dominance being the social norm. Second, in a society, the privileged group is not interested in dismantling the racist structures because it benefits from them. Third, race is a social construct created reproduced through social interaction. It is not based in biology. Fourth, the dominant group racializes different minority groups over time to meet the needs of the dominant group. Fifth, intersectionality and anti-essentialism explain that any given individual has multiple, overlapping aspects of his or her identity and cannot be explained monolithically. Six and final, “people of color may bring analysis,

perspectives, and experiences that their white counterparts cannot see or easily understand on their own” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 10).

The lens of Critical Race Theory can help explain, perhaps, some of the stark racial discrepancies in churches with regard to how different race groups explain racial inequality. The majority of research on churches and race has focused specifically on Black and White members of evangelical churches and their respective understandings of race and racial inequality. Though their core theological beliefs are the same and one might suspect that beliefs would translate into social action, Black and White members have opposite ways of explaining the prevalence and reasoning for racial inequality today. *Divided by Faith*, a seminal work by Emerson and Smith researching race in the evangelical church published in 2000, revealed that Whites explain racial inequality in individualist terms, citing culture and motivation as reasons to explain the Black-White socioeconomic gap. Conversely, African Americans overwhelmingly chose structural reasons as explanations. The prevalence of Whites explaining racism through an individualist lens can be seen throughout many, similar studies (Cobb, Perry & Dougherty, 2015; Garces-Foley & Jeung, 2013; Edwards et al., 2013; Jeung, 2005; Tranby & Hartmann, 2008; Wadsworth, 2010).

Emerson and Smith (2000) explain this stark division through proposing that White evangelicals operate from a cultural “tool kit” which informs their views on race. This “toolkit” involves (1) “accountable freewill individualism” (2) relationalism (attaching central importance to interpersonal relationships) and (3) anti structuralism (the inability to perceive or unwillingness to accept social structural influences) (p. 76).

For example, a White evangelical using this toolkit may explain an example of racial inequality, like the wealth gap between African Americans and White Americans by claiming that individual choices led to this gap, that if a person were more charming, they could get a better job, and that if an African American works hard enough, they will be able to succeed. This ignores structural forces that may be at play. However, while the majority of White evangelicals operate using this toolkit, a small group of White, progressive evangelicals were a notable exception to this understanding of race, racism as a sin, and explanations of racial inequality. Starting in the early 70s, these leaders had an understanding of sin that went beyond the individual level and was present in structural racism and injustice. This theological approach to sin grounded anti-racism work that addressed individual prejudice and relationships in addition to institutional racism and injustice (Gasaway, 2014). For the majority of more conservative evangelicals, however, this was not the case.

Emerson and Smith's (2000) "toolkit" concept coincides with the frames of colorblind ideology sociologist Eduardo Bonilla-Silva theorized in *Racism Without Racists* (2006). Bonilla-Silva suggests that colorblindness manifests itself through four frames that are independent, yet flexible, adaptable and overlapping. They are abstract liberalism (applying liberal economic thinking in an abstract manner towards race), naturalization (describing racial differences and separation as natural), cultural racism (using cultural generalizations and stereotypes to explain minorities), and minimization of racism (explaining racist incidents as one-time events and devaluing the reality of discrimination in the lives of minorities) (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Both of these concepts are

helpful in understanding Whites' explanations of racism and racial inequality in US society and specifically with understanding White evangelicals.

Role of Multiracial Churches

Recognizing that these sociological forces are at work, some scholars have suggested that, in an effort to remedy these long standing racial categories and divisions, churches should play an active role in confronting and dismantling them. As a follow-up to the book *Divided by Faith*, sociologists and Christian academics proposed in *United by Faith* that churches, when possible, should be intentionally multiracial, as “multiracial congregations can play an important role in reducing racial division and inequality and... this should be a goal of Christian people” (DeYoung et al., 2003, p. 3). However, there is conflicting research on the possibility and effectiveness of multiracial churches to create a 3rd culture, resist white, hegemonic norms, and effectively address issues of racial identity. Some academics argue that, building off contact theory, multiracial churches can lead to more racial equality and reducing racial division through the interpersonal relationships formed across racial barriers (Yancey, 1999; Emerson et al., 2002; DeYoung et al., 2003) and that they can be places of equitable exchange across racial boundaries (Hunt & Hunt, 2001; Emerson & Woo, 2006; Emerson & Yancey, 2008). In his study on a thriving, multiracial church in Los Angeles named Mosaic, Marti (2009) found the church to be an example of a space where these racial boundaries were “transcended,” proposing “that individuals connect to diverse congregations on the basis of a shared religious identity rather than their (acknowledged and celebrated) differences

in ancestral heritage” (p. 64). This can also be interpreted as a “theology of discomfort” where all members embrace difference (Garces-Foley, 2007).

Other studies show that while multiracial churches are valuable spaces that can bring many positive benefits for their members and take valiant strides towards racial equality and justice, they still are constrained by systemic racism. As Dougherty and Huyser explored in their 2008 study on racial integration in religious congregations, church organizations give the opportunity to create a new “we” identity, open to all who take part. However, even through decisions such as what music style of music is played for worship, certain racial groups can be privileged. In addition, there is limited research on the effect of participating in a multiracial church. Nancy Wadsworth found in her 2010 study of political orientations in evangelical, multiracial churches that some attendees are “nervously interested” in applying their raised consciousness of race and justice outside of a church context and others are confused or against it (p. 441). She explains, “... the ability to recognize structural and systemic inequalities as a result of participation in an MRC (multiracial church) does *not* automatically give people the resources to engage such issues outside of already familiar church-based approaches” (p. 462). Therefore, in order to achieve racial integration, diversity is necessary, but it is not enough on its own (Dougherty & Huyser, 2008; Wadsworth, 2010).

Colorblind Approaches

The difficulty that churches face in not reproducing systemic racism is in part because of the decision, implicitly or explicitly, to adopt a “colorblind” framework towards church culture. Even though the idea of cultural transcendence might appear to

address this, at times the so-called transcendent culture may actually be centered on white hegemonic norms, mirroring standards and values of White, middle class America. White majority churches may make efforts to draw in Black members through trying to incorporate more diverse music choices, however, without deeper structural change and thoughtful application, they may be further reinforcing racial barriers and working off of stereotypes of what non-White worship look like (Pitt, 2010). Simply being a diverse, multiracial organization is not enough. Some multiracial churches may avoid using the term “race” at all, instead using “culture” as a way avoid conflict (Marti & Emerson, 2014). In response to Marti’s 2009 study, Garces-Foley and Jeung (2013) critique the realities and problems of ethnic transcendence.

Marti suggests that we think of Mosaic as multiethnic and monocultural; though demographically diverse, Mosaic embraces the popular culture of middle-class White America. Mosaic’s approach to MRC-ministry has clear resonances with the colorblind approach to race prevalent among White evangelicals. Given the racial attitudes of Black Conservative Protestants, it’s not surprising that few African Americans attend Mosaic. While Mosaic is very successful at attracting a diverse membership, the lack of attention to racial issues at Mosaic undermines the ability of this MRC to work for racial equality in society at large. (p. 193)

Edwards continues the concern over what cultural norms are valued in multiracial churches in his 2008 study of another multiracial congregation in a large, Midwestern city. Edwards found that in order for a multiracial church to maintain itself, it must meet the needs of its White members, even when the White members are in the minority. As a

result, racial topics or issues may be avoided to keep White members from leaving. Some pastors of multiracial congregations also do not believe that addressing race, racism, racial inequality and reconciliation fall under the role of the church, afraid of possible racial conflicts that might emerge and focusing instead on messages of unity (Marti & Emerson, 2014). In such churches, it is possible then that, "... focusing on culture effectively minimizes entrenched institutional inequalities in favor of focusing on conversation-friendly topics such as types of food, styles of dress, or interesting places to travel. [This] effectively idealizes and distances the stark realities of racial injustices" (Marti & Emerson, 2014, p. 192). Attending a multiracial church can reinforce White normative cultural frames rather than challenge them, from the structural order of the service to the style of music played. Edward's study highlights the challenges that multiracial churches face in confronting racist structures and even the difficulties of developing meaningful relationships across racial divides. As an African American woman in the study questioned, "Whites don't understand our struggles. How can I have spiritual unity with someone who doesn't know what I have gone through?" (Edwards, 2008, p. 49). In spite of a focus on bringing diverse groups together in worship experiences and through relationships, a church cannot overcome the racial divide by focusing only on music and friendships (Edwards, 2014).

In addition to the difficulties of personal, cross cultural relationships, white norms and values can overrule and dominate a church's impact. For example, Priest and Priest (2007) give an example of a church that started from a merger between an African American church and a predominantly White church, with the goal of racial integration.

However, it reproduced White hegemonic structures, eventually leading to the black church's voting to end the merger. This example highlights that other factors besides a church's origin influence a church's ability to be a place of racial equality and justice. It is particularly striking that the Whites in the congregation perceived the merger to have gone well and were surprised by the reaction of the African American attendees.

In a case study of a multiracial church in urban Chicago, Barron (2006) showed how, again, the racial hierarchies of American society were reproduced and "managed" in the church. In this setting, church leadership conveyed messages of colorblind ideology to the congregation, members describing the church as being a "race-less" place where racial diversity was not the main focus (p. 30). This was a "relief" to some members. Despite this being the understanding of race in the church by its members, church leadership was, in reality, not colorblind whatsoever. Instead, they "managed" the diversity of the church, strategically and purposefully using racial identities to give a certain appearance. They actively desired to have African American members in the church, as their presence, especially in the urban Chicago context, would be validating the "urban coolness" of the church. Black members were wanted as worship leaders in the church, but racial diversity in music selection or event programming was not allowed. Black members were asked to be part of teams of people who greet those to attend the church, but were excluded from other leadership positions.

This "colorblind" approach, as result, further marginalized groups in a church context that already experience marginalization in greater society. In a society that is not colorblind,

Diversity can be praised, even highlighted, and is regarded as the natural and welcome outcome of urban life. But it simultaneously shuts down serious attempts at discussing race or racial advantage/disparities and removes the need to be intentional about correcting past and present injustices... [leaving] minority members disenfranchised, offended, ignored, and without the cultural resources to address that situation. (Barron, 2006, p. 30).

These studies highlight that simply being multiracial is not enough to mend the racial divide, create meaningful relationships across racial divides, and to justly honor the needs of different racial groups in a multiracial congregation (Barron, 2006; Cobb et al., 2015; Priest & Priest, 2007).

White Cultural Normativity

Institutional racism is part of what makes addressing the racial divide in multiracial organizations like churches difficult. This kind of racism can be hidden in the very structures of the institution, favoring one group over another. In his 2012 study on multiracial, evangelical organizations, Perry found that racial conflicts within the organizations really emerged from a difference in racialized moral values. In addition, these conflicts were addressed through the lens of White normativity, institutionalizing Whiteness. He describes a “racial habitus,” that is, a “matrix of tastes, perceptions, and cognitive frameworks that are often unconscious (particularly for whites), and that regulate the racial practices of actors such that they tend to reproduce the very racial distinctions and inequalities that produced them” (p. 90). These differing frameworks lead to differing moral standards, causing conflict and eventually the domination of

White normativity and White cultural hegemony. For example, he found that within evangelical outreach ministries (EOMs), White cultural norms became the moral standard within the organizations. This influenced the way these organizations approached fundraising by emphasizing the “techniques founded upon culturally White views and moral standards concerning livelihood and interpersonal relationships,” therefore “implicitly requiring minority EOM workers to effectually distance themselves from their respective ethno-racial relationships and heritages in order to successfully raise their financial support” (p. 101). This illustrates the way racial beliefs and practices can influence the seemingly neutral day to day practices of a religious organization.

Color-conscious Approaches

In order to avoid colorblind frames and the structures they reinforce, some churches choose to take a color-conscious approach. This includes recognizing the different racial identities present in a multiracial church, affirming the reality that race plays in the life of members, and actively engaging in “race talk” (Garces-Foley, 2007; Garces-Foley & Jeung, 2013). This might include addressing racial issues in sermons, through worship music, in specific education classes and lectures, engaging in cross-cultural, intentional social events and volunteer opportunities, and/or highlighting racial reconciliation in the church’s mission statement (Garces-Foley, 2007). This may also entail making intentional decisions of having non-Whites in leadership positions. As non-White leaders may be more conscious of the realities of structural racial dynamics, power and privilege, they can have an important influence on their congregations (Garces-Foley & Jeung, 2013; Emerson & Woo, 2006). Rather than avoid talking about race and issues

that may arise as a result of racial realities, “color-conscious congregations affirm publicly that these differences are real and Christians need to be aware of how they matter in the lives of church members and in American society” (Garces-Foley & Jeung, 2013, p. 200). However, in his study on Asian Americans in multiracial churches, Park (2014) warns that such churches can “unintentionally reinforce... *color-conscious structural-blindness*, a pattern of symbolically acknowledging ethnic cultural difference that simultaneously minimizes awareness of persistent systemic racism in American society” (p. 179). He warns that this can be problematic for White Christians in addition to other minorities that may be in the church. Consequently, even color-conscious approaches need to be implemented with care and with constant reflection on the patterns and ideologies they are creating and reproducing.

Limitations of Multiracial Churches

While Contact Theory (Allport 1954) posits that people can change through social interaction, in a racialized society, the change that is possible may actually be quite limited. In their book *United by Faith*, DeYoung et al. (2003) assert that whenever possible, churches “should journey toward becoming integrated multiracial congregations” (p. 180). They suggest that through a ubiquitous movement towards multiracial churches, the many problems of racial and racial injustice can be addressed. However, in direct response to this book, Cobb et al. (2015) found that multiracial congregations actually “(1) leave dominant White racial frames unchallenged, potentially influencing minority attendees to embrace such frames and/or (2) attract racial minorities who are more likely to embrace those frames in the first place” (p. 177). Their study

suggested that attending a multiracial church was not associated with Whites' explanations of racial inequality; instead, Whites in multiracial churches are just as likely as Whites in predominantly White churches to "question the importance of social structure in accounting for Black/White inequality and emphasize the importance of Blacks' own motivation" (p. 195). This suggests that White racial frames may actually be reinforced, rather than challenged, in such settings, affecting even the Black members of the congregation. The study also found that Blacks who attended multiracial congregations were actually more likely to explain racial inequality in the same way that Whites do, that is, emphasizing individual choice and minimizing structural explanations. This study "question[s] the potential of multiracial congregations to challenge White hegemony within society at large" (p. 195).

Another limitation of multiracial churches and their effectiveness can be seen in Wong's (2014) follow up study of Emerson's *Divided by Faith*. She acknowledges that physical presence of diversity in multiracial congregations is not enough to truly bridge the racial divide. Rather than focus her study on demographic representations in churches, she researched the level of relational integration across racially diverse church congregations, focusing specifically on how churches fostered interracial friendships. She found that a church's organizational structure and mission impacted interracial friendships. The more successful churches understood race as "intertwined with and indispensable to religious faith, and racially integrated community is an indication of congregational calling" (p. 225). However, while the study revealed important considerations for churches to help foster interracial friendships, it still focused solely on

the relational aspect of reconciliation. Of course, lessons on the dynamics of integration can help church leaders resist the pitfalls of colorblind and color-conscious approaches to understanding race in the church, but beyond integration, what does racial reconciliation and justice look like in practice?

Section Three: Multiracial Churches Engaging with Racial Reconciliation and Racial Justice

Barriers to Reconciliation

As previously addressed, there are many challenges to multiracial churches. Simply being diverse does not mean that people's view on racial inequality is changed. Church leaders must decide how best to approach their churches, be it through colorblind or color conscious practices. Multiracial churches can, therefore, be places where members are racialized and White hegemonic structures and values are reproduced. This can lead to instability of such churches because minority members may feel marginalized and not want to continue attending (Edwards et al., 2013). As members of the dominant culture, Whites in the congregation may feel more entitled in their views because of the privilege and power ascribed to Whiteness. Additionally, other attendees of multiracial churches may have religious ethnocentric values that come from their identity groups and translate into conflicts over cultural styles (Edwards et al., 2013). While the push for multiracial churches could lead to spaces of healing, hope and justice, the sociological forces they need to contend with, and perhaps intentionally counteract, are strong, even at times powerful enough to undermine the vision. Edwards et al. (2013) soberingly warn:

Do multiracial congregations legitimate and reproduce racial stratification in society? Do they represent the potential for social change leading to greater racial equality in society? Do they facilitate the development and distribution of social capital and other valuable resources to lower status people? [...] There is little evidence that this is the norm or that, as a whole, the growth in the number of multiracial congregations in America has produced anything like a movement for greater racial equality in the larger society... It appears that, on the whole, multiracial congregations are not increasing consciousness of racism and racial inequality. If anything, multiracial congregations are legitimating and reproducing racial inequality rather than challenging it. (p. 224-225)

If, as these studies suggest, multiracial churches on their own may cause more harm than good and are not able to adequately address racial inequality and injustice simply by existing, what opportunities for fostering justice and healing do such spaces have? Is there good that can come out of multiracial churches in dismantling White hegemony and supremacy and reorienting its members towards true racial justice? During the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, African American evangelicals worked to develop "reconciliation theology," using Biblical scripture to base racial reconciliation between Blacks and Whites. They, however, believed true reconciliation meant both individual level healing and societal structures that perpetuated injustice. They did not believe that the end of the Civil Rights Movement resulted in racial equality, nor did they fully support racial separatism advocated by the Black Power movement (Alumkal, 2004).

In the 1990s, Christian evangelical organizations and churches took up the cause of “reconciliation,” choosing to focus, however, purely on the individual level of interaction and “changing hearts.” This included the publishing of books, promoting cross-racial events and encouraging multi-racial friendships as an antidote to racism (Emerson & Smith, 2000; Edwards et al., 2013). Without more fully dealing with the scope of racial injustice and its impact beyond the relational level, White dominant frames remained unchallenged. In fact, this reimagining of reconciliation by predominantly White evangelical leaders lined up with the neoconservative political movements of the time. Explains Alumkal (2004) in his analysis of American evangelicalism in the post-civil rights era:

...the spread of the mainstream evangelical racial project among white Americans could be interpreted as a response to the crisis of white identity. Defining racism as a spiritual problem that is immune to secular solutions gives whites license to oppose affirmative action, welfare, and other divisive government programs. Furthermore, whites that are nostalgic for a sense of ethnic attachment can treat evangelical Christianity as a quasi-ethnic identity, a move that is encouraged by evangelicals' sense of themselves as an embattled religious minority in the contemporary United States (Smith, Emerson, Gallagher, Kennedy, and Sikkink 1998). Finally, whites can respond to their history as "oppressors" by cathartic acts of repentance, as well as by assertions that Christian identity transcends race, while fully retaining the fruits of white privilege. (p. 205)

Around 2000, this thinking evolved into an emphasis in having multiracial, diverse places of worship and affirming the need to address racial inequality, though still, in many cases, operating from a colorblind framework (Edwards et al., 2013; Alumkal, 2004).

Alternative Approaches to Racial Reconciliation and Justice

Part of the limitations of the “reconciliation” framework as evolved by White evangelicals is that because of the cultural “tool-kits” from which they operate; they perpetuate racialized thinking through a colorblind lens (Emerson & Smith, 2000). In response to this, Jennifer Harvey proposes a “reparations paradigm” rather than the commonly used reconciliation framework. Reparations are an accepted practice in international law, having been used to “ameliorate the damage done in some of the most painful of circumstances,” including the Holocaust and victims of British government torture (Brennan, 2017, p. 154). Harvey (2011) argues that because of the powerful and ubiquitous nature of White supremacy in American society and in the church, a radical shift is needed. The reconciliation framework has perpetuated and maintained racism rather than dismantle it. Instead, a reparations framework would include not only recognizing a general harm and sin of racism, but also “addressing brokenness requires addressing that harm and naming a perpetrator. For racial justice to be pursued authentically as a community, the perpetrator or perpetrators must come forward and participate in concrete redress. Thus, reparations acknowledge white agency historically and demand ongoing white agency for the repair of racial brokenness” (Harvey, 2011, p. 64). This paradigm shift would, perhaps, equip White members to see the need for

reparations, how they are tied to true racial justice, and how, as a result, true reconciliation can take place.

In their 2011 book *Transcending Racial Barriers: Towards a Mutual Obligations Approach*, Emerson and Yancey suggest a “mutual obligations” approach as the most just way to address race and racial justice in churches. Rather than putting the onus of responsibility on either the majority or minority groups of society, which would further perpetuate racialization, racialized thinking, and racial conflict, a solution needs be accepted by both groups and appropriately address the needs of both groups. They propose following a process which (1) defines the racial problem carefully, (2) identifies a critical core, (3) recognizes the cultural differences at play, (4) develops ideas and approaches the concerns of other racial groups, and (5) take the ideas and uses them in a way that can be accepted by all (Emerson & Yancey, 2011, p. 127-128). They recognize that this approach will come as a cost to both Whites and non-Whites, but that there are “massive benefits to be gained when there is a real connection between majority and minority groups” (p. 137). As described, no approach yet implemented or theorized has fully “solved” the problem of racial justice and racial healing.

Section Four: Impact of an Urban Context

The complexities of addressing race in the church are further exacerbated in the context of a city. Racial disparities and structural racism can be clearly seen in urban settings, structural violence playing out in phenomena like gentrification, residential segregation and other inequitable structures that are often realities of city life. Tim Keller, a prolific author and pastor of a Presbyterian church in New York City, highlights the

importance of “the city” for Christians to experience, express and understand God’s love. As God loves the city, so should Christians who live there (Myatt, 2016). This desire to love and care for “the city” has influenced many White evangelicals to move back into urban environments, responding to the previous fear of the city and “White flight” that took place in previous decades (Biello, 2011; Mulder & Smith, 2009; Myatt, 2016). According to Biello (2011), this movement called, “evangelical re-urbanization” is based on (1) a critique of suburban megachurches and a desire for “reconciliation” of urban life to “the kingdom of God” (2) evangelicals encountering structural dilemmas such as gentrification as a result. In many ways, cities have been conceptualized as a new frontier and a place of moral redemption, resulting in “the otherness of the city—inseparable from racial and class difference—fuel[ing] its attractiveness” (p. 14). With this population shift towards cities, there is a need for studies that investigate how evangelicals in cities understand the city and role of race and racism, as well as exploring the relationships between evangelical theology and city settlement (Mulder & Smith, 2009).

Therefore, it is of vital importance to understand the role of multiracial churches in an urban environment and how they engage in issues of racial justice, healing, and reconciliation. As previously explored, some multiracial churches reproduce racialized ways of thinking and may not, simply by existing, be enough to adequately address racial divide (Cobb et al, 2015). Conversely, there is also some evidence “that diverse congregations, such as the one Garces-Foley (2007) examined, can be places where a greater understanding and consciousness of racism and racial inequality can take place. And multiracial congregations tend to have more inclusive attitudes than monoracial

congregations when it comes to socioeconomic diversity (Yancey & Kim 2008)” (Cobb et al., 2015, p. 224). Additionally, church leadership has the power to influence structure as the leadership composition matters and can communicate a message about diversity, worship practices and styles can act as mechanisms of inclusion or exclusions, and diversity in the congregation is essential, though not enough on its own, for striving for racial integration and equity (Dougherty & Huyser, 2008). Multiracial churches have an opportunity to engage in a comprehensive reconciliation process that goes beyond individualistic, simplified definitions often seen in the White, evangelical church and instead pursue robust social justice (Edwards, 2014). Given the challenges of colorblindness and color-consciousness in how church leaders approach different identities in a multiracial congregation, the different paradigms of reconciliation and reparations, and the specific demands of a city-based church, how are urban, multiracial churches addressing issues of racial reconciliation and racial justice?

Section Five: Problem Statement and Research Questions

Washington, DC provides an ideal, contemporary setting for a case study of such churches. Once referred to as “Chocolate City” for its high population of African Americans, it also has a complicated history of race and religion. The rapidly gentrifying city is increasing its white population, having a profound effect on the racial demographics, the culture of the city, and political power. Like other major American cities, restrictive housing covenants and redlining limited where African Americans could live. Patterns of segregation and displacement have continued in many of the city’s neighborhoods throughout the 20th century and up today. This gentrifying city’s rapidly

increasing affluent, White population is having profound effects on the culture of the city and the political power of long-term, non-White residents.

In this racially divided city, churches have the potential to act as a space of racial inclusion, justice, and equity. Some of the city's evangelical churches explicitly define "reconciliation" as part of their mission; others address loving their neighbor/neighborhood. Some churches strive to be intentionally multiracial; others are either actively or passively looking to meet the needs of specific demographic groups. In particular, multiracial churches have a unique opportunity to be engaging on issues of race as their membership is already diverse and maintaining a heterogeneous congregation presents its own set of challenges. The leadership of these churches may have a great impact on the choices the church makes. Therefore, interviewing pastors of multiracial churches is one way to explore reconciliation and justice in the city. Looking specifically at pastors in multiracial churches located in and serving the city, how are they engaging on issues of racial identity, racial justice, and reconciliation? What does reconciliation mean for the church itself and how it interacts with the local community?

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Section One: Design of Study

The use of qualitative methodology, through the use of semi-structured interviews with pastors, allows for an in-depth analysis of how these church leaders conceptualize and engage in reconciliation, both on an individual and corporate level. Semi-structured interviews provide the space for pastors to explain the concepts and ideas they put forth in their own words. This provided adequate context for interpreting responses, in addition to the opportunity for eliciting stories which illustrated their beliefs and the application of their beliefs. Furthermore, the semi-structured nature fostered an interactive, conversational tone which gave room for the pastors to emphasize what was important and meaningful to them.

I focused specifically on multiracial churches in Washington, DC because they have a particular opportunity to address historical and contemporary racism and to work towards bringing true racial justice, healing and reconciliation. If multiracial churches are a religious community worth striving for, then there is something to be learned in studying the dynamics of the small percentage of multiracial churches, especially because they represent the ideal community (Gopin, 2000). Given the patterns of segregation that continue to define churches in the United States, it is worthwhile to study them as possible spaces of integration and to glean from their practices.

The context of the research was limited to studying churches within the geography of Washington, DC in order to explore the dilemma of how best to pursue racial justice in a church given the complications of an urban environment, especially of a city rapidly changing as a result of gentrification. In addition to having political implications for the city, choices that a church makes in how to address race with its congregation could have implications for how members act in public, thus influencing the social dynamics of a neighborhood. Furthermore, it is important to explore how these multiracial churches interact with the dynamics of historic and present-day segregation. To what extent does the history of the city and/or neighborhood in which the church is situated impact the church? What role does geography play?

Semi-structured interviews were done in person with the head pastors of four multiracial churches located within Washington, DC.⁴ They were audio recorded and later transcribed. Interviews ranged from 1-2 hours. Much of the previous research done on race and the church has focused on Protestant, evangelical churches (Emerson & Smith, 2000; DeYoung et al., 2003; Edwards, 2008; Tranby & Hartmann, 2008; Mulder & Smith, 2009; Bielo, 2011; Shelton & Emerson, 2012; Cobb et al., 2015; Barron, 2016; Mayatt, 2016). Though in my recruitment, I limited my study to Protestant churches, I was not explicitly looking for evangelical churches. However, all pastors that chose to participate in the study self-identified as “evangelical.” Given the current political climate and role of evangelical Christianity in the United States in the public sphere, it is important to note that 3 of the 4 pastors added their own definitions or clarifications of

⁴ For a list of interview question, please see Appendix A.

the word “evangelical” in response to the question “Would you consider your church evangelical?”

Section Two: Recruitment

Pastors were recruited via an email that invited them to participate in a study on how multiracial churches in Washington, DC were engaging on social issues and matters of justice. The first church chosen for recruitment was the multiracial church that I attend. From that point on, churches were selected through snowball method, through my personal knowledge of other multiracial churches, and through conducting internet searches of churches and their websites with a combination of words like “cross-cultural,” “diversity,” “multiracial,” “justice,” “reconciliation,” “hospitality” and “neighborhood.” A list of churches was made from information found on the church’s website, specifically looking at their “vision” or “mission statement.” A list of 10 churches was compiled and recruitment emails were sent. Of the 10 emails sent, seven churches responded. Three declined and four agreed to participate. Once a church agreed to participate, I verified the multiracial makeup of the congregation using the standard of multiracial churches defined as a church where one racial group did not make up more than 80% of the congregation (DeYoung et al., 2003).

Section Three: Demographics

All four of the pastors who participated in the study were men. The age of all the pastors ranged from early 30s to early 40s. Two of the pastors identified themselves as White, one as Latino, and one as Asian American. The names of the pastors and their

churches were changed to maintain confidentiality. The size and demographics of the churches are charted below:

Table 1
*Demographics of Churches as Described by Pastors*⁵

	Head Pastor	Size	Demographics
Restoration Church	Pastor Simon	150	60-65% White; 35-40% non-White
Vision Church	Pastor Gonzalez	45	40% White; 40% Latino; 20% African American
Neighborhood Community Church	Pastor Lee	150	50-60% White; 15% Black; 15% Asian; 10% Other minority
New City Church	Pastor Norton	700	61% White; 6% Latino; 19% Black or African; 12% Asian/Pacific Islander; 7% mixed (according to 2016 survey)

Section Four: Analysis

After the interviews were transcribed, I employed a Gadamerian-influenced hermeneutics approach for a qualitative analysis of the text. Gadamer (1975) wrote that an interpreter of text cannot be neutral or unbiased, and it is impossible to get rid of prejudice, both hidden and not so hidden. Interpreters ideally understand a text from the perspective of their *horizon*, or viewpoint, that also “includes his/her own immediate

⁵ The names of the churches and pastors were changed to maintain confidentiality. These are pseudonyms.

situation but also the roots of the past and *openness to the future (my italics)*” (Stenger, 1995, p. 152). For Gadamer, both the historical moment of the text and of the person interpreting the text helps actually give it meaning. The interpreter of a text actually stands “under” the text, rather over it from a position of expert knowledge, and should recognize that understanding comes from the overlap of the horizon of the text with the horizon of the interpreter (Stenger, 1995). This leads to having an ongoing, dialectical conversation with the text being interpreted. It views truth-claims of a text as plausible. It asks questions not only of the text, but also of the interpreter him/herself (Stenger, 1995).

Using this theoretical framework for interpretation, I first recognized the bias that influenced my interpretation of the data. My overt bias is that I am a member of one of the churches that I studied and am deeply committed to the ideas of racial reconciliation and justice within the church. In fact, I hold some leadership positions with regard to what that church does under the umbrella of reconciliation. This topic is of such personal importance to me that it has led to my development and implementation of this research project. I cannot be an impartial, neutral researcher because my faith and its implications on my personal and academic life run deep. In addition, as a resident of Washington, DC, I am committed to the local community, its history and its future. Of course, there are more biases than these listed which will impact the horizon from which I understand the data.

In addition, while interpreting the interviews, rather than impose outer frameworks and categories of meaning, I observed the themes and valuable stories from the data, allowing categories of meaning to rise from the data itself. Through a repetitive

reading of the interview transcripts and mapping out key content into webs of knowledge, I noticed patterns, intersections, concepts, and stand-out texts. The Gadamerian-influenced hermeneutics approach to analysis allowed me to understand the terms, concepts and themes from the interviews from the horizons of the pastors. Their horizons intersected with my own in a meaning-making process. While my biases have certainly affected my ability to accurately interpret the data, this hermeneutic process prioritized the pastors and how they each answered questions from their horizons.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Through a hermeneutic analysis of the interviews with the four pastors, three distinct but mutually reinforcing categories of findings emerged in answering the questions of how multiracial churches in Washington, DC are engaging in racial reconciliation and justice and what reconciliation means for the church and its interactions with the local community. As a result of my analysis, I submit that the following are characteristics of the processes of reconciliation: 1) religious, racial reconciliation is an ongoing process, 2) the practice of justice in a specific place is an expression of true faith, and 3) diverse community is essential for true faith. These findings outline a process, a locus, and a context for true reconciliation that interact and support each other. The following sections will explain each finding in depth.

Section One: Religious, Racial Reconciliation is an Ongoing Process

Conceptualizing Reconciliation

Reconciliation as Holy Work. When analyzing the pastor's views and approaches to reconciliation, some key, foundational paradigms became apparent. Several pastors used the cross as a central image in describing the motivation for racial reconciliation, helping the pastors justify their decisions to pursue reconciliation within their churches. The cross represents the place that Jesus died, a core belief of Christians. Associating reconciliation with the cross analogizes racial justice as an integral part to the Christian

faith because it is, according to several pastors, “something that Jesus died for.” Reconciliation is holy work, addressing sin and bringing dignity to God’s human creation. Pastor Norton⁶ brought up a common critique of the word reconciliation, that “Blacks and Whites never *were* reconciled in America. There never was a place when there was unity. Or Native Americans and White people in the US, there never was a reconciled time. So, what are we going back to?” However, he demonstrates a commitment to that wording because it is used in the Bible to explain what Jesus did for humans, “that he broke down the wall of separation that existed.” This similar theological grounding for the work of reconciliation could be seen with other pastors as well. While Pastor Simon⁷ clarified that Christians are not, and should not, be the only ones working for racial justice, he sees this work as the embodiment of Christian belief. He explains, “I think that any sort of approaches to racial justice outside of the centrality of Christ... we're just negotiating power.” Striving for reconciliation from a Christian perspective adds a spiritual dimension in explaining the cause and resolution of racial injustice. For the pastors, reconciliation results from modeling a life in the ways of Jesus, that is, Christian faith put into practice.

Sin and Dignity. All four pastors made two key truth claims about how sin and human dignity relate to reconciliation. First, racism is viewed as a sin, both on a personal and institutional level. This is a departure from many evangelicals who interpret sin through an individualist lens solely (Cobb et al., 2015; Dougherty & Huyser, 2008; Edwards et al., 2013; Emerson & Smith 2000; Garces-Foley & Jeung, 2013; Jeung, 2005;

⁶ Name has been changed.

⁷ Name has been changed.

Tranby & Hartmann 2008; Wadsworth, 2010). Second, all humans have dignity because they are made in the image of God. Therefore, as two of the pastors explained, “some lives do not matter more than others.” The two claims are interconnected. Pastor Norton explained racism as “spiritual at its core because... it’s believing a lie. And the lie is this: that some people are worth more than others. And that’s an affront to Genesis 1 that says we’re made in the image of God and it’s an affront to our constitution that says we are all created equally.” If racism is, at its core, a sin that affects both individuals and institutions, then the way it is addressed must also affect individuals and institutions. For the pastors, this fundamental understanding of the theology of sin should have radical implications on churches and how they address racial reconciliation and justice.

Furthermore, the idea that the image of God reflected in humans is a source of dignity, making lives matter equally, would also have implications for the way churches listen and interact with their members and their local communities. Gopin (2000) writes that this conceptualization of humans bearing God’s image leads to one of the primary objectives of conflict resolution: the humanization of the Other. How does the idea that, as one of the pastors said, “some lives do not matter more than others” play out within the church itself and within its geography, especially with regard to racial reconciliation and justice? As Pastor Gonzalez explained, one of the roles of his church is “God’s restoring the dignity of people [of] all the people that society has on the outskirts, from the tax collectors to the prostitutes to the women with health issues that hasn't healed... he's just kind of like lifting people up. Part of the thing that God is doing is helping people become the human beings that were supposed to be.” Pastor Simon echoed similar

conviction saying, "...if in the cross, Jesus is saying those that the world thinks of as nobodies become somebodies, then wherever we are seeing the marring of the image of God then it's our aim to dismantle that because of what took place on the cross." What, then, does this look like in practice? Could it lead to finding dignity and even love for those whom we classify as enemies (Gopin, 2000)?

We Are Never Reconciled, but Always Reconciling. Another key finding with regard to the reconciliation process is the idea that reconciliation is a lifelong journey. It is not an end goal; it requires a constant commitment, constant self-reflection, and constant enacting of the reconciliation. Said Pastor Simon, "Our eyes are never so opened that we've arrived. It is an opening." This was a theme consistently repeated, framing the way the some pastors viewed the work of reconciliation in their churches. It helped them justify the need for regular preaching and teaching on race, justice and reconciliation from the pulpit, addressing concerns that some might bring asking why a sermon or a conversation on race was happening again.

Pastor Lee also recognized that this lifestyle of reconciling must happen with all the people in the church, regardless of their racial identity. Because of the history around different identities in the US, the roles individuals' play are not equal. Everyone must play a role, but this looks different for different communities. He says that Whites have a particular need to not resist change. They should be willing to give up aspects of their culture, "not to cling to it, not to protect and defend it, but to joyfully relinquish some of those things for the sake of making room" and that in reality, Whites must take on "a lot of the heavy lifting for the work of reconciliation." He goes on that for People of Color,

the hard work lies firstly in forgiveness. This is a different position than that of Whites. People of Color need to “need to exercise empathy and understanding and extend generosity of heart towards their White brothers and sisters.” He also points out that, “even as Christians of color, we have never fully arrived. We are never done in our need to repent of our racial ignorance or of our ethnocentricity, or of our just general selfishness. And we're never done with or need to grow in wisdom and grow in knowledge and understanding of other people and their cultures and their personal experiences.” The work of reconciliation is a lifelong process for all those involved.

Theory of Reconciliation

Early on as we were starting up the church, we were having a conversation about how we might engage our neighbors more effectively, and it just so happened that a lot of the ideas that were coming out in that brainstorming session had to do with engaging poor, Black neighbors. And one of our African-American sisters became very frustrated by that... and understandably, and at one point, raised her voice and directed towards one young man who also happened to be White... she said, “I'm just so tired (emphasis) of people associating blackness with poverty,” ...and went on to explain her frustration in more detail... and of course, for her to express those emotions is completely legitimate. I think what stood out in that moment, and what she later felt badly about, was the way that she pressed all of her frustration on to one individual because he [...] mentioned some idea related to serving single moms in the local community which happens to be African-American in this neighborhood... It was a week later during the Q&A portion of our Sunday service that that same sister raised her hand and was called upon, stood before the church and said, “I want to apologize for my outburst. For the ways in which I treated this brother unfairly and unkindly.” And everyone understood that she didn't need to apologize for her emotions or for her wounds, which she was speaking out of [...] But there's a genuine sense in the way in which she knew that her anger may have hurt this brother personally. And she shared this with tears, and asked for forgiveness, even using that language, which I think was powerful, “I ask for your forgiveness,” which I then had the opportunity in that moment, on behalf of the church, as the pastor to say, “Well of course. Of course, forgive you! And we also understand completely the place of frustration out of which your anger came. And we want to hear more. Can you share more of your story with us? Can you help us to understand and know?” That invitation then turned into, several months later, an invitation which

extended to the whole church to come to her home to share a meal into listen to her tell her family story... a little snapshot of black American history through the lens of one woman's experience. This is a person who grew up at the tail end of Jim Crow, and so she was able to show us pictures like, "Here's the school that I attended. This building here was for the white kids and this building is where I attended class with all the other black children. This here is my church where we could not sit in the front pews because that was a 'Whites Only' section of the church." [...] It was just this rich, personal time of taking in this sister's life and really providing a richer context to what otherwise might have just been this irksome, harsh exchange between two individuals that would've been much easier to just sort of walk away from, dust your hands off, and not deal with. Because it's hard to deal with conflict. But by God's grace it actually turned out to be a very important moment of conflict that bore a lot of fruit of repentance, forgiveness, understanding, and in the end, I think wisdom.

The above story from Pastor Lee⁸ at Neighborhood Community Church⁹

illustrates some of the components of the ongoing reconciliation process that emerged from the data. This reconciliation process took place because of the public context of a church community; it had a *locus* (Lederach, 1997). It highlights what Gopin suggests is needed in religious peacemaking because "...it is precisely in the public space that we can encounter the truly estranged other-even, maybe especially, the enemy other, and it is only from there that he can take us ultimately to his home. How can we solve any deeply embedded violence and hatred that persists in large civilizations without coming to visit the home of the stranger?" (Gopin, 2002, p. 24). Within a multiracial church, individuals negatively impacted by the evil of historical and present day racial injustice are face to face with individuals who actively or passively may benefit from those injustices.

Individuals can also become symbolic representatives of racial or ethnic groups. This is part of the conflict dynamic of multiracial churches because as symbolic leaders, pastors

⁸ Name has been changed.

⁹ Name has been changed.

may, in turn, ask for or accept forgiveness towards, or on behalf of, a racial or ethnic group. Group representation and forgiveness are both illustrated in the story above.

As evidenced in the story above from Pastor Lee, the different ways pastors answered each interview question revealed the aspects of reconciliation that mattered to them. No one pastor had a clear reconciliation process, but through putting these various puzzle pieces together, I synthesized the various essential elements of reconciliation explained by individual pastors into a theory on reconciliation. True reconciliation is a process involving these six steps:

- 1) Awareness of Hurt
- 2) Lament
- 3) Confession/Apology/Repentance
- 4) Reparations
- 5) Forgiveness
- 6) Transformation/New Wisdom

The process of true reconciliation must involve each of these six components, though not necessarily in this order. In addition, it is important to clarify that this could be a cyclical process that repeats over and over throughout the life of both an individual and of a church.

True reconciliation is not complete without each of these components, though the pastors did not all explicitly categorize their comments or actions using these categorical labels. This process is not necessarily linear, but as the dimensions rely on each other to be most authentically realized, the omission of any of the components would lead to a

deficient process of reconciliation. It is important to note that while this process demonstrates a clear theory on reconciliation and justice, for the pastors, this process is ultimately shaped by a spiritual dimension and cannot be fully realized without God.

1) Awareness of hurt

In order for a reconciliation process to take place, first, there must be an awareness of hurt or a wrong committed. As evidenced in the reconciliation story above, there was a recognition of hurt caused on different levels. First, the African American woman made the whole group aware of the hurt that she felt by the stereotypical association of poverty and Blackness. This was an example of personal hurt caused by societal level beliefs and bias which often relate Blackness to poverty. Second, from an individual perspective, she later acknowledged the hurt that she had caused to the young White man by directing her frustration and anger with social injustice more broadly to him as an individual.

All the pastors contribute to the development of awareness of harm through sermons on racial reconciliation and justice at different times throughout the year. For example, Pastor Lee of Neighborhood Community Church raises awareness through celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month and Black History Month. During these months, he specifically encourages members of these communities to share about their life and faith experiences as shaped by their identities in front of the whole church as a part of the Sunday service. These are called “gospel and cultural identity stories.” In reaction to the summer of 2016, one defined by police shootings of Black men, Pastor Simon invited Black members of his congregation to lead a service of lament, making their

congregations aware of pain felt in the Black community, an action which will be further explored below. Both of these pastors made explicit, structural choices of handing over part or all of a worship service to marginalized and affected communities, in part to make publicly aware the wrongs that these communities felt.

2) *Lament*

Lament is another way of saying mourning. As mentioned above, Pastor Simon dedicated a full service to lament in the wake of police violence against Black men, handing over leadership to those most affected. He explains his reasoning

to surrender services... to particularly to Black men in our congregation and say, 'You lead us in lament.' And how for us to hear the pain and anger and disappointment of Black men in our church... so that we can hear... this is ongoing pain. It's going to take some time. And there's going to be parts of it that some of us never understand because it's not our reality, even as close as we may be to people who have been affected.

In Western culture, lament can be uncomfortable and often overlooked. Pastor Simon knew the importance allocating space and time for the whole congregation "to face anger of Black men and women who love Jesus, who love the church, but they're just... they're hurt. And they're hurting. And there's a way we've been complicit in that." For Pastor Simon, this is part of a process that will lead to reconciliation and healing. In fact, after the service, the church congregation shared a meal together. An event that takes place once a month, it happened to fall on the same Sunday as the lament service. This was an important progression for Pastor Simon because facing "our own brokenness and the

brokenness of our country,” or giving the space for lament, leads to healing. Reflecting on that Sunday he explains, “I mean we lament... But we don't not eat together. Man, that was tough. But we made it through, another day, another step forward. Gimme a hotdog. Let's figure it out. But let's figure it out for the two of us.”

3) Confession/apology/repentance

After acknowledgement of wrong and lament over that wrong, the next step is confession, leading to apology and repentance. Confession may often be thought of as a private, individual act between self and God. In this reconciliation framework, however, confession also refers to a more public acknowledgement of individual and corporate sin. As Pastor Lee interprets it, these are “sins committed by groups that we identify with or that we are associated with.” He believes that White Christians, in particular, need to acknowledge the sin of “corporate racism, both in the past and the present, as it relates to Whiteness in America.” Pastor Simon, who identifies as White, explains, “These are sins that we have as a community, as a community of people, as a country, as a nation. And so, we need to confess it, together.” Restoration Church builds in confession of sin or profession of faith as a part of their Sunday services. People in the church, reflecting on the passage that will be preached, write public confessions or professions. Church leaders then read them anonymously to the church. While these do not always focus on confessing racial sins, this intentional, structural process opens up the space for confession to happen as a normal part of the service.

Confession is the precedent for repentance. Repentance, according to Pastor Lee, involves a “true reckoning... of wrongs that have been done in the past and in the

present.” He explains that American Christians, or Americans in general, would probably agree with reconciliation as a concept and that having multiracial churches could be a good thing. He goes on, “And on one level, they would embrace that vision, but there's much more resistance when you start digging down into the deep structures of church life which need to be changed in order for there to be true solidarity and true unity and true reconciliation because that would involve repentance.” In this, Lee is saying that repentance involves a difficult process of reflecting on the structure of the church and being willing to make changes. Repentance goes beyond confession and apology; repentance is making things right. How is repentance manifested, therefore? Through reparations: concrete actions that repair the structure and make past wrongs right.

4) Reparations

In the context of this reconciliation process, reparations are more than common conceptions of the term involving monetary payments. If reparations within a church mean making things right, the above steps of acknowledgement, confession, and repentance must happen first. Only after that is the church, as an institution and as individuals, able to reflect on what repair could look like. Pastor Lee explains, the “American church has been built on the legacy of exclusion of minorities, most especially African-Americans from the earliest days of their entrance to the New World as slaves. So... We've never known... Literally, the American church has never known how to worship together.” From this reflection, Lee has made a commitment to creating a multiracial, cross-cultural church as a response from the wrongs of the past. His acts of repair include an explicit mission statement centered around a cross-cultural vision, a

worship style that incorporates music from the Black church and Latin influences, the creation of a Cross-Cultural Team within the church, and intentionally pursuing diverse leadership, including the hiring of an African American pastor. These are not actions for the sake of diversity; they are institutional acts of repair. Other pastors discussed similar institutional commitments including making justice a strategic priority, prioritizing diverse leadership, dedicating sermons and teachings to reconciliation and justice, the creation of a Racial Justice Group, and taking walking tours as a community. In addition, New City Church dedicates \$100,000 a year to a ministry focused on addressing young people in foster care, encouraging families to foster or adopt, and preventing families in crisis from entering the foster care system. Such a financial commitment, it is important to note, is also an act of institutional repair.

In addition to corporate-level reparations, Pastor Simon encourages his congregation to ask themselves, “What story do you want your money to tell?” with regard to gentrification in the city. Recognizing that he and his congregation do not have the power to reverse the harm to his community and city caused by gentrification, he still wants individuals to make things right with what they can do. He explains:

We are still playing with this idea but what we would call a “gentrification footprint.” So, if you think of a carbon footprint, like the environment, well I can't eliminate it, but there are things I can do to reduce it. [...] Well how do I figure out my gentrification footprint? How can I reduce that? [...] If you're going to go out 10 times to a bar or to a restaurant, then let 3 of those times, let it be to a bar or restaurant that's 20 years or older as a way to honor the history of this city that

was here before any of us arrived. If you're renting, get to know who your landlord is. Try and go back as far as you can and get to know their story, what the neighborhood was like before you moved in. Really try, so we just do a bunch of different kind of things that are ways to reduce your gentrification footprint.

Pastor Simon is asking individuals in his church to consider the implications of the daily decisions they make, including where they eat. Reducing the “gentrification footprint” is about making right injustice present in the city. This can be seen as an act of reparation.

5) *Forgiveness*

As seen in the reconciliation story at the start of this chapter, forgiveness also plays a key role in the reconciliation process. Lee illustrates the importance of forgiveness, both on the individual level and the corporate level. After the African American woman publicly confessed before the church, Lee emphasized the power of her using the words, “I ask for your forgiveness.” Forgiveness is a central part to the Christian faith, something that marks conversion into the faith and should be continuously practice. The parallel between forgiveness done between an individual and God and the forgiveness that an individual in turn must do is part of what makes this concept essential in the Christian framing of reconciliation. As Appleby (2006) notes, “Sin against a fellow human being is therefore always also a sin both against the human community and against God... In this respect, only God is in a position to forgive... But the human community is called nonetheless to replicate divine forgiveness in the temporal realm” (p. 229). Lee then applies this same principle to corporate forgiveness, offering forgiveness to the woman on behalf of the church. Both Pastors Lee and

Gonzalez¹⁰ note the difficulty of forgiveness and an understanding of the pain and emotion that a wrong act can cause. Gonzalez highlights the challenges of forgiveness some may face, asking,

Why should I forgive a country, and a race, and a people that have kidnapped my ancestors and brought them against their will [...] Like the people from El Salvador have a natural distrust for America. Why? Because America financed terrorism in their country for 20 years. I mean there's like, like, the stories of incredible atrocities that were like financed by the CIA. That's like historical fact, that you can look up. That's documents that have been disclosed now. So, you have [...] all of this rage, that I think is justifiable. And you have all this frustration, and you have all this pain, where does it go?

Outside of a spiritual influence, this act of forgiveness may be impossible. But it is through a spiritual transformation that healing can be realized.

6) Transformation/New Wisdom

The final result of the reconciliation process is transformation and new wisdom. After the African American woman hosted members of the church in her home and shared the story of her family with them, Lee says that it led to “wisdom.” Going through this reconciliation process develops a new understanding of the Other, of those with different experiences based on their race, and this changes those involved in reconciliation. A spiritual transformation occurs, impacting the individual, the community, and the greater institution. Pastor Simon explains this as the only way

¹⁰ Names have been changed.

Americans will be able to get over the “original sin of racism” and the “origin story of our country: that some lives matter more than others.” According to him, this transformation starts with an individual process that “comes when someone says ‘Yes’ to Jesus” but then “breaks open is something that is much wider.” He frames the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross as something that is more than for individual salvation. It leads to wanting to “embody racial justice, economic justice, um, relational, strife between men and woman, husbands and wives, between parents, things that have been broken get made right.” Through transformation, reconciliation can happen.

The Practice of Reconciliation

The Role of Small Groups in Reconciliation. As pastors described various aspects of reconciliation, another key finding emerged. While dialogue alone is insufficient, the ideal space for reconciliation is in a smaller group where there is truth-telling, listening, and a chance to go through a reconciliation process without shame. This is not to say that reconciliation only exists on the relational level or that it cannot and should not take place in larger groups or in one on one conversation, but some pastors noted the important impact of small groups. These small groups help hold individuals accountable as they engage in reconciliation in community, but according to Pastor Lee, they also provide a space “where people can apologize, repent, admit their mistakes without shame that can so easily crush.” If a group is too large, a relational connection cannot take place. Outside of a smaller setting, there may not be the necessary community pushing for an individual’s growth. It is in more intimate spaces that, Pastor Lee suggests, “people can actually hear each other... shed their caricatures of people that

are different than themselves.” Therefore, small groups are an essential component to true reconciliation.

The Role of the Local Church in Reconciliation. For the pastors, the local church provides the space for this reconciliation process to happen. In addition to structural issues that need to be addressed like policy and laws, the local church is a space where relationships can form over time. According to Pastor Lee, the local church is “uniquely” the place where “you're learning to love people that know your story. People that you're almost forced to work out differences... and across a long period of time.” Pastor Gonzalez describes the local church as a place that gives a “story that at least helps people articulate their lives.” The story of Christianity, as lived in the local church, allows for unlikely friendships that lead to reconciliation. This is only possible, of course, when the church itself is diverse enough to even have opportunities for cross-racial interactions and friendships. According to Pastor Lee, faith provides a new identity, one that should come even before ethnic or racial identity. He explains how it is in multiracial churches that “two groups of people would have no business being friends if it weren't for the grace of Jesus. If it weren't for the common identity that they share that runs deeper than even their ethnic identity.” In a racially segregated society, like that of the US today, the local church can be an ideal locus for reconciliation.

Summary of First Finding

In summary, the first major finding of this study is that religious, racial reconciliation is an ongoing process. It is a tangible way to exercise the Christian faith, based on foundational paradigms of reconciliation including an understanding of racism

as personal and social sin and of humans as having dignity because they are made in the image of God, and the idea that we are never reconciled but always reconciling. The theory of reconciliation, created by puzzling together key aspects described by the pastors, involves six steps, though they may not be linear. They are: 1) Awareness of Hurt, 2) Lament, 3) Confession/Apology/Repentance, 4) Reparations, 5) Forgiveness and 6) Transformation/New Wisdom. In addition, pastors made claims about how to implement these reconciliation processes, valuing small groups and viewing the local church as a place where these processes can take place.

Section Two: The Practice of Justice in a Specific Place is an Expression of True

Faith

The second key finding from this study is that the practice of justice in a specific place is an expression of true faith. Faith and the practice of justice are integrated. True faith is expressed *as* practice; the two cannot be separated. Pastor Simon worded this as the marrying of *orthodoxy*, belief and *orthopraxy*, actions. The beliefs of Christianity, of the gospel, are not purely spiritual, divorced from practical action and embodied justice in a community. He argued that you cannot have true belief without true practice; you cannot have right practice without true belief. Pastor Simon describes this manifestation of united actions and belief as “public works of righteousness and social justice,” using the ancient Hebraic etymology to explain that righteousness goes beyond personal, individual transformation. Righteousness is also manifested publicly, though it’s rooted in something deeper. He fosters this as an expectation of being a part of the church;

moreover, the church is the exact place where this fusion should be taking place. Right actions and right faith should be moving towards each other. He explains,

It doesn't matter where you start. Somebody's like "I want to volunteer because I've got some extra time" ... that's fine, we'll start there. And then, can I get to the deeper theology. Other folks are like, "Oh, ya, ya, I just don't have time to do it." We're like, sorry, that's not good enough. You've got the right belief, but let's sort of push it the other way. So, it doesn't matter where folks are starting, but we do want to bridge the two of them.

This bridging takes place in the community of the local church, and the right actions that should be taken are best understood through going through reconciliation processes across lines of difference, as described in the first finding.

It is essential to clarify that this interwoven relationship between practice and faith also implies that right action is not good enough on its own. Pastor Simon clarifies that the motivation for doing right acts is not "let's do acts of charity or even disembodied acts of justice," but is about living out the faith in these acts. The pastors noted that part of their work is to persuade their congregations that faith-based acts of justice are essential and fundamental to being a Christian. The practical challenges of a busy life in DC can make it difficult to live out these acts of justice, but that is no excuse. However, as Pastor Lee explains, "I don't ever want to get up on a soapbox and... speak prophetically on racial issues, but [not have my] own house in order so to speak." This exemplifies a commitment to faith as practice within the congregation itself in addition to how the congregation interacts with the local community.

A key feature of this practice of justice is that it is directly shaped by the geography in which the churches are located. For all of the pastors interviewed, their neighborhoods were of paramount importance; many pastors described being in the neighborhood “intentionally” and how neighborhood dynamics affected them directly. Pastor Simon elucidated this by using the language of “parish” to show “if the church is in a geography, then there's a measure of spiritual responsibility that church has for that geography, whether those folks come to the church or not.” Having a spiritual responsibility for the geography manifests itself in different ways. Pastor Gonzalez envisions his church as having “presence” in the neighborhood. For him, this means that the members of the church are “so ingrained into the lives of the people in your neighborhood that you see everybody.” He went on to give an example of Jonny, his neighbor without a permanent home, who often stays the night, eats with Pastor Gonzalez and his wife, and comes to do laundry. The neighborhood should be a better place because members of his church live in it, taking the time to “see” even those who may be often forgotten or ignored, that is, to honor God’s image in the neighborhood.

Pastor Lee and Pastor Simon expressed a commitment to justice in the neighborhood in different ways. For Pastor Lee, the neighborhood should be reflected in the church, directly impacting the “cross-cultural vision” of the church. The neighborhood is diverse; therefore, the church should be cross-cultural because of the geography in which it is situated. Pastor Simon has similar ideas, but he uses the concept of integration to explain his commitment to their specific geography. Part of faith as just action means working to integrate where disintegration has happened. This means, for

example, that he wants “to live and work in church all in the same neighborhood... not just because I want things convenient, but because there's actually something transformational about the integration of it.” This merger of geography, faith, and practice leads to specific actions on behalf of neighbors.

What are, then, the concrete expressions of justice for these pastors? What actions do they take and their congregations take? Examples of faith-based, just action included regularly babysitting for families wanting to go to PTO meetings at the school where one of the churches meets, regularly volunteering a family homeless shelter in the neighborhood, sitting on the board of neighborhood organizations, providing Thanksgiving meals for over 100 families, and even being arrested in protest of policies that would harm city residents. It meant the pastors seeing their role as one in which they lead by example and also inspire their congregations to action. Pastor Lee communicates that “to be a part of this church means to be a part of the neighborhood and to be a member of this community means to be a servant of our neighbors.” As a result, he estimates that a third to a half of his church is serving or engaged in the local neighborhood in some way. Pastor Simon’s congregation participates in an organization called DC127, from the Bible passage James 1:27 which says that true religion is those that care for widows and orphans and their distress. Of his congregation of about 150 people, 25-30 individuals (about 20% of the church) actively foster or are in the process of adopting as a part of DC127. This is a significant commitment and example of justice embodied in action as a lifestyle and for the long term, not just for a couple hours on a given day.

Place Matters to God

Why the attention to geography and the neighborhood around the church? This comes from a key premise of the pastors: because human beings are made in the image of God, the places they live matter. Part of valuing people is giving value to the places that they value. As mentioned above, there was a common belief that all people in the neighborhood should be “seen.” If the people in the neighborhood are seen as having dignity, where they live is also important because it is important to those people. Just as some lives do not matter more than others, some places also do not matter more than others. Two of the interviews with pastors took place in the same week that President Trump is said to have described some countries as “shitholes.” These two pastors mentioned that incident in their interviews, addressing why place matters to God. For example, Pastor Gonzalez illustrated how when people found out Jesus was from Nazareth, they said, “What good can come out of Nazareth?” Drawing a parallel to today, Pastor Gonzalez went on to say:

You know what good can come out of the shithole town like Nazareth? It's kind of fascinating that... God identifies himself specifically with the weak and the poor and the oppressed and the marginalized. And that these places that other people see as shithole countries or shithole towns: God chose these place for his son to arrive. And I'm a minority and I'm from a country that many people very much probably think is a shithole...And as a minority, as someone from a country like that, you know there is a level of comfort and hope in how God through Jesus

is kind of like on my corner and identifying himself with me and not thinking he's too good to be with someone from my type of town or my type of country, right?

Place matters to God because people matter to God. If the practice of justice is an expression of true faith, located in a specific geography, the people in that place matter. That neighborhood also matters.

There is a Just Way to Interact with the Neighborhood

Having a clear logic for why geography shapes actions of true faith leads to a pivotal caveat: there is a just way to interact with the neighborhood. Two important principles for neighborhood service emerged from the pastors: first, it is important to ask a community what it needs and/or to join with what is already going on in a community. Second, just action is anti-paternalistic and involves reciprocity, acknowledging that we all have needs. People should not be seen as *projects*; they are *friends*. The first point is best illustrated by the way the organization DC127 started. The founding church decided to first meet with the city and asking how the church could help. The deputy mayor asked this church to help mobilize other churches to address the foster care crisis in the city. The city described how there were 2000 kids in the foster care system and 300 waiting to be adopted. The city asked for help in mobilizing the 600 churches in Washington, DC, and DC127 was born. After 5 years, DC127 has 20 partner churches and over 200 consistent volunteers. As a result, they have served over 70 children and families in crisis. The church plans to launch an initiative to address and provide affordable housing next. This church was able to make an impact in the city and in the lives of families and children because it asked local leaders what role it could play.

The second principle is that of reciprocity and anti-paternalism. Pastor Lee expounds on this idea by explaining that it means...

Honoring each other's dignity, as people made in the image of God, and recognizing that we all have needs just of different varieties, whether seen or unseen, whether material or emotional, or spiritual psychological or physical, humbly recognizing that we all have needs, and then mutually serving our needs.... Letting yourself be served as a neighbor as well, so a relationship of genuine reciprocity. But I mean, being a neighbor also means being a friend, and what I mean by that is that it's not just a transactional relationship where you're re-distributing resources or just in each other's lives on occasion... a relationship defined by a service project or even defined by needs.

This is a stark contrast to practices of some churches and of other service-oriented organizations. The reframing of relationships through the concept of reciprocity changes that attitude of the one serving, adding a dimension of humility. It differently positions the person being helped as well. Speaking again of his neighbor Jonny, Pastor Gonzalez explains how the attitude of friendship affected Jonny. Over breakfast together, Jonny said, "You guys are making me feel like I'm almost human." For Pastor Gonzalez, his relationship with Jonny is one of friendship, growing out of their neighborhood presence. It is his hope that those in his church will take a similar attitude of service and friendship. By practicing justice in the neighborhood, true faith can be lived out by remembering that place matters to God and by having a posture of humility.

Section Three: Diverse Community is Essential for True Faith

Finally, the third major finding of this study is that the pastors frame true faith as being revealed in diverse community. Striving for a multiracial church is a response to personal sin and institutional sins of the church. It provides a place to practice the reconciliation paradigm. It is a response to the context of the neighborhood. True faith cannot be understood accurately and fully without diverse voices. Pastors made very clear choices as a result of this foundational belief. This impacted their church's structure and other institutional choices, how the church addresses White cultural normativity, and what the dynamics of a diverse community should be like. In addition, it led to each pastor reflecting on the limits and opportunities of his particular racial identity.

Diversity is Needed for Understanding the Faith

Diversity is important in these churches not just because it allows for processes of reconciliation or because it represents the population of the local community. In order to truly understand God and the Christian faith, it is essential to listen to the voices of the marginalized. Not doing this leads to, as Pastor Simon stated, a "misshapen faith." In the US context, and in Washington, DC, this means an intentional choice of centering non-White voices, in part as a response to what has been done in the past. What it means to be a Christian and how a Christian life should be lived needs to be heard from people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds and of different socioeconomic statuses. Pastor Simon explains the reasoning for this as coming from the Bible itself:

Where does God often speak and who does he often meet? And over and over, it's not the person in the center; it's the person on the margin. And so, if we only ever

and always listen to whoever it is that we deem the best and the brightest, and the smartest or the most well equipped or the most put together, we are going to tell the gospel story that's different than the story we understand that's happening in the Bible... It's not just a gospel of the margins... neither is it tokenism.

This shows the importance of diverse voices, not because it is popular or politically correct, but because it follows the example of God. Pastor Simon goes on:

I say ok... is there anything that might be missing in your discipleship as a follower of Jesus if you only ever read authors that were 70-year-old men from Texas? You might go, ya! Well, would you add an author from Florida? Yeah, maybe, maybe one from New York. Ok, we'll keep expanding. So, if you know that in this space there could be, that there was something missing, even if you wouldn't use the language of misshapen... if you listen to the faith journeys of women, is it going to add a dimension of faith that maybe you didn't know? That's absolutely fair. Got it. Now, if you only listen to the wealthy? How about that? If you only listen to the educated? How about that? If you only listen to people from North America? So just to sort of expand it, and you know there's actually different ways (emphasis) that I need to hear the gospel. It's the same gospel, but I need to hear the good news of Jesus, that story told back to me from different voices and different experiences. Not to just have a good, trendy, diverse church, but... To do otherwise is... it's a form of laziness actually...

Pastor Simon is arguing that the core theological beliefs must be understood through different identities to be most fully understood. He warns that “unless I listen to voices

from the margins, unless I listen to voices that have actually be churned up and disempowered if not disemboweled by theology that neglects their voice, which silences their experience,” he will not be able to clearly understand the gospel, Jesus and the Christian faith. Pastor Simon’s claim is laced with vivid descriptors that highlight the urgency of this perspective and the consequences of not doing so. Diversity, for him, is nothing less than absolutely essential.

Maintaining Diversity in a Multiracial Church must be Intentional and Sacrificial

If having diversity is crucial for a true, authentic faith, then it is also important to make intentional, sacrificial choices to have and maintain diversity in the church. All the churches in this study were multiracial, and three made (and continue to make) very explicit choices in order to maintain the diversity within the congregations. Intentionality is central because, says Pastor Simon, “You don't drift into diversity. You drift into homogeneity.” As a result, intentional choices are made about the structure of church services (some of which was already address in the reconciliation process above), music and worship styles, and diverse church leadership. These choices have a cost, explains Pastor Lee. The cost can include a financial cost, such as allocating portions of the budget to justice ministry. It also can include an energy and relational cost. From a leadership perspective, there is a cost to giving up power to traditionally marginalized voices. It means trying to cultivate non-White leadership, providing leaders of color with every resource and opportunity to succeed, and for Pastor Simon, “whenever there's a choice, to submit to non-White leadership.” It also means reflecting on what voices are influencing church leadership, especially if the pastor is White. Suggests Pastor Simon:

Are they reading non-White authors or are they only reading White authors? What podcasts are they listening to? Are they listening to podcasts only by people who look like them or are they listening to other podcasts from voices they don't normally gravitate towards? And then if they've never been mentored or disciplined by a person of color, if they're White, then I would really encourage them to do that.

Additionally, maintaining a diverse church means carefully choosing whose critiques should be listened to. One pastor was critiqued by an African American attendee for having “White” music. This interaction caused him to want to change the music that is played during the worship service, recognizing that the critique was addressing the White cultural normativity of the church’s music. Other pastors mentioned that they intentionally preference voices of the marginalized communities and that all voices are not weighted the same. They chose to center the voices of marginalized and historically silenced communities, affecting how critique is understood and considered.

Whose Culture?

Another key component that emerged from true faith in diverse community is the idea that the church should be a place where people of all ethnicities, races, and cultures feel included and welcomed. Church should be a place where people can bring their identity without “denuding” themselves. Pastor Lee uses this vivid image as a response to how some minorities have needed to shed or minimize their racial and ethnic identities to be part of churches, on behalf of church “unity.” He wants his church to be a place where “ethnic identity and background is something that will be honored and celebrated.” Part

of creating a space where this “denuding” does not take place means recognizing and challenging the White cultural normativity that has defined American church structures and traditions, “which can be excluding to people of other cultural backgrounds.” Pastor Norton mirrors this though by making intentional diversity a strategic priority of the church, in order to “not be a multiethnic church that's assimilated to dominant White culture.” If churches follow a reconciliation process as described in this research, then considering what reparations need to take place might lead to other concrete examples of specific ways churches could take to break from White cultural norms.

Role of Heterogeneous and Homogeneous Groups

Additionally, a repeated theme from the pastors is this idea that diverse community should include places of comfort, like affinity groups, and discomfort, like heterogeneous groups which spur on growth and aid in accountability. A truly diverse church is one in which people may feel both comfortable at times and uncomfortable at times. In terms of comfort and safety, it there need to be safe spaces where people can engage in a dialogue and/or reconciliation process involving truth telling and listening, but also where those involved know that there is a commitment to relationships with each other. While these heterogeneous groups provide a “safe” place for dialogue, they can also be “dangerous” in the sense that it is important to talk about subjects that are difficult and uncomfortable, issues around class, race, and how these impact individual lives and the city. These mixed identity groups also provide an opportunity for holding each other accountable. Pastor Simon explains that small groups may be a place where “Every time I have the sense that you're seeing yourselves as the savior for this neighborhood, I will let

you know. I'll let you know at every step and turn that you are absolutely not.” This type of truth-filled interaction and accountability across identity lines is possible because of heterogeneous settings.

Recognizing that safety for People of Color especially might mean something different, two of the churches have created homogenous affinity groups. These groups are, explains Pastor Norton,

...a safe space for people of color to come together for healing, which is very important when dramatic things happen in the immigrant community, or the African American community, or the Asian American community. Where there's a place for you can come and just completely let down your hair and just be like “Hey. I don't need to try to translate this for somebody. You just know what it feels like.”

Providing support for minority groups is, therefore, a key ingredient to a thriving, multiracial church community.

Leaders Must Reflect on Their Racial Identity

A final theme in the findings on diverse community being essential for true faith is the idea that church leaders must reflect on their personal racial identity and their perceptions of the opportunities and limits that result from it. All of the pastors did this in their interviews. Pastor Lee explained the way his own experiences with racism and exclusion in the Christian faith influenced how he thinks today. His Asian identity helps him to connect to other minorities, though it also restricts the way he can lead Whites in his congregations. These limits to his empathy for his White members can be

challenging. He explains, “It’s tiring. It’s frustrating. It’s hurtful... I’ve been told that I don’t care at all about our White Christian members... but there are times where I’m personally exhausted or confused or less willing to engage or frustrated by certain individuals or groups of individuals, so that’s, that’s often hard too.” Pastor Gonzalez reflects on the limits of his Latino identity in interacting with his White attendees expressing, “there’s almost like a sense of inadequacy, like how do I pastor you?”

Conversely, as White men, pastors Norton and Simon also feel limited by their Whiteness. Pastor Norton strives to exercise his privilege in a way that uplifts other voices, saying that his Whiteness can be an “asset” while interacting outside of his church. He also feels, however, that in some ways, his ability to lead in a “prophetic” way would be increased if he were not White. He sees his White identity as limiting what he can say and how it might be received. Pastor Simon also acknowledges his Whiteness as something that can be used for good by citing the impact of the “optics for People of Color to watch a White pastor stand on stage and have Black Lives Matter on the projector behind them.” He recognizes a bridge-building quality in himself that he thinks equips him to serve his congregation well. Wary of his Whiteness, he is aware that he needs to be corrected when he is “under-pastoring people of color.” He believes that his White male identity is best suited for pastoring White men. As a result, his elder board and other leaders help him be aware “of my own privilege and blindness... So, I always have to be careful of that, sort of that shadow side or weakness, so surrounding myself with that other who will remind me of otherwise. I’ve got to be willing to hear that too.” He needs diverse community to help him lead in a racially just way.

Section Four: Limitations

While the results may have implications for churches in Washington, DC, in other urban areas, and around the USA, some limitations include results that are not generalizable. A small sample size of four churches limits the significance of the results. As this study has focused on the pastor's understandings of racial reconciliation and justice within Washington, DC, it is important to note that the rest of the congregation may not share their views. This study does not measure the impact or effectiveness of the pastors or church leadership on the congregation's views of racial reconciliation and justice, although that could be considered as a topic of study for further research. Churches have a hierarchical leadership structure, so while gathering data from the head pastor is useful, all church leadership may not share his views or practices. In addition, the pastors interviewed may respond to interview questions how they wish to be seen rather than how they actually view a certain topic. Also, it is important to note that key lenses missing from the research are that of a Black pastor and of a Native American pastor.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore how multiracial churches in an urban context engage in issues of race, racial reconciliation and racial justice and to define what reconciliation means for those churches. Analysis of the interviews led to three main categories of findings: 1) religious racial reconciliation is an ongoing process, 2) the practice of justice in a specific place is an expression of true faith, and 3) diverse community is essential for true faith, as represented below. These are mutually dependent concepts, working in conjunction with each other and are best understood in relationship with one another.

These can be seen in the model below:

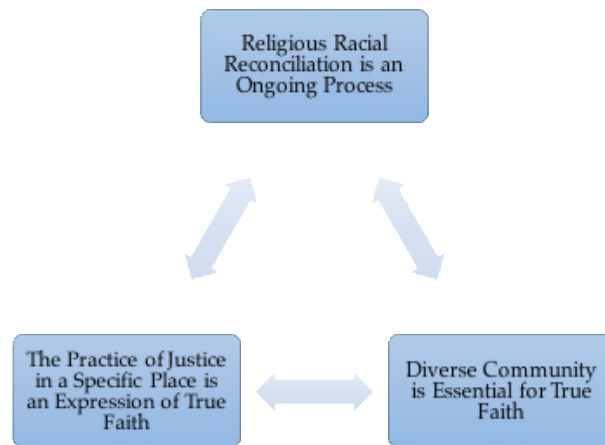


Figure 1 *Model of Reconciliation*

These three ideas work together to answer the *how* and *what* of reconciliation for these church communities. First, religious racial reconciliation is an ongoing process. For the pastors, this process of reconciliation is directly tied to the practice of justice in a specific place, like a city or neighborhood, as an expression of true faith. Second, expressions of justice in a community should be tied to a reconciliation process and are needed for true reconciliation to occur. Part of practicing justice is prioritizing diverse community within the church, which may also mean reflecting the diversity of the specific place where the church is located. Third, for true diverse community, the ongoing reconciliation process needs to be taking place, bridging and healing the identities within the diverse community. The reconciliation process also needs diverse community in order for it to take place; racial reconciliation cannot take place without more than one race. All three

of these findings work in a synergistic relationship with each other, creating a holistic and just understanding of reconciliation.

Section One: Religious, Racial Reconciliation is an Ongoing Process

The pastors framed the process of reconciliation with key presuppositions on reconciliation including that racism is a personal and institutional sin, that humans have dignity because they are made in the image of God, and that the cross of Jesus is a means for understanding reconciliation. I created a theory on reconciliation by synthesizing various components of reconciliation that the pastors highlighted. A six-part, cyclical process emerged, including awareness of hurt, lament, confession/apology/repentance, reparations, forgiveness and transformation. These features of reconciliation do not necessarily occur in this order, but they do work together and must all be present in order for true reconciliation to take place. This theory of reconciliation also involves the understanding that reconciliation is a constant, lifelong process that involves different roles for different parties. In addition, my analysis leads to recommendations for the locus of this process: that it is most effective in a small group setting and within the local church.

Racism as a Sin

The conceptualization of racism as a personal and institutional/corporate sin was a key feature in the logic of the pastors. This is notable because of the departure from the understanding of sin as purely individual, without societal implications, which Emerson and Smith found in their 2000 study. The “toolkit” Emerson and Smith describe as causing White evangelicals to undervalue the impact of social systems, to overemphasize

individual sin and to see individual relationships as the primary means of reconciling is not present in these pastors. The understanding of racial sin as both individual and corporate leads to both individual and corporate manifestations of the reconciliation process. There are spaces for individual reconciliations processes to take place, as evidenced in the story from Neighborhood Community Church. There are also examples of corporate/institutional reconciliation processes, like the lament service at Restoration Church or the financial and relational commitments to organizations like DC127.

A key question emerges from the pastor's views of racism, its origins, and its solution. According to the pastors, racism is a sin. If that is true, is spiritual transformation necessary to end racism? While this opens up opportunities for addressing this in a church setting, what are the implications beyond the church? Pastors may perceive their churches and their spiritual leadership as essential to bringing racial justice and reconciliation in a community. They may articulate, as many of the pastors in this study did, that the role of the church is precisely to facilitate racial justice and reconciliation, within the walls of the church and within the local community. Churches are limited, however, in what they can do. While in a city like Washington, DC, it is possible that those attending churches will have the power to influence social structures like laws and government. However, the primary purpose of a church is spiritual in nature. Perhaps what these churches offer, then, is a model for how Christian faith communities can address racism. If racism is addressed through the foundational beliefs of the faith community, then working to end it also becomes part of what it means to

practice that faith. This may lead to deeper and more holistic reconciliation for members of Christian faith communities and, in turn, impact the places where they live.

Human Dignity

A second presupposition in the logic of the pastors was the idea that humans have an inherent dignity because they are made in the image of God. Gopin (2000) explains that understanding humans as bearing God's image is directly tied to one of the primary objectives of conflict resolution: the humanization of the Other. This belief gives a holy dignity to all people, across race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and other lines of division. Even those we consider our enemies bear God's image. In a city like Washington, DC, there are many examples of those who might be considered enemies, even if not explicitly labeled as such. Those who hold opposing political beliefs, residents of segregated, disadvantaged, or gentrifying neighborhoods, immigrants from around the world, recipients of government housing and subsidies, people of varying sexual orientations, and members of historically opposed racial groups all converge in a city. They all may be considered the Other. What implications might the framework of humans having dignity, bearing the image of God, have for how a church approaches its members and the community in which it is situated? How might this influence reconciliation practices in and outside of the church? It offers a starting point for entering conflict that honors all parties involved, adding a holy dimension to the work of racial reconciliation and justice.

Theory of Reconciliation

Based on analysis of the interviews from the pastors, I synthesized a theory of reconciliation. The six-part process includes awareness of hurt, lament, confession/apology/repentance, reparations, forgiveness and transformation. While a reconciliation process does not necessarily follow these steps in order, all of these steps are needed to realize true reconciliation. For the pastors, this process is spiritual and God is an essential component. In addition, it is a process that is lifelong. It is a continuous cycle that responds to racial sin and injustice, both on the personal and systemic levels. This changes the attitude from which one engages in reconciliation. Rather than a step-by-step guide that achieves an end and finishes, true reconciliation will require continuous work from all affected parties. Though different parties may have different and unequal roles to play, reconciliation is not something that is accomplished. In a way, it is an attitude towards life.

If the first step is awareness of a hurt, then, especially in the church setting, it is vital that spaces and structures exist where this can happen. There needs to be room for identity groups that are affected by racial injustice to voice their experiences to the rest of the community. Pastors could use their power to speak to racial injustice in sermons and corporate prayers. Community members might lead cultural heritage celebrations, racial justice groups, dinners, discussions, dialogues, walking tours and more. Some of the pastors interviewed modeled inviting affected communities to lead the awareness process. This included public story sharing on the intersection of faith and racial/ethnic

identity, supporting marginalized communities in leading the service, and dedicating components of the Sunday service to knowledge sharing.

Awareness, in turn, leads to lament. Lament involves expressing sorrow, grief, and pain. It is closely tied with mourning, a key step in conflict resolution processes. Explains Gopin (2000), “a peacemaking mourning process must speak to the deepest identity needs of a group and also to the group’s sense of a threat to its future, its fear of annihilation” (p. 171). Furthermore, Volkan (1997) describes how trauma and loss can affect an individual’s, and a group’s, psyche. A phenomenon of time collapse can connect the emotions and feelings of past traumas to a present-day scenario, resulting in people that “may intellectually separate the past events from the present one, but emotionally the two events are merged” (p. 35).

Applying this to the history of racial oppression and injustice in the USA, and specifically in Washington, DC, it is possible to see how lament, over past sins and current injustice, might be of particular importance for African American community members and those of other racial identities that could be seen as causing or complicit in racial violence. As a result, it is vital that in a church setting, a space for lament exists. This space necessitates a willingness to hand over power to affected communities and a willingness to face discomfort, while at the same time balancing an unfair expectation that it is the victim’s role and responsibility to do so (Bergen, 2016). It involves listening with empathy, to whatever extent possible, despite the limitations of mourning events that may be out of an individual’s personal experience. In a Western context of feeling good

and avoiding pain, this lament can be difficult. However, it is essential in order to set the stage for true healing to take place.

Lament allows for a new future to be imagined because the past has been adequately reckoned with. As Pastor Simon described, after the lament service, his congregation still ate together. After the pain of lament and mourning, the community is still united, though changed. The results of proper lament and mourning include acts of confession, apology and repentance. Churches might consider institutionalizing public confessions of corporate sin, as done in Restoration Church's confession/profession part of their weekly service. This practice normalizes confession as part of the Christian experience and takes it beyond the private, individual level. It contributes to an environment where a reconciliation process can thrive. An apology is just a step in the reconciliation process, but it:

...imagines a way forward. An apology ought to acknowledge the moral violation, the harm caused, and the inability of confession to repair the damage, and thus place the community before the mercy of God and human victims in the fragile hope of a reconciled future. Yet, an apology may become pernicious in the grasping and claiming of this mercy, and in the presumption that awareness of the inadequacy of apology constitutes its adequacy. (Bergen, 2016, p. 135)

In his commentary on whether and how churches should apologize for historical wrongs, Bergen warns that an apology alone is not enough to heal the harm done. An apology must lead to repentance, and true repentance involves changing actions. He explains that true repentance acknowledges the wrong and owns the responsibility for the

harm caused. Apologies made in the public sphere encourage the rest of the reconciliation process and, when joined together with “ritual dimensions, such as physical monuments or anniversaries, may aid in accountability” (Bergen, 2016, p. 137). Churches should, as a result, consider institutionalizing rituals of confession and repentance as part of the church service.

An outflow from the acts of confession and repentance, reparations seek to repair harm. Reparations will look different for each act of sin, be it the sin of racism or otherwise, and may also have different implications on the individual and corporate/institutional level. As previously noted, reparations are common in international law as a means of ameliorating harm caused by acts such as the Holocaust or government torture (Brennan, 2017). Harvey applies this idea to the American church, suggesting that adequately

addressing brokenness requires addressing that harm and naming a perpetrator.

For racial justice to be pursued authentically as a community, the perpetrator or perpetrators must come forward and participate in concrete redress. Thus, reparations acknowledge White agency historically and demand ongoing White agency for the repair of racial brokenness. (Harvey, 2011, p. 64)

For Harvey, it is vital in the American context to have Whites admit their role in racial injustice and actively work to repair it.

In a multiracial church setting, the concept of reparations perhaps can be extended more broadly. If the church has been a perpetrator of racial harm, then the church should work to repair that harm. This is true for individual harm caused and also for harm caused

by the church as an institution. How can a church do this? Bergen (2016) warns that first, a church must be humbly aware that the actions it decides to take may, in actuality, be something that they will be actually later confessing. That is, while a church may be well-intentioned in its acts of repair, it is possible that in the future, these actions will contribute to further injustice and harm. He then goes on to explain his warning.

Canadian churches have responded to the legacy of residential schools with the establishment of funds to assist healing and to establish relationships, the development of educational resources, changes to church structures, political advocacy, and participation in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Beyond all of these necessary initiatives, churches must ask how they will discern the wrongs they are committing now and in the future. If part of the problem in the past was the failure to truly hear the voices of victims, then the development of a culture of attentiveness will be crucial. (p. 47)

Bergen encourages a mentality that humbly admits the possibility of future harm.

In the example above, Canadian churches engaged in reparations in various ways, from monetary funds to education and advocacy. What could institutional reparations look like in the American evangelical church? In this study, examples of acts of repair, or reparations, included mission/vision statements dedicated to being cross-cultural or working for justice, actively working against White cultural normativity, inclusion worship music from the Black church and Latin influences, the creation of community groups within the churches focused on cross-cultural relationships and/or racial justice, and prioritizing diverse leadership, dedicating sermons and teachings to reconciliation

and justice, community events like historical walking tours of neighborhoods, and large financial contributions to ministries that work for justice in the foster care system or with affordable housing. Churches should, in diverse community, think honestly and creatively about what other acts of repair might look like.

It is important that churches, in humility, listen and prioritize the voices of marginalized communities. Multiracial churches, in particular, have unique opportunity to model reparations and this reconciliation process because their communities are already diverse. Rather than needing to look for communities affected by racial injustice, it is likely that they are already in the church. As a result, it is particularly important that multiracial churches encourage and enact reparations. This should be modeled at the institutional level, from the church leadership, as maintaining diversity is a challenge (Barron, 2006; Dougherty & Huyser, 2008; Edwards, 2008; Marti & Emerson, 2014; Priest & Priest, 2007; Wadsworth, 2010). Framing reparations as flowing out of repentance will help the congregation understand that these acts are not in a superficial effort to appear diverse and inclusive, but instead as intentional acts of repair for past sins of the church.

The reconciliation theory described here can take place on an individual and an institutional level. It is applicable to all individuals and churches in the US context, though monoracial churches would find it more difficult to live out this process. Reconciliation, without the affected parties, cannot take place. Therefore, I would suggest that it is an imperative of multiracial churches in particular so that authentic, cross-cultural and cross-racial community can be formed and thrive. Without the living out of

this reconciliation theory, true healing cannot take place. Reconciliation is needed to right racial wrongs and for the creation of true community.

Section Two: The Practice of Justice in a Specific Place is an Expression of True

Faith

The second major finding of this study was that the practice of justice in a specific place is an expression of true faith; action and faith go hand in hand. Orthodoxy and orthopraxy cannot be disjointed. This is a different conceptualization than some might have. For example, it is possible that an individual could see their faith as something that is exercised in particular moments, like going to church on a Sunday morning. Their actions throughout the week may exist apart from their religious activities. A mobster who sees no conflict with extorting an individual during the week and then attending church on Sunday might be an extreme example of this. The results of this study suggest that according to the pastors, such a split would not be true faith. There is no separation; the practice of justice is an expression of true faith and should be lived out in the every day.

Furthermore, the specific location of a church shapes what acts of justice in the community look like. This comes from a belief that because people are made in the image of God and have inherent dignity, the places they live matter as well. All of the pastors interviewed for this study intentionally chose the neighborhoods where their churches are located and also intentionally chose to live in that neighborhood. Geography influenced how the churches started and greatly impacted how these pastors and their churches engaged in the local community. Just as faith and practice must be integrated, so must the

geography of the church be integrated into the faith practice. The city of Washington, DC, directly shaped how these churches engaged in racial justice and reconciliation. Acts of justice and reconciliation were not abstract; they were lived in the neighborhood. The history of the city and the continuing legacy of racial injustice necessarily impacts the church. It is important, as a result, that churches, wherever they might be located, consider the place where they are, the history of the geography and the impact of that place on the church members and the local community. Faith is manifested in a specific context; geography, just action, and faith must be integrated.

When thinking, then, of how to practice justice in a place, it is essential to recognize that there are just ways to intervene in a community. First, it is important to humbly ask a community what it needs and be open to joining what might already be taking place in a community before deciding how to live out faith in a particular place. In order to serve best, one must come with questions, not answers. Secondly, the disposition of service matters. Just intervention is not paternalistic. Rather, those living out faith in a place must have an attitude of mutuality and reciprocity; all humans have needs and all humans are able to support and help each other.

This is in stark contrast to models of intervention which presuppose that one party has the power and ability to provide and the other is weak and in need of help. These characteristics can actually be applied to us all. All humans have strengths; all humans have weaknesses. All humans have needs; all humans can provide. This both implies a humility and a worth as people interact with each other that is counter to common practice. Church leaders should reflect on their attitudes and encourage their members to

do the same. Are they acting justly, humbly asking a community what it needs or joining in already existing effort, rather than coming in as saviors? Do they have an attitude of mutuality and reciprocity when it comes to engaging in the local community? Attitudes towards racial reconciliation and justice matter and influence the way justice is expressed in a place, for good or for ill.

Section Three: Diverse Community is Essential for True Faith

Finally, true faith can only be understood in diverse community. This is because without the diverse interpretations, understandings, and contributions of the marginalized in society, one's faith will be misshapen and inaccurate. Knowledge from only one lens does not allow for a full understanding of the truth. This finding has compelling implications for knowledge in the church, but also for knowledge in the secular world. What “misshapen” beliefs exist in the world today because they have only been interpreted or taught through one lens? Particularly in the US context, to what extent have our society and institutions been maintaining White cultural dominance and erasing the experiences of People of Color and others who do not fit into the dominant culture? It is important to reflect on the lenses that shape beliefs and understandings of the world both on an individual and structural level. In contrast to much of the segregation prevalent in US society, multiracial churches have the opportunity to make use of the diversity within the congregation to reach a more complete understanding of the Christian faith and to take just action as a result.

Because of this, maintaining diversity in a multiracial church is of utmost importance. This involves intentional and sacrificial choices on church structure and

leadership. As a result, churches should be a place when people of all ethnicities and races feel welcome, without needing to minimize or silence key aspects of their identities. Part of maintaining a diverse community is providing spaces for community members to experience comfort, homogenous affinity groups, and discomfort, heterogeneous groups allowing for relationships across lines of difference while fostering growth and accountability.

It is also important that leaders of multiracial churches take the time to reflect on their own racial and ethnic identities, the implications that those identities have with regard to their leadership, the ways in which their identities can help and hurt their ministries, and how those in the congregation will view their racial and ethnic identity. Particularly for leaders of multiracial groups, their racial identities matter. Because the US is a racialized society, one in which social meaning is given to physical characteristics of individuals and groups, the racial identity of the pastors matters (Omi & Winant, 2015). It influences their perceptions of abilities and limits to their leadership, it impacts the way they structure and lead the church, and it affects the way the congregations, in their own racial identities, interact with the pastors. Therefore, careful reflection on racial identity will aid their effectiveness as pastors of multiracial congregations.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to explore how multiracial churches in an urban context engage on issues of racial reconciliation and justice. A second core research question asked how the pastors of multiracial churches understood and defined reconciliation. Given the troublesome legacy of racial injustice and oppression in the United States, and how those tensions continue to be lived out in cities, Washington, DC was an ideal setting for this research. Multiracial churches constitute a small percent of all churches in the US, in many ways representing the continued patterns of segregation today. Because of the unique makeup of multiracial churches and the practical opportunities for understanding and implementing reconciliation, this research focused only on multiracial churches in Washington, DC. The results included a process and theory of reconciliation, the understanding that faith can be expressed as justice in a place, and the framework that diverse community is essential for true faith.

This study suggests that pastors of multiracial churches in DC may have a more comprehensive understanding of reconciliation than in the past. Rather than an individualistic, personal relationship oriented process promoted by White evangelical leaders in the 90s, they conceptualize reconciliation as actually more holistic, situated in a specific geography and involving individuals and communities. Some of the pastors described a reconciliation process involving personal and corporate level sin leading to

personal and corporate level responses. While no one pastor outlined the exact theory that emerged from the data, each pastor contributed specific aspects. In fact, it is in the diversity of these pastors that a fuller understanding of reconciliation emerged. This illustrates the idea that for true knowledge, we need one another. Diverse racial and ethnic identities help shape our worldviews. In community with each other, across these lines of difference, is where the truth is found.

The model of these churches reckoning with their past history and their present situations, choosing to engage in reconciliation and justice, sometimes at great personal cost, is needed not only for other churches, but also for other institutions with similar legacies of racial injustice and continuing oppression. Christian churches and organizations may consider following a holistic reconciliation process as described in this research and implementing the recommendations for righting past racial harm. Perhaps others can glean from the lessons learned in this research of what reconciliation from a religious framework means, how it is manifested in communities, and the components that contribute to an environment in which it can take place. Certainly, not only churches have committed, and continue to commit, acts of racial injustice. Not only churches promote White cultural normativity and dominance. From a Christian perspective, the integral belief that racism is a sin provides the opportunity for acknowledging and confessing a wrong, providing space for grief expression, and working to repair the harm caused, all leading to transformed relationships. As a result, Christian communities, and perhaps other faith communities, would benefit from using this approach to reconciliation.

Another key lesson for conflict resolution overall is that diverse community, in and of itself, is not enough to achieve reconciliation. While contact across racial divides in a diverse church setting may have positive impact on individuals (Emerson et al., 2002; Yancey 1999), simply being multiracial does not mean that true racial reconciliation and justice have been achieved, that the community is actually integrated, that White normativity has been overcome, and that other racialized practices have been rectified and repaired (Barron, 2016; Cobb et al., 2015; Dougherty & Huyser, 2008; Edwards et al., 2013; Edwards, 2014; Garces-Foley & Jeung, 2013; Marti & Emerson, 2014; Pitt, 2016; Priest & Priest, 2007; Wadsworth, 2010; Wong, 2014). Diversity is a worthwhile goal and can foster positive social change, but there is more work to be done for racial wrongs to be made right. Pastors of thriving, multiracial churches make intentional decisions to foster processes of reconciliation and justice in their communities and to the places their churches are located, both on the personal and corporate levels. Much can be learned from the successful practices of these leaders and spaces. How have they promoted the reconciliation, justice, and healing still so necessary in contemporary American society? Further research should be done to evaluate these reconciliation processes and the impact of church leaders on their congregations and local communities. The lessons from this research can be applied not only to churches, but also to other individuals and institutions looking for a real racial reconciliation. Pursuing racial justice is arduous and often painful, necessitating sacrifice and humble reckoning with the evils of the past and present. It is a work that never ends, but it is a work that is worth pursuing.

APPENDIX A

Semi-Structured Interview Questions:

- 1) What is the story of this church? How did it start?
- 2) What within the church addresses racial reconciliation and justice?
 - a) Sermons
 - b) Prayer nights in response to events
 - c) Book clubs
 - d) Bible studies in small groups
 - e) African American history month
 - f) Cross cultural ministry
 - g) Reconciliation ministry
 - h) Dialogues/panels
- 3) What have been some of the most troubling national or local headlines/stories/events for you and your congregation?
 - a) How did you handle them as a church?
- 4) What is the vision for your church?
- 5) How do you see your church engaging on social issues? On issues in the city?
 - a) What verses influence your position on this?
- 6) Could you tell me a **story** of a way in which having a multi-racial/multi-ethnic congregation has been challenging?
- 7) Could you tell me a **story** of a way in which having a multi-racial/multi-ethnic congregation has been rewarding?
 - a) A story of a way your church doing racial reconciliation “right”?
 - b) Something you are proud of?
- 8) How would you describe your racial identity?
 - a) How does race influence your leadership of the church?
- 9) How does the Bible address racism?
 - a) Is racism a sin?

- b) How do you work on/address/unpack that sin with the congregation?
 - c) How would you like to (if don't currently)?
- 10) What does racial reconciliation mean?
- a) What scriptures do you use to support your view?
- 11) What vision do you have for the American church with regard to racial healing?
- 12) What is your denomination?
- 13) Would you consider yourself evangelical?
- 14) What is your age?
- 15) How would you describe the culture of the church?
- a) Church leadership
 - i) Demographics
 - b) How would you describe your regular attendees?
 - i) Demographics/Age/Socioeconomic/
 - ii) Size of church?
 - c) What motivates them to be a part of this church?
- 16) Anything else you'd like to add?

REFERENCES

- Allport, G. (1954). *The Nature of Prejudice*. Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Alumkal, A. W. (2004). American Evangelicalism in the Post Civil-Rights Era: A Racial Formation Theory Analysis. *Sociology of Religion*, 65(3), 195–213.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/3712249>
- Appleby, R. S. (2006). Conclusion: Reconciliation and Realism. In D. Philpott (Ed.), *The Politics of Past Evil: Religion, Reconciliation, and the Dilemmas of Transitional Justice*. (pp. 223-242). Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Barron, J. M. (2016). Managed Diversity: Race, Place, and an Urban Church. *Sociology of Religion: A Quarterly Review*, 77(1), 18–36. <https://doi.org/10.1093/socrel/srv074>
- Bergen, J. M. (2016). Whether, and how, a church ought to repent for a historical wrong. *Theology Today*, 73(2), 129–148. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0040573616643362>
- Bielo, J. S. (2011). City of man, city of God: The re-urbanization of American Evangelicals. *City and Society*, 23(SUPPL.1), 2–23. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-744X.2011.01053.x>
- Blau, F. D., Ferber, M. & Winkler, A. (1998). *The Economics of Women, Men, and Work* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

- Bonilla-Silva, E. (2006). *Racism Without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
- Brennan, F. (2017). *Race Rights Reparations: Institutional Racism and the Law*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Cobb, R. J. (2014). Still Divided by Faith? Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America, 1977-2010. In J. R. Hawkins and P. L. Sinitiere (Eds.), *Christians and the Color Line: Race and Religion After Divided by Faith*. (pp. 128-140). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Cobb, R. J., Perry, S. L., & Dougherty, K. D. (2015). United by Faith? Race/Ethnicity, Congregational Diversity, and Explanations of Racial Inequality. *Sociology of Religion*, 76(2), 177–198. <https://doi.org/10.1093/socrel/sru067>
- Delgado, R. & Stefancic, G. (2012). *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- DeYoung, C. P., Emerson, M. O., Yancey, G., & Kim, K. C. (2003) *United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Dougherty, K. D., & Huyser, K. R. (2008). Racially Diverse Congregations: Organizational Identity and the Accommodation of Differences. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 47(1), 23–43.
- Edwards, K. L. (2008). *The Elusive Dream: The Power of Race in Interracial Churches*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

- Edwards, K. L. (2014). Much Ado About Nothing? Rethinking the Efficacy of Multiracial Churches for Racial Reconciliation. In J. R. Hawkins and P. L. Sinitiere (Eds.), *Christians and the Color Line: Race and Religion After Divided by Faith*. (pp. 128-140). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Edwards, K. L., Christerson, B., & Emerson, M. O. (2013). Race, Religious Organizations, and Integration. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 39, 211–28.
<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-071312-145636>
- Emerson, M. O., & Smith, C. (2010). *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Emerson, M. O. & Kim, K. C. (2003), “Multiracial Congregations: An Analysis of Their Development and a Typology”. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 42: 217–227.
- Emerson, M. O., Kimbro, R. T., & Yancey, G. (2002). Contact Theory Extended: The Effects of Prior Racial Contact on Current Social Ties. *Social Science Quarterly*, 83(3), 745–761. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-6237.00112>
- Emerson, M. O., & Yancey, G. (2011). *Transcending Racial Barriers: Toward Mutual Obligations Approach*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Emerson, M. O., & Yancey, G. (2008). African Americans in Interracial Congregations an Analysis of Demographics , Social Networks , and Social Attitudes. *Review of Religious Research*, 49(3), 301–318. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20447500>
- Emerson, M. O., & Woo, R. (2006). *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Ehrenhaus, P., & Owen, A. S. (2004). Race Lynching and Christian Evangelicalism: Performances of Faith. *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 24(3-4), 276-301.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1046293042000312779>
- Gadamaer, H.G. (1975). *Truth and Method*. New York, NY: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, Peace, and Peace Research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), 167-91.
- Galtung, J. (1990). Cultural Violence. *Journal of Peace Research*, 27(3), 291-305.
- Garces-Foley, K. (2007). *Crossing the Ethnic Divide: The Multiethnic Church on a Mission*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Garces-Foley, K., & Jeung, R. (2013). Asian American Evangelicals in Multiracial Church Ministry. *Religions*, 4, 190-208. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel4020190>
- Gasaway, B. (2014). "Glimmers of Hope": Progressive Evangelicals and Racism, 1965-2000. In J. R. Hawkins and P. L. Sinitiere (Eds.), *Christians and the Color Line: Race and Religion After Divided by Faith*. (pp. 128-140). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Gopin, M. (2000). *Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World Religions, Violence, and Peacemaking*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Gopin, M. (2002) *Holy War, Holy Peace: How Religion Can Bring Peace to the Middle East*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

- Govier, T. (2009). A Dialectic of Acknowledgement. In J. R. Quinn (Ed.), *Reconciliations(s): Transitional Justice in Postconflict Societies*. (pp. 36-50). Kingston, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Harvey, J. (2011). Which Way to Justice? Reconciliation, Reparations, and the Problem of Whiteness in US Protestantism. *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, 31(1), 57–77. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23562642>
- Hunt, L. L., & Hunt, M. O. (2001). Race, region, and religious involvement: A comparative study of whites and African Americans. *Social Forces*, 80(2), 605–631. <https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.2001.0098>
- Jeung, R. (2005). *Faithful Generations: Race and new Asian American Churches*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Johnson, T. E. (2008). Ambassadors of Reconciliation? Observations and Lessons Learned from Evangelical Churches. *Liturgy*, 23(4), 19–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/04580630802205504>
- Lederach, J. P. (1997). *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace.
- Marti, G. (2009). Affinity, Identity, and Transcendence: The Experience of Religious Racial Integration in Diverse Congregations. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 48(1), 53–68. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5906.2009.01429.x>
- Marti, G., & Emerson, M. O. (2014). The Rise of the Diversity Expert: How American Evangelicals Simultaneously Accentuate and Ignore Race. In B. Steensland & P.

- Goff (Eds.), *The New Evangelical Social Engagement* (pp. 179–199). Oxford University Press.
- Mulder, M. T., & Smith, J. K. A. (2009). Subdivided By Faith? An Historical Account of Evangelicals and the City. *Christian Scholar's Review*, 38(4), 415–433. Retrieved from http://www.calvin.edu/admin/csr/weblog/files/Mulder_Smith_article.pdf
- Mullin, M. S. II. (2014). Neoevangelicalism and the Problem of Race in Postwar America. In J. R. Hawkins and P. L. Sinitiere (Eds.), *Christians and the Color Line: Race and Religion After Divided by Faith*. (pp. 128-140). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Myatt, W. (2016). God in Gotham: Tim Keller's Theology of the City. *Missiology: An International Review*, 44(2), 180–193. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0091829615617493>
- National Congregations Study. (2015). *Religious Congregations in 21st Century America*. Retrieved from http://www.soc.duke.edu/natcong/Docs/NCSIII_report_final.pdf
- Omi, M. & Winant, H. (2015). *Racial Formation in the United States*. 3rd ed. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Perry, S. L. (2012). Racial Habitus, Moral Conflict, and White Moral Hegemony Within Interracial Evangelical Organizations. *Qualitative Sociology*, 35(1), 89–108. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-011-9215-z>
- Pitt, R. N. (2010). Comment: Fear of a Black Pulpit ? Real Racial Transcendence Versus Cultural Assimilation in Multiracial Churches. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 49(2), 218–223. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40664696>

- Priest, K. B., & Priest, R. J. (2007). Divergent Worship Practices in the Sunday Morning Hour: Analysis of an “Interracial” Church Merger Attempt. In R. J. Priest & A. Nieves (Eds.), *This Side of Heaven: Race, Ethnicity, and Christian Faith* (pp. 275–291). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Robertson, C. (2018, March 9). A Quiet Exodus: Why Black Worshipers are Leaving White Evangelical Churches. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/09/us/blacks-evangelical-churches.html>
- Shelton, J. E. & Emerson, M.O. (2012). *Black and Whites in Christian America*. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Smith, C., Emerson, M., Gallagher, S., Kennedy, P., and Sikkink, D. (1998). *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Stenger, M. A. (1995). Gadamer’s Hermeneutics as a Model for Cross-Cultural Understanding and Truth in Religion. In T. Dean (Ed.), *Religious Pluralism and Truth: Essays on Cross-Cultural Philosophy of Religion*. New York, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Tranby, E., & Hartmann, D. (2008). Critical Whiteness Theories and the Evangelical “Race Problem”: Extending Emerson and Smith’s Divided by Faith. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 47(3), 341–359. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5906.2008.00414.x>
- Volkan, V. (1997). *Bloodlines: from Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism*. Boulder, CO: West View Press.

- Wadsworth, N. (2010). Bridging Racial Change: Political Orientations in the United States Evangelical Multiracial Church Movement. *Politics and Religion*, 3(3), 439–468. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048310000131>
- Wong, E. R. (2014). Knotted Together: Identity and Community in a Multiracial Church. In J. R. Hawkins and P. L. Sinitiere (Eds.), *Christians and the Color Line: Race and Religion After Divided by Faith*. (pp. 128-140). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Yancey, G. (1999). An Examination of the Effects of Residential and Church Integration on Racial Attitudes of Whites. *Sociological Perspectives*, 42(2), 279–304. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1389630>

BIOGRAPHY

Anna Laura Grant graduated from Oakton High School in Vienna, Virginia in 2006. She received her Bachelor of Arts from James Madison University in 2010. She then earned a Master of Bilingual and Multicultural Education from the University of Alcalá, Spain, in 2011 and a Master of Secondary Education from Valencia International University, Spain, in 2013. Shifting her academic focus, she earned a Master of Science of Conflict Analysis and Resolution from George Mason University in 2018. She has been an educator with young people and adults for 8 years. In addition, she has been working facilitating dialogue and reconciliation around race and equity for schools and churches in Washington, DC for 4 years.