



*ENTRE NOS:*  
COVENANT EPISTEMOLOGY AND A THEOLOGY OF IMMANUEL  
FOR RACIAL HEALING AMONG US

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
The Faculty of  
Fresno Pacific Biblical Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts in Theology

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by  
Noemi Vega Quiñones  
May 2017

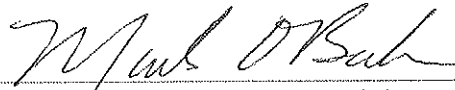


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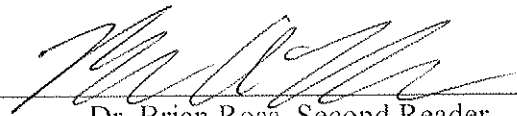
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Accepted by the Faculty of the Fresno Pacific University Biblical Seminary in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts in Theology




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Abstract of:

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Racial violence exists in many forms, from the overt hatred spewed by extremists to the covert prejudice unintentionally harbored by people in a racialized society. While some people clearly see evidence of the racial impact on bodies, others do not. Christian ministries have attempted to bring racial healing to the Church, but recent events reveal that the interpersonal and systemic problems created by race are still misunderstood between communities of color and white communities. Citing evidence from recent data, this thesis shows that one problem of race is a problem of epistemology. In the United States, race flourished within the nation's narrative of expansion and was concomitantly supported by a theological vision of creation *ex nihilo*. Consequently, an epistemology that was severed from the land and from one another was formed and a racial ideal was placed as the source of truth and knowing.

How is the gap between white evangelicals and evangelicals of color bridged for the sake of racial healing *entre nosotros* (among us as the covenanting community of the Lord)? Christians have the duty to become racial healing agents because of our call to make disciples of all nations. The thesis identifies four components necessary for racial healing in the Church: an honest acknowledgment of the sociotheological formation of race, an epistemology that bridges the gap in interpretation between communities of color and white communities, a theology of God with us, and minoritized critical perspectives of this theology to encourage the Church in racial healing. *This thesis makes the case that incorporating four key concepts in any racial healing model will better facilitate racial healing conversations among Christians: 1) acknowledging the sociotheological roots of racial pain entre nosotros, 2) incorporating a covenant epistemology, and 3) embodying 4) a theology of Immanuel, God Entre Nos.*



The thesis uses an interdisciplinary approach to racial healing. First, a critical historical analysis is provided of both the sociological and theological formation in the West. Second, a critical philosophical analysis is given to highlight that one problem of race is an epistemological one and necessitates a covenant epistemology. Third, a biblical study of Immanuel in Isaiah and Matthew, including theophanic sketches of the Holy Spirit in Matthew, is conducted to form a theology of God with us. Fourth, a minoritized account of Immanuel through an *evangélica* perspective is provided. Finally, each of these themes (sociotheological historical awareness, a covenant epistemology, a theology of Immanuel, and a perspective of Immanuel) is interfaced with one another to provide ideas for racial healing *entre nosotros* (among us).

If evangelical Christians are to take seriously the words of Matthew 28:16-20, John 13:34, and 1 John 4:7-21, then we are to take seriously the invitation to love one another. Covenant epistemology shows that a noticing regard for the Real is necessary for the knowing process. The noticing regard is the look of awe and wonder, of care and concern, as the Real chooses to reveal itself. This thesis shows that Immanuel is our noticing regard. That when racial violence occurs, Immanuel looks with a noticing regard to the victims, honoring their Real, mourning the injustice done to their humanity, and inspiring followers of Jesus to work toward racial justice. Immanuel has a noticing regard for the perpetrator, exposing the perpetrator's hatred with love and truth, and inviting the perpetrator into racial healing. Immanuel as noticing regard *Entre Nos* teaches, instructs, admonishes, loves, and guides us in covenant relationship. Ultimately, it is this noticing regard for one another and for Immanuel that will bridge our divides, replace our racial optics, and heal our lands and our peoples.

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## Introduction: The Hope of Racial Healing Among Us

### *A Guide to the Thesis*

*Key words and phrases are highlighted in bold upon first appearance and defined in the Glossary on page 126. Please read the thesis as an unfolding and intermingling network of concepts aiming to form a synthetic defense for an embodied **covenant epistemology** and theology of Immanuel for racial healing.*

On Sunday, February 26, 2012, an unarmed black teenager, Trayvon Martin, was shot and killed in a Florida suburb by a neighborhood watch volunteer named George Zimmerman. The cause of Martin's death was attributed to his suspicious attire and behavior. Trayvon Martin was wearing a black hoodie while walking in a white suburb. Mr. Zimmerman deemed him suspicious.<sup>1</sup> Two years prior to Martin's death, Michelle Alexander's book *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* was published. This book significantly contributed to confronting the **post-racial** myth.<sup>2</sup> This myth concluded that the election of the first African-American president was proof that the United States was beyond **racism**. However, correlation does not imply causation, the election of the first African American president did not come from a post-racial society. For those who have continued to experience discrimination based on their skin color, a post-racial society has never been a U.S. reality. Trayvon Martin's death sparked a national conversation on **race** that escalated after Zimmerman's acquittal on July 13, 2013. The so-called post-racial society has been exposed to all as a myth and the differing perceptions on race that exist in the U.S. can no longer be ignored.

When asked about Martin's death, President Obama responded, "If I had a son, he'd look like Trayvon."<sup>3</sup> These words gave attention to the personal and emotive nature

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<sup>1</sup> Lizette Alvarez and Cara Buckley, "Zimmerman Is Acquitted in Killing of Trayvon Martin," *New York Times*, July 14, 2013, accessed September 4, 2016, <https://nyti.ms/2jZyLn8>.

<sup>2</sup> Words in bold are defined in the Appendix A Glossary beginning on page 126.

<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Capehart, "From Trayvon Martin to 'black lives matter,'" *Washington Post*, February 27, 2015, accessed September 4, 2016, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-partisan/wp/2015/02/27/from-trayvon-martin-to-black-lives-matter/?utm\\_term=.b48861e039ea](https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-partisan/wp/2015/02/27/from-trayvon-martin-to-black-lives-matter/?utm_term=.b48861e039ea).

of Mr. Martin's death felt by the African American community. In the same interview, Obama's observation of different vantage points regarding the incident offered a further insight into the **racial problem**: "It's important to recognize that the African American community is looking at this issue through a set of experiences and a history that doesn't go away...that ends up having an impact in terms of how people interpret the case."<sup>4</sup> President Obama was explaining that the African American community saw Martin's death as a consequence of his race, and the pain experienced within the community as a result of such an interpretation. He had to interpret this situation for those in the U.S. who did not find a racial undertone in Martin's death.

The **problem of race** in the U.S. has continued to surface as national awareness of racial profiling has grown. More deaths of unarmed black men (e.g. Michael Brown and Eric Garner) shot by police have been reported.<sup>5</sup> The problem was accentuated with Tamir Rice's death, whose toy gun was mistaken for a real one.<sup>6</sup> In Rice's case, the problem of interpretation warped by a **racial gaze** was apparent. Police saw a reasonable threat to their own safety from a five-foot-seven African American male weighing 195 pounds. Rice's friends and family knew him as a "good-natured kid," who was a bit shy and "persistently bullied by some of his peers for wearing the same stained and dirty clothes day after day."<sup>7</sup> Officers Loehmann and Garmback were acquitted of any charges because jurors found enough evidence to believe that Rice was "capable of inflicting death or serious physical injury."<sup>8</sup> The prosecutor, Mr. McGinty, labeled the case a

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Daniel Funke and Tina Susman, "From Ferguson to Baton Rouge: Deaths of Black Men and Women at the Hands of Police," *Los Angeles Times*, July 12, 2016, accessed April 5, 2017, <http://fw.to/cs3KYbT>.

<sup>6</sup> Patricia Williams, "Reasoning Away Murder," *Nation*, November 2, 2015, 10.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 11.

tragedy of “mistakes and miscommunications,” referencing the 911 dispatcher’s failure to inform the officers of the caller’s description.<sup>9</sup> The person who called 911 described Rice as a juvenile whose gun was “probably fake.”<sup>10</sup> Not knowing this description, the officers shot and killed twelve-year-old Rice, without legal consequences, because of the “perceived capability” of his ability to inflict harm on the officers. Columbia Law professor Patricia Williams commented, “That perceived capability underwrites our repetitive American tragedy. The black superpredator.”<sup>11</sup>

### ***The Problem of Race and How it is Interpreted in the U.S.***

One problem of race in the U.S. is its vast and deeply rooted history. Another difficulty is evidenced by the starkly different ways that whites and people of color interpret race’s impact across peoples, systems, and structures. While many whites do not interpret cases such as Rice and Martin as being racially influenced, most people of color do so, based on their everyday experience of discrimination.

Race is a way of defining people, a “social construction” and a “master category that has profoundly shaped, and continues to shape, the history, polity, economic structure, and culture of the U.S.”<sup>12</sup> Race is also an overt and covert social imaginary that enables whites to have power over people of color.<sup>13</sup> While whites may not see race and its residual effects as problematic, people of color, impacted daily by race, cannot help but be aware of it even in its more enigmatic and systemic forms.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Timothy Williams and Mitch Smith, “Cleveland Officer Will Not Face Charges in Tamir Rice Shooting Death,” *New York Times*, December 28, 2015, <https://nyti.ms/2k8iuAn>.

<sup>11</sup> Williams, “Reasoning Away Murder,” 11.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the U.S.*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge, 2015), 106. Racial formation is developed more fully in Chapter One of this thesis.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>14</sup> The Census Bureau is one example of systematized racialization, with fixed racial categories.

Race, **racialization**, systematization, and structuralization along racial lines are epistemologically nuanced. These nuances can be seen in the various ways that people are socially formed to know about the world and one another through the interpretive lens of race. A **white epistemology** allows white and white-appearing individuals to be unaware of the racial impact in the nation. In contrast, the **epistemology of people of color** in the U.S. is highly impacted by their own and their ancestors' experience with racism. People of color see the residual effects of racism impacting current incarceration rates, income and wealth attainment, and health and education inequality. Whites, however, (and more strikingly white **evangelicals**) do not clearly see such effects. Where people of color cry out "black lives matter," some whites counter with "all lives matter." What is behind this interpretive discord? Behind this inability to understand the other is an obscured vision tainted by a **sociotheological** history of **racial formation**. Race thus divides even those, both white and people of color, who spiritually align themselves as evangelicals. Data of current views on race and religion support this observation.

The 2015 American Values Survey by the Public Religion Research Institute revealed differences between whites and people of color regarding their perception of racial problems in the U.S. Jones et al. found that fifty percent of white Americans believe "police officers generally treat blacks and other minorities the same as whites," but eighty-four percent of black Americans and seventy-three percent of Hispanic Americans disagreed.<sup>15</sup> A similar difference in viewpoints is found when asked if the recent police killings of black men were related to patterns of discrimination or isolated

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<sup>15</sup> Robert P. Jones, Daniel Cox, Betsy Cooper, and Rachel Lienesch, "Anxiety, Nostalgia, and Mistrust: Findings from the 2015 American Values Survey," *Public Religion Research Institute*, November 17, 2015, <http://www.prii.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/PRRI-AVS-2015-1.pdf>, 44. The survey uses Hispanic to describe anyone in the U.S. with a Spanish background. The thesis prefers the use of Latino/as for its geographic indicator of peoples from Latin America, regardless of their connection to Spanish.



events. Fifty-three percent of respondents interpreted the recent deaths of black men at the hands of police as “isolated incidents rather than part of a broader pattern of how police treat African Americans.” Broken down by racial group, sixty-five percent of whites, forty-one percent of Hispanic Americans, and fifteen percent of blacks attribute these deaths as isolated incidents. Significantly, eighty-one percent of black Americans attributed the recent police shootings of black men as part of a broader pattern.<sup>16</sup> The data reveal the different interpretations of racial injustice. This difference points to one of the problems of race: the lack of a unified interpretation of what constitutes the problem of race. The thesis posits that this lack of a unified interpretation results in the lack of a unified evangelical response to racial injustice in the U.S.

The division in racial interpretation is not only striking between people of color and whites, but also between white Christians and other religious groups. “White Christians are more likely than other religious groups to say that recent killings of African American men by police aren’t connected.”<sup>17</sup> White Christians do not appear to see systemic racism: seventy-two percent of white evangelicals interpreted these events as isolated incidents compared to eighty-two percent of black evangelicals who believed these events represented a broader pattern.<sup>18</sup> There is a sharp distinction between black and white Americans, especially among Christians, regarding racial perception.

### ***Questions Toward an Answer to the Interpretation Gap***

Many questions arise in response to these data. First, which group is correct? Are white evangelicals interpreting the reality in the U.S. more accurately than black evangelicals, or is it vice versa? Second, what are the views of other people of color (e.g.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

Asian Americans, Native Americans, Middle Eastern, or Latino/a)? Their views are missing from this data and from national media coverage, but they also feel the impact of racial discrimination. Third, is the problem of race only one of interpretation, or are there multiple factors creating discord? Fourth, since part of the race problem is an interpretation gap that has led to an impasse in **racial healing** conversations, how can this gap be closed to bring racial healing among peoples? This fourth question is the main question that this thesis hopes to answer.

That first question concerning the accuracy of whites and people of color in interpreting society's problems as racial or not assumes that only one group can be correct. This assumption is problematic because both groups, per the data, believe that their interpretation of race in the U.S. is accurate.<sup>19</sup> Assuming that both groups will continue to believe they are correct, how can these disparate viewpoints be reconciled?<sup>20</sup>

The second question arising from the data, which concerns the other people groups that feel the impact of racism, addresses the polarization created by the current discourse. The racial problem is framed as a black/white issue and undermines the conditions of other people of color. What if Native American, Middle Eastern, Asian American, and Latino/a voices were given spaces to contribute to the answer of racial healing? What would it take for these viewpoints to be reflected in education, theology,

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<sup>19</sup> Even when data show disparities, the interpretive gap exists. Objectively, studies show that people of color face disproportionate mass incarceration rates and education and income disparities resulting from segregated neighborhoods. For a recent study on segregation and its economic impact on all bodies, read Marisa Novara, Alden Loury, and Amy Khare, "The Cost of Segregation: Lost Income, Lost Lives, Lost Potential," *Chicago Metropolitan Planning Council*, no. 1 (2017): [http://www.metroplanning.org/costofsegregation/default.aspx?utm\\_source=%2fcostofsegregation&utm\\_medium=web&utm\\_campaign=redirect#page](http://www.metroplanning.org/costofsegregation/default.aspx?utm_source=%2fcostofsegregation&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=redirect#page).

<sup>20</sup> Viewpoint is subjective, but important. Each group received the same information, but *interpreted* the data through a set of cultural lenses, what Emerson and Smith call a cultural toolbox. For more on this read Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 76-91.

and public discourse? At the same time, how can the cacophony of voices be turned into a harmony of reconciliation among people groups? The question remains, how can these disparate viewpoints be reconciled?

The third question arising from the data asks if the problem of race is more than just an interpretive problem. What other factors contribute to the racial disparity in the U.S., factors that make any reconciliation of differing interpretations appear to be impossible? This question acknowledges the complex and intermingled quandary that has been generated by racism. It addresses the layers and sub-layers that are effected by having race as a master category, along with the systems and structures that are both seen (e.g. hard data such as educational and income inequality rates) and unseen (the interpretative differences or epistemological frameworks). This is an important question to answer, but this thesis posits that this third question cannot be fully answered until the question of reconciling disparate viewpoints is addressed. An example from education in the U.S. will clarify this position.

The problem of education disparities generated by segregated neighborhoods highlights the need to address the gap of interpretation first.<sup>21</sup> Segregated neighborhoods result in under-resourced neighborhoods that end up having higher concentrations of dropouts. Black and Latino/a students have consistently and significantly higher dropout rates than whites.<sup>22</sup> Latino/as have significantly higher dropout rates than any other racial category studied from 1990 to 2014. In 2002, Latina students in particular had the highest

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<sup>21</sup> Emily Gersema, "Neighborhood Segregation is Driven by Income Inequality, Choice of School Districts," *USC News*, May 10, 2016, accessed April 5, 2017, <https://news.usc.edu/99804/neighborhood-segregation-is-driven-by-income-inequality-and-choice-of-school-districts-study-finds/>.

<sup>22</sup> Grace Kena et al. "The Condition of Education 2016," *U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics*, May 2016, accessed October 17, 2016, <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>.

dropout rate of all racial groups.<sup>23</sup> The researchers note a variety of factors contributing to this: “family responsibilities, poverty, lack of participation in preschool, attendance at poor quality elementary and high schools, placement into lower-track classes, poor self-image, limited neighborhood resources,” and lack of role models.<sup>24</sup> Note how these factors are mostly material realities. The problems of race are systemically evident, but the question remains as to the *source* of these factors. How does poverty and attending an under-resourced school contribute to a poor self-image and impact one’s interpretive outlook?

A link between perception (interpretation of reality) and outcomes resulting from those perceptions has been identified in social work studies. For example, researchers found that contextual factors such as teacher and parent support positively impacted students’ self-perception and school engagement. The more engaged a student is in school, the more emergent and positive the academic and behavioral patterns.<sup>25</sup> The study suggests that “students’ perception of control and identification with school” reinforces academic participation, decreasing their likelihood of dropping out.<sup>26</sup> If students *interpreted* their academic experience as positive, they would be *more likely to participate* in such activities and thus more likely to stay in school. However, if they perceived their agency as limited due to economic, personal, or social barriers, different outcomes would ensue. Returning to race, the material impact of racism is connected to the invisible, but palpable force of perception. Thus, the question of interpretation

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<sup>23</sup> Ruth Zambrana and Irene Zoppi, “Latina Students: Translating Cultural Wealth into Social Capital to Improve Academic Success,” *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work* 11, no. 1 (February 2002): 39.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>25</sup> Anna-Mária Fall and Greg Roberts, “High School Dropouts: Interactions Between Social Context, Self-Perceptions, School Engagement, and Student Dropout,” *Journal of Adolescence* 35, no. 4 (August 2012): 9.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

becomes a meta-question that emerges as a means of understanding how to address the gap between whites and a people of color.

The fourth question arising from the data is the key question to answer. Since part of the race problem in the U.S. is an interpretation gap that has led to an impasse in racial healing, how can this gap be closed so that healing among and within the races will occur? If models for racial healing do not address the issue of disparate interpretations people will continue to see the problem of race differently, unable to fully understand each other. One group will ask for **racial reconciliation** while another will ask for **racial justice**. Both have the same goal (racial healing), but very disparate solutions.

Given the stark difference of interpretation between white evangelicals and all other religious groups surveyed, what is the unique challenge for evangelicals seeking racial healing? The answer to this question necessitates a critical historical analysis of the confluence between Christian theology and Western epistemologies that limit knowing to observable facts on one hand and on the other hand relegate knowing to a limited social construct that defies reality and rejects definition. Instead of prophetic voices speaking against the sin of racism (a sin of oppression against one's neighbor), white evangelicals, as evidenced by the data described previously, remain unable to actually see the racial patterns that their brothers and sisters of color so readily acknowledge. Racism relegates evangelicals of color to contextualized ministries and theologies that limit their agency against this sin. Racial healing needs to involve everyone, especially those professing to be Christian.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Sociologist George Yancey uses a mutual responsibility model. Current discourse on race tends to put the sole responsibility of correction on whites, but this is neither helpful nor corrective for all. Aside from creating a defensive response within whites, this approach limits the agency and voice of people of

### *A Proposed Christian Response Toward Racial Healing*

Given the Christian invitation to be an apostle of the message of reconciliation, it is imperative that evangelical leaders create and embody models of engaging the racial pain *entre nosotros* that will lead toward the healing of the nations.<sup>28</sup> *Entre Nosotros* exemplifies the communal, interpersonal, and familial bond among Christians across racial, ethnic, cultured, gendered, and socioeconomic divides. *Entre nosotros* is Spanish for among us and is used throughout the thesis to refer to Christians in the U.S., particularly evangelicals. Theologically, *Entre Nos* serves as a reminder of Jesus who once lived among us and the Spirit, who continues to minister among us.<sup>29</sup> Immanuel (God with us) is the starting point for a theology of *Entre Nos* for racial healing.

The following is a proposed framework for both whites and people of color that takes an honest, reflective look at the theological and racial formation of the U.S. The framework addresses the hegemony of racial formation, its epistemological limitations, and provides an embodied *evangélica* perspective of racial healing *entre nosotros*.

The proposed framework for racial healing is illustrated through the metaphor of salsa. Making salsa helps imagine the collaborative, embodied, and spicy work of racial healing. Spice both induces pleasure and evokes pain, similar to the pleasure and pain involved in conversations around race. Salsa comes in various flavors (*sabores*), colors (dependent on the *chile* pepper), combinations (many ingredients may be added), and spice levels. The multiple combinations and results represent the plurality of voices needed for racial healing among the nations. The basic ingredients for salsa are chopped

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color. The best solution is where all contribute toward healing. George Yancey, *Beyond Racial Gridlock: Embracing Mutual Responsibility*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 75-124.

<sup>28</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:20; Revelations 7:9-10.

<sup>29</sup> John 1:14. Chapter four explores an *evangélica* theology of Immanuel as the Spirit among us.

onion, diced tomatoes, lime juice, and minced jalapeño pepper.<sup>30</sup> Anyone can make a delightful salsa with these basic ingredients. Racial healing is not as easy as making salsa, but it is just as delightful when done well.

*This thesis makes the case that incorporating four key concepts in any racial healing model will better facilitate racial healing conversations among Christians: 1) acknowledging the sociotheological roots of racial pain entre nosotros, 2) incorporating a covenant epistemology, and 3) embodying 4) a theology of Immanuel, God Entre Nos.*

First, acknowledging the roots of the racial pain among us must begin the process of healing. Too often, workshops on reconciliation skip over the necessary step of acknowledging the damage of the past and the continued collective trauma that is experienced by all in a racialized society, but primarily by people of color.<sup>31</sup> Forgiveness is a challenge for the victim, but it is significant for healing. “Though forgiveness releases the offender from debt, it does so not by treating the offense as if it were not there; forgiveness is forgiveness only because it keeps affirming justice by transcending it.”<sup>32</sup> Telling the truth of the past facilitates forgiveness *entre nosotros*.

Second, a corrected epistemology is necessary for constructing a new way of imagining life *entre nosotros*. Third, embodied faith is required for healing. Abstract theologies that do not empower believers to live out their faith in practical actions fall short of reconciliation. Embodiment involves participating, sensing, being, “hearing the word, feeling the water of baptism, and tasting the supper.”<sup>33</sup> Fourth, just as the type of

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<sup>30</sup> My favorite salsa is my mom’s *Pico de Gallo*.

<sup>31</sup> I often hear from people of color about their pain and fatigue when engaging in racial reconciliation workshops that do not first address and lament the historical pain of race.

<sup>32</sup> Miroslav Volf, “The Trinity is Our Social Program: The Doctrine of the Trinity and the Shape of Social Engagement,” *Modern Theology* 14 (1998), 414.

<sup>33</sup> Beth Felker Jones, “Body,” *Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics*, Ed. Joel B. Green, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 108.

jalapeño pepper produces a certain *sabor*, the thesis asserts that various perspectives on Immanuel for racial healing are possible and needed. The thesis presents an *evangélica* spice for racial healing and invites further ingredients from various cultural backgrounds among the body of believers to contribute to the salsa.<sup>34</sup>

### *Outline of Chapters*

Chapter one introduces the first ingredient: acknowledging the racial pain among us. It surveys the history of racial formation, its impact on theology and epistemology, and the current racial landscape. Chapter two presents a **covenant epistemology** for racial healing. Chapter three builds a theology of Immanuel from Isaiah and Matthew and explores its contribution to racial healing. Chapter four presents the *evangélica* perspective of Immanuel called *Entre Nos*. Chapter five uses the metaphor of mixing salsa to explore racially healing *entre nosotros*.

The task of racial healing is a monumental one involving powers and principalities that are beyond any one person's control. Even so, every individual and people group that chooses to follow Jesus has committed to a family rooted in the reconciling work of the cross, the only power that can overcome our racial sin. Jesus' last words to his disciples invite all into this possible reality: "Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."<sup>35</sup> This thesis aims to be a work of love for Immanuel and the fellowship of believers, helping us learn how to love one another more fully.

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<sup>34</sup> While racialization needs to be dismantled, **ethnicity** and **culture** are gifts people may use to bless one another and bring glory to God. This will be explained throughout the thesis.

<sup>35</sup> John 13:34-35. All scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version, © 1989, the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.



**Chapter One Ingredient One:**  
**The History of Racial Formation Among Us**

The first ingredient in the racial healing salsa is an honest account of how and why race was created and its perennial consequences among us. The U.S. has never adequately acknowledged its role in the Native American genocide<sup>36</sup> nor its crimes against humanity in the era of slavery.<sup>37</sup> The introduction stated a preference for the term *racial healing* rather than racial reconciliation, since the latter implies there was relationship prior to the offense thus necessitating a re-conciliatory event. However, this lack of adequate acknowledgement of the *pain* of the past is like a hemorrhaging wound for people of color. The abolition of slavery and civil rights movements have helped treat the wound, but were like compression bandages that did not fully cover the wound nor locate its inception. A hemorrhaging wound will not heal if it is deeper and wider than the compression bandages being used. Acknowledging and continually uncovering the **sociotheological** roots of the racial pain *entre nosotros* locates the point of impact and accounts for the evolution of that wound.

Locating the emergence and form of race is necessary for racial healing. It is important to remember that race was a socially constructed idea that emerged from a particular time in history for particular reasons. Ideas of ethnic (geo-political) differences

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<sup>36</sup> The U.S. Congress apologized to Native peoples in the 67-page Defense Appropriations Act of 2010 on p. 45, but it was not publicly recognized. This did not honor the Native peoples because it was buried in a document indirectly addressing the issue. See Robert Longley, “Did You Know the US Apologized to Native Americans?” *Thought Co.*, July 7, 2016, accessed April 2, 2017. [www.thoughtco.com/the-us-apologized-to-native-americans-3974561](http://www.thoughtco.com/the-us-apologized-to-native-americans-3974561).

<sup>37</sup> Joy Degruy Leary, *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America’s Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing* (Milwaukee: Uptone Press, 2005), 76. Degruy Leary writes about the United Nations World Conference Against Racism in 2001. The delegates named U.S. chattel slavery a “crime against humanity” (76). The U.S. representatives walked out of the proceedings and refused to acknowledge the indictment. Several incidents that would today count as criminal acts are bondage, rape, the Black Codes and Exclusionary Acts of 1865, peonage of sharecropping (1866-1955), the Convict Lease System in 1846, Jim Crow (1896-1954), lynching, the Tuskegee Syphilis Study of 300 African American infected men left untreated, and many others (83-98).

were evident prior to the colonizing of the Americas, but these notions of superiority were not based on a person's skin color or physical features; they were based on tribal or familial affiliations. Race emerged in the midst of a colonial enterprise that sought justification for its subjugation of peoples. The racial scale became the most profitable method for conquest. Grouping people according to phenotype and naming such people inferior to a white ideal justified enslavement and violence. Racialization was reinforced by theological arguments. Racial healing necessitates learning and acknowledging this comingling of race and theology. An honest address of the sociotheological racial development first takes ownership of past wrongs, second reveals and names the hegemonic narrative of **whiteness**, and third invites both whites and people of color to partner together toward healing.

Taking ownership of the crimes committed against black bodies was a significant part of South Africa's healing process during the Truth and Reconciliation Hearings.<sup>38</sup> The U.S. has yet to adequately account for the Native American genocide. Mark Charles notes that in 1491, an estimated 100 million Native Americans lived in North and South America and 20 million lived in what is now the U.S.<sup>39</sup> By 1892, about 232,000 Native Americans remained, "wiped out by immigrants who came into this land with a doctrine of manifest destiny."<sup>40</sup> Native Americans face high rates of substance abuse, depression, and poverty in their reservations amidst a long-awaited apology from the U.S. African American Ph.D. Joy Degruy Leary posits that healing is connected to telling the truth

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<sup>38</sup> Degruy Leary, *Post Traumatic*, 20.

<sup>39</sup> Mark Charles, "Native American Perspective on Immigration" (Lecture, Survey of Immigration Perspectives, InterVarsity Borderlands Urban Program, San Diego, CA, July, 2012).

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

about America's chattel slavery.<sup>41</sup> A lack of acknowledgement of these truths has prevented healing and lead to what Degruy Leary calls Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome, where "three hundred and eighty-five years of physical, psychological and spiritual torture have left their mark."<sup>42</sup> A racial healing model that does not acknowledge and account for the racialization of the past and its residual effects in the present will bypass actual healing. Such models ignore the generations of pain and trauma that racial hierarchies have created. Unfamiliarity with this historical pain will develop models that gloss over the root of the wound and too quickly bandage it for the sake of reconciliation.

Second, uncovering the sociotheological history of racial formation promotes racial healing because it reveals how race infiltrated theology through the harmful narrative of whiteness. Racial formation began with a forceful social imagination that saw the world through a white human ideal. This ideal would be used to re-create and re-interpret human bodies and their worth along a racial scale for economic profit, becoming a hegemonic orientation of reality. Whiteness is the power to sustain the social imagination that promotes white bodies.<sup>43</sup> It is hegemonic in usurping identity rooted in connectedness to land and one another and promoting an individualized identity formed apart from geography, history, or common memory. Whiteness didn't just privilege white bodies, it also shaped societal and economic structures such as the racist immigration laws in the early twentieth century, explained later in the chapter. Whiteness further institutionalized racism through Jim Crow laws and continued to flourish even after

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<sup>41</sup> Degruy Leary, *Post Traumatic*, 201.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>43</sup> Willie Jennings defines whiteness as: "a way of imagining oneself as part of the central facilitating reality" that "makes sense of, interprets, organizes, and narrates the world." Willie James Jennings, "Overcoming Racial Faith," *Divinity: Duke University*, 14, no. 2 (April 2015): 9.

emancipation.<sup>44</sup> Whiteness impacted the way people lived, by replacing the communal lifestyle of indigenous peoples with an entrepreneurial, capitalistic one focused on material profit. For theologian Willie Jennings, understanding the preference of white bodies begins with re-examining theology.<sup>45</sup> “Before anything it was a theological form...because whiteness suggested that one may enter a true moment of creation gestalt” where “people would henceforth (and forever) carry their identities on their bodies.”<sup>46</sup> There is a governing theological imaginary within Christianity that remains covered. Its implications are only recently being noted.<sup>47</sup>

Third, uncovering and acknowledging the sociotheological history of racial formation creates an invitation for both whites *and* people of color to work toward embodying a racial healing community involving personal, collective, and structural **reparations**. The word reparations has a political connotation since it was used by activists in the 1990’s to call for Affirmative Action and other social re-arrangement programs. I am using the term both in its political sense and in its theological sense of repairing the broken relationship between people of color and whites along the

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<sup>44</sup> Lawyer and author Bryan Stevenson states, “I don’t think we are free in America. I think we are burdened by our history of racial inequality,” and continues to note how a form of slavery has continued after emancipation. Bryan Stevenson, *Brief but Spectacular Take on Justice in America*, directed by Zach Land-Miller (2017: PBS News Hour, April 14, 2017.), online, <https://youtu.be/Zj91x5H5ohY>.

<sup>45</sup> Whiteness may also be understood through the lens of privilege. For more on privilege see Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women’s Studies,” in *Privilege and Prejudice: Twenty Years with the Invisible Knapsack*, ed. Karen Weekes (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009). McIntosh describes white privilege as: “an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was ‘meant’ to remain oblivious” (7). Whiteness makes these individual and systemic privileges appear to be entitlements. Recall Jennings’s definition of whiteness as a *central facilitating reality*. It may be difficult for whites to acknowledge privilege because they are white within a world where whiteness is the central facilitating reality. That is why it is imperative for whites to learn from communities of color about the privileges of being white that they may not be able to readily identify. The main point is that whiteness gives preferential treatment to white and white-appearing bodies.

<sup>46</sup> Willie James Jennings, *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 58.

<sup>47</sup> Whiteness seizes racial healing by creating reconciliation paradigms that benefit the dominant group at great cost to communities of color, further preventing racial justice.

interpersonal, intrapersonal, and structural lines. As whiteness and its impact are uncovered, the community of faith can work toward racial healing programs that bring justice and healing to the wrongs of the past. Along with repairing past wrongs, racial healing involves restoring broken communities. As Degruy Leary notes, “racism is difficult to address or cure because it is not acknowledged.”<sup>48</sup> This chapter is an attempt at such an acknowledgment.

### ***The Concept of Sociotheological Racial Formation Explained***

Sociotheological racial formation is a term that bridges the parallel development of theology and race; it is both a skin issue *and* a problem of sin. At its core, racism is a hate and violence against neighbor, particularly in the U.S. against Middle Eastern, Latino/a, Native Americans, black,<sup>49</sup> and Asian bodies.<sup>50</sup> Racism is like the hemorrhaging wound of sin because at its root is the lie that some lives are worth more than others.<sup>51</sup> This lie is an affront to the imago Dei beauty inherent in every created being.<sup>52</sup> The hemorrhaging wound is that of Abel forever bleeding at the hands of Cain, it is the familial bond between peoples forever severed, until the resurrection.<sup>53</sup> The resurrected Jesus forever reconciled all peoples to God and all peoples to one another.<sup>54</sup> Though Christians cling to the hope of the resurrection, the resurrection does not gloss over the

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<sup>48</sup> Degruy Leary, *Post Traumatic*, 20.

<sup>49</sup> Degruy Leary writes about the “hemorrhaging of African Americans,” and notes: “With the endorsement of slavery as a legal, acceptable and justifiable institution, the founding fathers committed American’s original sin, a sin that has continued to plague America” (24).

<sup>50</sup> Take, for example, the racist Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.

<sup>51</sup> “The U.S.-Mexican border *es una herida abierta* where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again.” Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987, 25. *Es una herida abierta* is translated as “it is an open wound.”

<sup>52</sup> Genesis 1:26-27.

<sup>53</sup> Genesis 4:1-16.

<sup>54</sup> Ephesians 2:11-22; Galatians 2:15-21; John 17:20-23.

pain of the past. The resurrection came *after* the pain of the cross. Racial healing will come *after* the pain of the past is acknowledged, a pain rooted in theological formulation.

An investigation into the effects of racism on epistemology and theology is necessary. Until eight years ago when James Kameron Carter wrote his seminal book *Race: A Theological Account*, a sociotheological resource for race was not directly available.<sup>55</sup> Several books were written and programs created by practitioners and scholars to bridge the gap between whites and people of color since the late 1980s.<sup>56</sup> However, these programs tended to focus on individual reconciliation rather than racial healing or justice.<sup>57</sup> A sociotheological account of racial formation is a hybrid interdisciplinary approach: the socio-theological joining of socialization, anthropology, psychology, the visible on one side of the hyphen and the theological, biblical, philosophical, invisible on the other side. Sociotheological research attempts to take the whole human and the whole study of theology into account. The following is a history of this sociotheological development as uncovered to date.

### Definitions and Preconditions of Racial Formation

In the attempt to examine history with the goal of uncovering the beginning of sociotheological racial formation, a rewriting of history takes place.<sup>58</sup> **Revisionist history** is a re-examination of past accounts that expose “little-known chapters of racial

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<sup>55</sup> “One is hard-pressed to find an adequate *theological* account of the modern problem of race.” J. Kameron Carter, *Race: A Theological Account* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 3.

<sup>56</sup> “The evangelical community has witnessed an explosion of racial reconciliation conferences, books, study guides, videos, speeches, practices by organizations, formal apologies, and even mergers of once racially separate organizations” (Emerson and Smith, *Divided by Faith*, 63-65).

<sup>57</sup> Emerson and Smith, *Divided by Faith*, 67. The authors note that racial reconciliation messages focus on individual actions, resulting in an inability to see the need for structural change and reparations.

<sup>58</sup> Critical Race Theory has emerged as a movement of scholars and activists who are examining the past and present relationship between race and power, read Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 2012).

struggle,” offering, “evidence, sometimes suppressed, in that very record.”<sup>59</sup> Before such an account of race can be given, it is necessary to address the concept of race itself.

Is race a biological truth (is it in our genes), or is it a socially constructed notion, a type of hegemonic tribalism? **Race** is defined in this thesis as a category assigned to people in a racialized society based on observable, phenotypical differences such as eye shape, skin color, and hair type (among others). Phrenology arose in the early 1800’s as the first attempt to make scientifically objective racial categories, but the presupposition of racial hierarchy was already in the American psyche.<sup>60</sup> Biological, psychological, and anthropological studies continue to use race and ethnicity/culture interchangeably, confusing the notion of race (which didn’t emerge until the colonial enterprise) with the familial, cultural, and geological distinctiveness of **ethnicity**.<sup>61</sup> Race is an **essentializing** event, confining a person to a color and its associations.<sup>62</sup> Ethnicity and culture, in contrast, are evolving and changing concepts as people mature, interact, and migrate. How and why did this confounding between race and ethnicity begin?

**Social construction** theorists propound that race was created to achieve a hierarchy.<sup>63</sup> Faux scientific explanations of racial difference were developed only after the capital need for hierarchy was created. From its inception race has been a variable

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>60</sup> “American slavery experience was exclusively based on the notion of racial inferiority” (Degruy Leary, *Post Traumatic*, 50).

<sup>61</sup> For an example of the confluence of race and ethnicity in cognitive psychology see Lawrence A. Hirschfeld, *Race in the Making: Cognition, Culture, and the Child’s Construction of Human Kinds, Learning, Development, and Conceptual Change* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1998), 83-120.

<sup>62</sup> See Ian Hacking, *The Social Construction of What* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000). Hacking calls this racial theory “psychological essentialism” because it helps explain the “prevalence of concepts of race and the ease with which they can be conscripted for racism” (17).

<sup>63</sup> Emerson and Smith, *Divided by Faith*, 7-8. The authors note certain physical characteristics are used to classify people such as nose and eye shape and skin tone, but not all are used such as foot size. As social meaning is placed on only certain characteristics, hierarchy of racial preference emerges.

concept presenting itself as genetic and unchangeable.<sup>64</sup> Essentialization happened as the *idea* of race began to shape the *identity* of people. With the emergence of race, identity was replaced by the *idea* that white bodies are superior to all other bodies.<sup>65</sup> Eventually, this idea of racial difference would crystallize into racial performance and racial phrases emerged like, “you act too white” or “you’re acting brown.”

The theory of **racial formation** explains the hegemonic social imaginary of whiteness. Michael Omi and Howard Winant describe race as a “master category” that has the main goal of social stratification; i.e., creating a hierarchy.<sup>66</sup> Omi and Winant present the term “racial projects,” which translate racial meaning into social structures that “become racially signified.”<sup>67</sup> Examples of racial projects are the terms “inner city” or “urban” as codes for African American or Latino/a neighborhoods. Racial projects happen everywhere in a racialized society. Racism emerges as a racial project that has developed into a racist structure of domination.<sup>68</sup> Racial politics emerge as a society is racially organized.<sup>69</sup> At the core of racial formation is the monetary need for a hierarchy. “Modern capitalism could not have come into being without this grand infusion.”<sup>70</sup> Thus, the root of race, far from being biological, was the greed for wealth.

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<sup>64</sup> Delgado and Stefancic, *Critical Race*, 8-9. Persons share more physical features than not.

<sup>65</sup> Hacking, *The Social Construction*, 10-11. Hacking uses the example of women refugees to explain how ideas about a people construct that very people’s identity. First, the idea of “woman refugee” is created by overlapping factors such as social events, legislation, immigrant groups, and social workers and then a woman is classified “woman refugee.” After classification, the woman is treated as a woman refugee and she comes to see herself as such. Hacking writes: “Ways of classifying human beings interact with the human beings who are classified...People think of themselves as of a kind, perhaps, or reject the classification;” this acceptance or rejection is called *the looping effect of human kinds* (34).

<sup>66</sup> Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation*, 105-106.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.



### Pre-Colonial Notions of Superiority: Setting the Stage for Subjugation

Even though one sees examples of slavery from ancient civilizations such as the Egyptian slave system or Aztec slavery, no records exist of any claims of genetic superiority over those who were enslaved.<sup>71</sup> The Old Testament records the use of slaves, but the Hebraic law was “relatively mild toward the slaves and recognized them as human beings subject to defense from intolerable acts,” in contrast to other Ancient Near East cultures.<sup>72</sup> Degruy Leary notes that slaves lived in ancient Greece, Rome, and the African continent before the European conquest of Africa, but those captured held the possibility of gaining their freedom.<sup>73</sup> These systems of subjugation were not based on a person’s skin color, but on a person’s tribal or national affiliation. Nationalism and geo-political identity must not be confused with racism.

Excavating the origins of race, one discovers how Greek philosophy and religious discrimination set the foundation for racial thinking to emerge, but also that neither established a human hierarchy on a color scale. Plato’s forms depicting the *inherently* best philosopher as the ideal ruler, and Aristotle’s *ousia* depicting the most virtuous aristocrat to serve as the *naturally* best ruler, both planted the seeds for essentialization, which was the proposition that people were born<sup>74</sup> with naturally inferior or superior,

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<sup>71</sup> “The idea of a slave as exclusively the object of rights and as a person outside regular society was apparently alien to the laws of the ANE” Muhammad A. Dandamayev, “Slavery - Ancient Near East,” *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* volume 5, Ed. David Noel Freedman, (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 61. Ancient Near East cultures practiced slavery, but they were semi-free peoples primarily used for household help due to the high skill needed for palace machinery (Dandamayev, “Slavery,” 58-62).

<sup>72</sup> Dandamayev, “Slavery,” 65. See also S. Scott Bartchy, “Slavery – New Testament,” *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* volume 5, Ed. David Noel Freedman, (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 65-73. Key differences between NT slavery and that of the colonial enterprise were the former: lacked racial reasons, encouraged education, had greater social mobility opportunities for the slave, the slave could own property, and the majority of slaves could be freed by the age of thirty (Bartchy, “Slavery,” 66).

<sup>73</sup> Degruy Leary, *Post Traumatic*, 49.

<sup>74</sup> Jennings interprets Aristotle’s thought that some are “born to serve rather than to command” (*Christian Imagination*, 35).

unchangeable essences.<sup>75</sup> Religious discrimination against Jews and Muslims in the 16<sup>th</sup> century set the foundation for notions of a superior religion and thus a superior culture, but again violent acts against Jews and Muslims were committed because of their religious inclinations and not their physical features.<sup>76</sup> European empire expansion and the greed for wealth needed nourishment from a deeper source than religion or philosophy, they needed an ideal that would embed itself within the psyche, social imagination, and the very bodies of peoples. The stage was set for an interpretive framework of race.<sup>77</sup>

### **Exploration and Enlightenment (15<sup>th</sup> century – 19<sup>th</sup> century)**

#### *European Exploration and Conquest: The Emergence of Whiteness*

On August 8, 1444, the first African slaves arrived in Portugal to a ceremonial presentation for Prince Henry and his subjects. This presentation functioned as a public display of the power and amassing of wealth that was promised by the emerging colonial enterprise.<sup>78</sup> Theologian Willie Jennings rightly reveals that from the beginning of colonialism, theology played a significant role. “At this time in the history of late medieval Christendom all accounts of events, royal or common, were theological accounts.”<sup>79</sup> Portugal’s royal chronicler, Gomes Eanes de Azurara, recorded Prince Henry’s tithe of two young male slaves to honor and thank God. How did the colonial

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<sup>75</sup> Naomi Zack, *The Ethics and Mores of Race: Equality after the History of Philosophy* (Lanham: Roman & Littlefield Publishers University Press, 2011), 2-15.

<sup>76</sup> Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation*, 113.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid. Before 1440, Degruy Leary writes: “most people who became slaves became so as a result of war...Europeans, however, systematically turned the capturing, shipping and selling of other human beings into a business, a business that would develop into the backbone of an entire economy, providing the foundation for the world’s wealthiest nation” (49). Also, “Although slavery has long been a part of human history, American chattel slavery represents a case of human trauma incomparable in scope, duration and consequence to any other incidence of human enslavement” (75).

<sup>78</sup> “Beside the Muslims, Valencians, Catalans, and Genoese [they were also] peoples with power over black flesh. They now emerged as bearers of black gold” (Jennings, *Christian Imagination*, 15).

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 16.

enterprise fuel human subjugation, leading to the violent extremes of the African slave trade? A logical rift had to be made between the humanity of the African and Native peoples, and the humanity of the conquistadores.<sup>80</sup> The latter had to be proved superior to the former in order for the colonial enterprise to succeed. Within the context of Christendom, this justification had to be done theologically and sociologically at the same time.

Racial formation was a power and mammon-oriented political motivation that had to be supported by the language of the time, which was theology.<sup>81</sup> While the first criteria for creating the distinct gradations of humanity were visual referents such as body size and color, the parallel development was a theological justification for commodified human bodies. The physiological differences were used to quickly round up Africans and indigenous peoples for servitude, displacing them from their native lands, customs, and familial tribes. This displacement caused a severance in all people's knowledge of and way of knowing the world. Instead of understanding the world through relationship to the land and one another, a new epistemology had to emerge. Jennings calls this new lens the "racial optic" that severed a people's identity *from* and connection *to* land and replaced it with an identity constructed around a white European ideal.<sup>82</sup> Thus, African and indigenous peoples were removed from their lands first, and then newly created as black and other races second. Conquistadores and missionaries employed scripture as rationale and defense of these actions.

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<sup>80</sup> Europeans concluded that black Africans were fitted by a natural act of God to the position of permanent bondage. It was this relegation to lesser humanity that allowed the institution of chattel slavery to be intrinsically linked with violence" (Degruy Leary, *Post Traumatic*, 51).

<sup>81</sup> While physical attributes were used to create race, it was "reprocessed in the discourse available at the time: primarily and for a long time to come, theological" (Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation*, 114).

<sup>82</sup> The optic "presented itself as the only real option given the aggressive desacralization of the world. When you disrupt and destroy the delicate and contingent connection of peoples' identities bound to specific lands you leave no alternative but racial agency" (Jennings, *Christian Imagination*, 58).

Jennings uncovers the pivotal moment when race replaced place in a person's identity formation using Zurara's (the Portuguese royal chronicler) historical account. In Zurara's *Chronicles of Guinea* (1457) he explicitly categorizes people as "white enough," "mulattoe," and "as black as Ethiops, and so ugly, both in features and in body."<sup>83</sup> Zurara places the racial optic onto an aesthetic calculus, a range along the white scale. The white calculus replaced identity from land and place, with the result that bodies were now understood according to their color and physiological features instead of according to their lands, memory of place, and tribal history. Thus, history was also severed from identity and bodies, with value and identity weighed on a racial scale. Now, peoples were ahistorical and aspatial, judged according to a created ideal. This racial scale would later be employed by Columbus, the Spanish explorer Garcia de Escalante Alvarado (1548), and the Italian Jesuit Allesandro Valignano (1539-1606), among many others, to arrange bodies on a scale from ideal white to captured black flesh.<sup>84</sup>

While Zurara justified violence against slaves on the grounds of their salvation and education, Valignano more clearly makes the connection between race and theology.<sup>85</sup> For example, Valignano interpreted Japanese as intelligent, cultured, and superior to all other races. He reasoned that their superiority explained the greater conversion numbers among them.<sup>86</sup> Jennings captures this sociotheological development the best: "Slowly, out of these actions, whiteness emerges, not simply as a marker of the European but as the rarely spoken but always understood organizing conceptual

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 30-31.

<sup>85</sup> Jennings notes this "rhetorical strategy of containment, holding slave suffering inside a Christian story, will be recycled by countless theologians and intellectuals of every colonialist nation" (2010, 20).

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 32.

frame...Black bodies are the ever-visible counterweight of a usually *invisible* white identity.”<sup>87</sup> From this moment on, all bodies, including indigenous and Native American bodies, would be measured against both the ideal of whiteness and the inferiority of blackness.

Eleven years after the first African slaves were brought to Europe, Pope Nicholas V wrote *Romanus Pontifex* (1455), further solidifying the Church’s support of the colonial enterprise.<sup>88</sup> In it the Pope formed the doctrine of *creation ex nihilo*, a world created out of nothing. This doctrine provided the theological underpinnings for the idea that people exist out of nothing, without place or identity. Christ as the beginning of all things and the creator of all things divinely owns all things. Thus, the church, as an extension of Christ’s body, had geographic ownership over all people and their lands.<sup>89</sup> European missionaries entered newly conquered places with this newfound ownership of all lands. The epistemological void created by *creation ex nihilo* necessitated a new epistemology, one centered in white authoritative bodies. When white Christians used race to justify the colonial conquest, they defined themselves sans race and relegated racialized bodies as perpetual recipients of a new racial optic.

Jennings presents this moment of theological maneuvering as crucial to understanding the emergence of race. With the loss of tribal lands came the loss of tribal identity. For the indigenous in Africa and Latin America, identity was formed and shaped by a shared personhood.<sup>90</sup> One knew oneself through the stories of the elders and the community. Identity was derived from a shared land with creation, the flora and the

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 26-27.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 40.

fauna. In the Ju/wasi tribe, for example, “elders represent not only the epistemological limits of life-knowledge, but also the epistemic structure of practices.”<sup>91</sup> If epistemology could no longer be derived from the usual signifiers of place and narrative, it had to be derived from a new conceptual framework. This new organizing principle would present whiteness as the new creator.

Another effect of whiteness is a loss of memory, what Jennings calls **Gentile remembrance**. Jennings uses the Jesuit missionary José de Acosta Porres (c. 1540-1620) as an example of the supersessionist thinking that grew in this era.<sup>92</sup> Interpreting the Andean adaptation of Christianity as demonic,<sup>93</sup> stupid, ignorant,<sup>94</sup> and syncretistic, Acosta forgot the historical account of Gentiles like himself entering into the story of the Jewish Christ.<sup>95</sup> Acosta became the final authority of how Christ could be worshiped and understood.<sup>96</sup> This final authority of a white male ideal has tainted theological interpretation and sociological relationships to this day.<sup>97</sup>

*Sociotheological Racial Formation in the U.S.: The Systematization of Whiteness*

In 1619, the first African slaves were brought to North America.<sup>98</sup> The escalating pull of whiteness had rooted itself deep within European soil and was being exported into North American Native lands. A few voices decried race and racial theories, such as the Dominican friar and Spanish historian Bartolomé de las Casas (c. 1484-1566) and the

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>92</sup> “Supersessionist thinking is the womb in which whiteness will mature” (Jennings, *Christian Imagination*, 36).

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 104-105.

<sup>95</sup> Acts 15:1-35. See also Jennings, *Christian Imagination*, 98.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>97</sup> Gentile Christians “decided that we should look at the world as though we were at the center of it and not at the margins with a Jew named Jesus. We forgot we were Gentiles, the real heathens. A Christian world was turned upside down and remade in our image” (Jennings, *Christian Imagination*, 6).

<sup>98</sup> Degruy Leary, *Post Traumatic*, 75.

Jesuit philosopher/historian Portuguese mulatto António Vieira (1608-1697).<sup>99</sup> In spite of these voices of warning, the narrative of the divine selection of European Americans that would lead the way toward progress in the New World established a momentum that was unstoppable.

Since 1700, there is evidence that Christians in the New World viewed blacks and Natives as “less than human, without souls, incapable of learning.”<sup>100</sup> While the East was under colonialism and conquest from Protestant England, the West was under the missionary power of Catholic Spain. The racialized hierarchy of the Spanish missions viewed the *Indio* as equivalent to the black. In California, the conquistadores separated people between the local Natives and the “*gente de razón*” (people of reason).<sup>101</sup> While the racialization of black slaves happened in the East, the racialization of the *Indio* as the “people without reason” was taking place in the West.

By 1750, almost twenty per cent of the newly arrived population in the U.S. was African or of African descent, and the impetus for Christianizing slaves grew. Cotton Mather (1663-1728) and other influential clergy argued that a person’s salvation did not change their slave status.<sup>102</sup> George Whitefield (1714-1770) also supported continued chattel slavery, further stating that “cruelty can have the positive effect of heightening ‘the sense of their natural misery,’ thereby increasing receptivity to the Christian message.”<sup>103</sup> Financial stability and wealth were driving forces for maintaining subjugation. Theological justification was not enough to sustain racial formation. The

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<sup>99</sup> Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation*, 113. De las Casas warned against racializing theology and Vieira debated against the nature of peoples.

<sup>100</sup> Emerson and Smith, *Divided by Faith*, 22.

<sup>101</sup> Robert H. Jackson, “La Raza y La Definición de la Identidad del ‘Indio’ en las Fronteras de la America Española Colonial,” *Revista de Estudios Sociales* no. 26 (Abril 2007): 117.

<sup>102</sup> Emerson and Smith, *Divided by Faith*, 23-24. Mather made his case by calling on God’s omnipotence and divine ordering, using these to justifying any means of punishment for a slave.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

question of the humanity of the slaves and the Native needed to be addressed. The answer came from Enlightenment reasoning and (faux) scientific racial experiments.<sup>104</sup>

The first of these pseudo-scientific works that promoted the colonial enterprise was Carl Von Linnaeus' *Systema Naturae* (1735).<sup>105</sup> Linnaeus, a biological scientist, (1707-1778) created a system for organizing human beings based on observable physical attributes. Credited as beginning the field of anthropology, Linnaeus's "objective" observations of different skin colors used subjective categories of intelligence and morality to distinguish each race.<sup>106</sup> A key assumption Linnaeus (and his adherents) held was an ontological definition of race. Linnaeus claimed that darker people *naturally*, by the order of nature, were inferior to whites.<sup>107</sup>

The collaboration between "scientific" explanations for race, theological justifications thereof, and philosophical theories of race was the intellectual context in which the Declaration of Independence and subsequent formative documents were written.<sup>108</sup> During this time, thoughts on race and a hierarchical ordering thereof are evident in the works of Enlightenment philosophers such as Hegel, Kant, Voltaire, and Locke. These philosophical musings influenced theological development.<sup>109</sup> James

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 28-30. Not all evangelicals supported race. By 1775, some believed "slavery must be challenged, or God would demand retribution" (Emerson and Smith, *Divided by Faith*, 28). A few evangelicals supported the first organized society against slaves. Their aim was to send freed slaves back to Africa (29). In spite of these exceptions, "many white evangelicals saw nothing intrinsically wrong with slaveholding" (30).

<sup>105</sup> Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation*, 115.

<sup>106</sup> Degruy Leary, *Post Traumatic*, 60.

<sup>107</sup> Influenced by Linnaeus, Count Joseph Arthur de Gobineau (1816-1882) compiled "the most respected scientific studies of his day" in his *Essay on the Inequalities of the Races* (1853-1855), which would influence the eugenics movement (Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation*, 116).

<sup>108</sup> Colonists were concerned with "nation-building, establishing national economy in the world trading system, resistance to monarchy, and philosophical discussions on 'natural rights of man'" (Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation*, 115).

<sup>109</sup> Ibid. See also Emerson and Smith where they show how American values such as independence, individualism, and privacy are a confluence of Enlightenment philosophy and the evangelical Protestant Christianity emerging at the time (*Divided by Faith*, 2).



Kameron Carter, a theologian, agrees.<sup>110</sup> Carter uses Kant's anthropology to highlight the influence of racial thought on Christian theology.<sup>111</sup> In 1775 Kant published an essay titled "On the Different Human Races," which Carter analyzes to trace the emergence of race as an ontological form.

For Kant, phenotypical differentiations confirmed the existence of four races: white, black, Mongol, and Hindu, but even these may be reduced to two: white and black.<sup>112</sup> Kant drew on the argument from nature that it has "equipped the species to exist and flourish by supplying each with the requisite adaptive capacities."<sup>113</sup> Using the analogy of seeds growing in different ways according to its environment, Kant argued that, "under the right regional conditions, the various seeds would germinate to yield various races."<sup>114</sup> However, Carter shows that Kant viewed the white race as gestalt, without race because of its perfection.<sup>115</sup> Kant's anthropology turned political and racial when he analyzed civilizations, using white bodies as positive examples and "races" for negative examples of civilizations.<sup>116</sup>

A significant example of inferior peoples for Kant was the *Jewish problem*. In Kant's *Anthropology*, the Jews are viewed as a threat and contagion to an autonomous

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<sup>110</sup> There is much to glean from Carter's seminal work. For a rich history of early Church debates preparing the way for supersessionism read Carter's account of Irenaeus and his fight against the Gnostic controversy 12-34. For Foucault's anxiety over the "Jewish problem" which is a racial problem, read 53-68. Foucault sees the Protestant Reformation using the analytic of war between races, 72. Carter asserts, "the inner basis of the principle of Protestantism, and thus the inner basis of the principle of race (struggle), lies in the mythological and religious discourse of the Jews;" race, therefore, "arises inside the question of Israel, inside the question of the theopolitical meaning of Jewish existence" (Carter, *Race*, 73).

<sup>111</sup> Kant considered Christianity "modernity's supreme, rational religion" (Carter, *Race*, 82).

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>115</sup> Kant sees whites as a kind set apart, a race "that is not quite a race, the race that transcends race precisely because of its developmental progress toward perfection" (Carter, *Race*, 88).

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 100-101.

life.<sup>117</sup> Kant and other Enlightenment thinkers transformed Christianity from a Jewish narrative of the world to a Western story of enlightenment zenith.<sup>118</sup> With Kant's *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (1793), Christianity would be reinterpreted with the primary optic of reason. Jesus was no longer Israel's covenant with God.<sup>119</sup> In eliminating Jesus' Jewish identity and the identity of Israel as the covenant people of God, Kant was free to replace identity with a European lens. The seedlings of manifest destiny were set in place.<sup>120</sup>

*The Formation of a Nation and the Enforcement of Whiteness*

The formation of a country and its citizens, along with its ideals and mores are reflected in its laws.<sup>121</sup> The Constitutional Convention of 1787 created the three-fifths notion of a black human during the legislative compromise to the question of how to count the slave population. Degruy Leary writes, "In this way, slaves became three-fifths of a human."<sup>122</sup> The country's immigration laws also enforced whiteness. The U.S. Naturalization Act of 1790 restricted naturalization to "free white persons" of "good moral character." This act would not be repealed until 1952.<sup>123</sup> The Indian Removal Act of 1830 also enforced whiteness by removing all Native Americans east of the

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 108. Carter makes this connection with Kant's understanding of Paul and civil society. Read 108-117 for further insight into the argument.

<sup>120</sup> For an example of how these notions led to a doctrine of manifest destiny, see Frederick J. Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," *The Annual Report of the American Historical Association*, 1894, 119-227. <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/TURNER/chapter1.html#text15>. Turner writes "It appears then that the universal disposition of Americans to emigrate to the western wilderness, in order to enlarge their dominion over inanimate nature, is the actual result of an expansive power which is inherent in them."

<sup>121</sup> Danny Carrol, "A Christian Response to Immigration" (Survey of Immigration Perspectives, InterVarsity Borderlands Urban Program, San Diego, CA, July, 2012) and Danny Carrol, *Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church, and the Bible*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 95-99.

<sup>122</sup> Degruy Leary, *Post Traumatic*, 53.

<sup>123</sup> "Legal definition of whiteness took shape in the context of immigration law" (Delgado and Stefancic, *Critical Race*, 85).

Mississippi so that white settlers could legally take the land. In 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo ended the Mexican-American War and made former Mexicans from California, Nevada, and Utah, as well as parts of Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Wyoming automatic U.S. residents. Even though Mexican-Americans were “legally” regarded as white, many racially *appeared* to be non-European and treated as such.

According to law professor Ian Haney Lopez, 52 explicit racial cases defining who qualified as white occurred from 1878 to 1952, two of which went to the Supreme Court.<sup>124</sup> It is therefore helpful to know how immigration policy was a conscious definition and systematization of whiteness.<sup>125</sup> The first Immigration Act was passed in 1924.<sup>126</sup> However, racial bias was evident before the quotas were enacted. In 1882 The Chinese Exclusion Act was created to eliminate Chinese immigration to the U.S. The *Yellow Peril* was a racial term describing the fear of the influx of Chinese labor, pulled in for work on the railroads. This law was not repealed until 1943. Another law during this time made “marriage to a non-White alien by an American woman akin to treason.”<sup>127</sup> This law would not be repealed until 1931.

Two cases that stand out as significant in the creation of whiteness are *Ozawa v. U.S.* (1922) and *Thind v. U.S.* (1923). Ozawa was a Japanese man who followed all U.S. customs requirements, and presented his case for citizenship. The court denied Ozawa citizenship because he was not Caucasian (a term explained in the next paragraph).

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<sup>124</sup> Ian Haney Lopez, *White By Law: The Legal Construction of Race, Revised and Updated 10th Anniversary Edition* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 3-5. At times the courts would use “common knowledge” of whiteness to support their claims and at other times “scientific reasoning.”

<sup>125</sup> “The racial composition of the U.S. citizenry reflects...the conscious design of U.S. immigration and naturalization laws” (Lopez, *White by Law*, 27). For a review of these laws and their racial restrictions read 27-28. For a review of law and citizenship around the notion of white identity, read 30-34.

<sup>126</sup> The 1924 Immigration Act created a quota system, installing limits for certain countries. In this era, Irish, Italian, and Eastern European peoples were viewed suspiciously because of their Catholic faith.

<sup>127</sup> Lopez, *White by Law*, 34.

Months later, however, in Thind's case, even though he was Caucasian per "scientific rationale," Thind was Indian in life and culture. To reiterate, even though Thind was a veteran of the U.S. Army and fit the previous scientific requirement of whiteness per the ruling in the Ozawa case, the court denied Thind's citizenship because of his different *culture*, which is a subjective term. Thus, the Thind case made "the test of Whiteness solely one of common knowledge."<sup>128</sup> In Ozawa, the appeal to science was used, while in Thind, the appeal to common knowledge was used. Neither Ozawa nor Thind were deemed Caucasian. But where did the notion of Caucasian originate?

Around the time that the U.S. was defining its identity and governance, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840) wrote *On the Natural Variety of Mankind* (1775). Blumenbach studied races by examining and categorizing skull bones. He categorized the skulls as Caucasian, Mongolian, American, Ethiopian, and Malayan. Blumenbach took the name Caucasian from Mount Caucasus near Mount Ararat, where it is said that the ark of Noah rested after the flood. He believed Mount Caucas was the "original race of man" and that the Caucasian was the "most beautiful race of men."<sup>129</sup> Kantian philosophy and pseudo-scientific notions of race employed this narrative to form and shape the New World.

How did evangelicals respond to this growing notion of race? Most white evangelicals responded by not responding. Racialization was such that it allowed whites to assume they were the ideal race or sans race.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>129</sup> Degruy Leary, *Post Traumatic*, 61.

<sup>130</sup> "Whites do not see themselves as having a race, but as being, simply, people" (Delgado and Stefancic, *Critical Race*, 89). Evangelicals "usually fail to challenge the system...because they support the American system and enjoy its fruits" (Emerson and Smith, *Divided by Faith*, 22).

### Modernity, Postmodernity, and the Post-Racial Myth (19<sup>th</sup> century – Today)

By the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century the nation was in great racial transition.<sup>131</sup> While Christian Americans in the north were beginning to call for emancipation and the end of slavery, including the famous revivalist Charles Finney, those in the south were developing a theological case for its support.<sup>132</sup> Even though a few evangelicals supported freedom for slaves, they did not envision ending racialization.<sup>133</sup> Further systematization of racism would occur through the Jim Crow legislation in the late nineteenth century.

Jim Crow laws assumed that everyone started on equal footing in the socioeconomic ladder. The idea was that every person had the *ability* to live well if they worked hard enough. Jim Crow laws ensured the continued systematization of racism because such equality in all measures of life (employment, access to education, transportation, and quality health care) was absent for the emancipated. Although recently liberated blacks were no longer under the bondage of slavery, they continued to live under the bondage of segregation, racism, and violence. Mexican Americans and other minority groups would also be impacted by Jim Crow legislation. Until 1947, when *Mendez et al v. Westminster School District of Orange County et al* ruled segregation

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<sup>131</sup> While one group gained advantages, another group was experiencing oppression. In 1846, for example, Mexican and Native land was taken and then twenty years later, the Emancipation Proclamation freed African American slaves. While the Reconstruction was underway, Congress passed the Indian Appropriation Act, “providing that no Indian nation would be an independent entity capable of entering into a treaty with the U.S” (Delgado and Stefancic, *Critical Race*, 79). The Dawes Act broke up two-thirds of all Native American land. After the Chinese Exclusionary Act, immigration quotas were put in place restricting immigration from Ireland, Poland, and Italy.

<sup>132</sup> “On the whole, northern evangelicals did not differ from southern evangelicals in their racial views, except that they tended to oppose slavery” (Emerson and Smith, *Divided by Faith*, 34). The authors note Finney’s abolitionist efforts and theology of freedom, but also see evidence for a racial optic.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 31-34.

unconstitutional, schools in California were separate, but considered equal, although in fact their separateness ensured their inequality.

White Protestant churches struggled to define their stance on Jim Crow legislation. Protestant values of individualized faith coupled with a strong work ethic aligned with Jim Crow thought.<sup>134</sup> Many did not challenge the notion of segregation. After emancipation, the black church grew and provided a safe haven from the increasing racial violence. Similarly, the Latino/a church grew along the border, especially after the Azusa Street Revival.<sup>135</sup> These ethnic-specific protestant churches provided places of refuge and belonging for people of color.<sup>136</sup> Although both groups (white protestants and protestants of color) taught from the same Bible, their application of scripture and its impact on everyday life were divergent. Churches of color had to respond theologically, liturgically, and practically to the everyday racism experienced by their congregants. Ministers and scholars have yet to adequately address this divergence in application.<sup>137</sup>

After Jim Crow and segregation were eliminated (1954), the colorblind movement emerged. In an effort to eliminate prejudice and racism, many began to teach and advocate for the colorblind ideal. Since race is an illusion, one can eliminate it within oneself by not seeing race at all. However, this largely misinterprets what is meant by race as a social construction. Because it was constructed carefully and over a long period of time and on for the sake of capital profit, race has influenced every aspect of U.S. society, including but not limited to education, healthcare, business, self agency,

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>135</sup> For a history of this development, see Arlene Sánchez Walsh, *Latino Pentecostal Identity – Evangelical Faith, Self, and Society*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

<sup>136</sup> See Emerson and Smith, *Divided by Faith*, 47. After *Brown v. Board of Education*, Graham ended segregation at his meetings. Even so, he disagreed with the methods of the Civil Rights movement.

<sup>137</sup> Further studies could explore the development of these diverse theologies with attention to racialization or a theology against race in the preaching, teaching, and liturgy of the time.

attitudes, dating, legislation, and mass incarceration. Whiteness, as the hegemonic lens through which the world is interpreted, remains in individuals and social structures.

Amidst the ebb of postmodernity in the past decade, colorblind ideology has waned and a rising cry for addressing systemic racism has appeared. The fall of Nazi Germany helped expose the dire consequences of the racial superiority rhetoric. Scientific critique against race did not happen until 1950, when UNESCO wrote the *Statement on Race*, declaring it a social myth, not a biological fact.<sup>138</sup> However, scholars and activists alike continue to confound ethnic and cultural identity with racialized identity. To this day sciences like pharmacogenomics and cognitive psychology continue to examine biological notions of race.<sup>139</sup>

The U.S. is still trying to heal from the deep wounds it inflicted upon various peoples. These wounds include the near elimination of an entire Native population and the lands stolen from them, the millions of people captured during the transatlantic slave trade for U.S. profit, and the pervasive effects of slavery and a deeply rooted racial optic. Degruy Leary writes, “three hundred and eighty-five years of physical, psychological, and spiritual torture have left their mark.”<sup>140</sup> Omi and Winant note, “The ‘conquest of America’ was not simply an epochal historical event – it was the inauguration of racialization on a world-historical scale.”<sup>141</sup> The racial wounding went on for centuries and has wedged itself deep into the fabric of American society. It will take a long time to work together toward our racial healing, but the need is worth the effort and hope is worth our time.

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<sup>138</sup> Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation*, 117-118.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Degruy Leary, *Post Traumatic*, 112.

<sup>141</sup> Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation*, 114.

## **Problems Created by Sociotheological Racial Formation: The Interpretive Gap and Whiteness as Theology Supreme**

A study of the sociotheological history of racial formation within the U.S. reveals at least two problems elicited by race. This thesis addresses these two significant concerns for theology: the evangelical protestant interpretive gap (explained in the introduction) and whiteness as theology supreme. When an ideal of white bodies and white thought permeate every aspect of a society, every aspect of that society is impacted, including its theology. Whiteness as theology supreme refers to the influence whiteness has on biblical hermeneutics and embodied expressions of Christianity. Jennings notes, “early Europeans inherited theological visions that collated the symbiotic tropes of whiteness and blackness with ideas of good and evil, light and dark, and life and death.”<sup>142</sup> Whiteness is not a particular group of people, a particular gender, or a specific nation; it is bigger than these. Whiteness has developed into a power and principality, an invitation and transformation to imagine oneself into this racialized ideal. Whiteness is not the opposite and certainly not the equal of blackness.<sup>143</sup> Whiteness as theology supreme is a declaration that the best hermeneutic is through the interpretive lens of an individual body that is not connected to a history of place, a history of Gentile remembrance, or a common memory of conquest.

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<sup>142</sup> Jennings, *Overcoming Racial Faith*, 7.

<sup>143</sup> The white/black binary is a problem created by race. Delgado and Stefancic connect the binary to the idea of black exceptionalism where “a group’s history is so distinctive that placing it at the center of analysis is...warranted” (*Critical Race*, 77). The white/black binary “allows people to simplify and make sense of a complex reality...the risk is that nonblack minority groups, not fitting into the dominant society’s idea of race in America, become marginalized, invisible, foreign, un-American” (78). Research needs to examine the impact of race on each community and resist the temptation to subsume these into the polarity. The white/black binary needs to be demythologized so that other minority stories can be told, antagonism between people of color can diminish, and the notion of “progress” in race can be debunked.



Whiteness is so pervasive that it can be easy to imagine it as a social construct others deal with, but not oneself. Whiteness is not just about equal human rights or about equitable power dynamics, it is about a central facilitating reality that impacted all epistemology and worldviews. Remember that whiteness was created to commodify bodies of color and justify their inferiority for purposes of economic wealth and empire building. This creation changed theological interpretations of Christ. The savior became a man in white European flesh whose language, customs, ways of worship, and ways of understanding the world were gospel. The Jewish Jesus born in Galilee to unwed parents fleeing persecution and a refugee crucified on the cross with nothing on but a slim linen cloth was hardly envisioned. The power of mammon and greed ensured that the reality of Christ's mutilated body and liberation after resurrection never reached captive hearts that might identify with such mutilation and find hope in an embodied liberation. By aligning itself to power, empire, and wealth, the European Church became complicit in separating humanity from its covenant relationship with the Creator (in bearing the only image of the creator) and its covenant relationship to one another (in serving as the arbiter of human worth).

How does this white ideal impact theology? Whiteness created racialized bodies without geographical anchors from which to understand the world and the self, furthering pedagogical imperialism.<sup>144</sup> Pedagogical imperialism refers to the attitude that one has the only correct answer and the best complete knowledge of theology. This has impacted Christianity in its mission and soteriology. Missionaries from Europe, and later the U.S., to the world had the challenge of translating the Gospel into contexts different from their

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<sup>144</sup> Jennings, *Overcoming Racial Faith*, 7-9. The racialization of Christ is a consequence of whiteness. For further insight into his problem and hope beyond this, read Brian Bantum, *Redeeming Mulatto*, (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010).

own. As the Gospel was planted in different soil and took root, indigenous peoples interpreted and understood the Gospel through their culture. Concerns over syncretism grew. Native American theologian Richard Twiss observes that sometimes these syncretistic concerns were more a question of who had the authority to interpret the biblical text and place limits on its application.<sup>145</sup>

At times, U.S. missionaries took the Gospel to different contexts without regard to the customs, metaphors, and images of the people.<sup>146</sup> Pedagogical imperialism refers to how, for example, one image of soteriology (penal substitution) will be taught and showcased as the only biblical image of salvation. Asian American theologians have commented on how a guilt-based image of redemption (such as the penal substitution model) does not work with many Asian Americans. Instead, Mako Nagasawa advocates a more relational “union with Christ” model because this image more clearly addresses the shame-based self-concept of many Asian Americans.<sup>147</sup> Theologian Jackson Wu defends contextualization for an honor-shame framework in soteriology and spiritual formation.<sup>148</sup> He further posits that discipling Asian Americans through a guilt-based lens would do more harm to their spiritual development than good. These are just a few examples of how whiteness has impacted theological thought and application.

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<sup>145</sup> Richard Twiss, *Rescuing the Gospel from the Cowboys*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 63-83.

<sup>146</sup> Mark Baker, “Missionary as Theological Resource Person: Two Metaphors” (class lecture, Global Christian Theologies, Fresno, CA, September 1, 2011). Baker presents the suitcase metaphor to describe how some missionaries would unpack theology, but with little partnership or contextualization.

<sup>147</sup> Mako Nagasawa, “Why Penal Substitution Damages Asian-Americans: Asian American Spirituality in the Context of White American Evangelicalism,” *Mark D. Baker: Personal Website*, last modified March 2013, <https://profmarkbakerdotcom.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/article-asian-am-spirituality-white-am-evangelicalism.pdf>.

<sup>148</sup> Jackson Wu, “Does the ‘Plan of Salvation’ Make Disciples? Why Honor and Shame are Essential for Christian Ministry,” *Asian Missions Advance*, (January 2016): 9-11. I appreciate Wu’s assertion that discipleship through an honor/shame lens serves people across ethnic groups.

Three implications for addressing whiteness as theology supreme are to demythologize whiteness, address the hegemony in theology, and maintain humility attending to the first two. First, the sociotheological history of racial formation traces how whiteness was a creation that turned into a powerful invitation. Demythologizing whiteness involves naming it as a power and principality, one of the many that the cross has overcome.<sup>149</sup> It means remembering one's Gentile posture before the scriptures, (if one is not Jewish), remembering one's invitation into the people of God and the covenanting community. Demythologizing whiteness involves actively remembering one's familial history, geography, and their place in the history of peoples. Demythologizing whiteness facilitates reading and interpreting scriptures with humility and a willingness to learn from others.

Second, challenging the hegemony of whiteness in theology, along with its pedagogical imperialism, will diminish whiteness as theology supreme. As previous examples have shown, biblical images of salvation and community are made richer through a harmony of cultural voices. These voices, though diverse and singing from their cultural perspectives, sing in harmony to the music of the biblical narrative.<sup>150</sup> Though each voice expresses differently the grandeur of God, the good news of Jesus' life, and the continuing work of the Holy Spirit, each voice is rooted in covenant to the Creator.

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<sup>149</sup> I use and find helpful Marva Dawn's theology of powers and principalities, *Powers, Weakness, and the Tabernacling of God*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2001), 93, 102, 129-59.

<sup>150</sup> The idea of marginalized voices in dialogue stems from Enrique Dussel's political philosophy (2008) and the voice of color thesis in critical race theory which states that minorities bring a "presumed competence to speak about race and racism" because the histories of oppression will communicate unique effects of whiteness (Delgado and Stefancic, *Critical Race*, 10).

The third implication, a posture of humility, presents the cultural voice as one among the chorus, not as the solo through which the song must be sung. A posture of humility is countercultural to the activist norm of today, but it is crucial for the unraveling of pedagogical imperialism. It would be just as much a sin as whiteness if **Latinidad** were presented as the supreme hermeneutic. By maintaining a posture of humility, demythologizing, and challenging whiteness as theology supreme, the community of believers will take steps forward in racial healing.

### **Engaging in Racial Healing: The Unique Evangelical Concern**

After examining the sociotheological racial formation in the U.S. and whiteness as theology supreme, the unique evangelical concern needs to be remembered. Recall in the introduction the interpretation gap revealed in the data collected by the Pew Research Center. Evangelicalism grew within the racialized soil of the U.S. In order to fully express Christ's truth and love in this world, it is imperative to acknowledge this interpretive gap and work for racial healing.<sup>151</sup> It is difficult to be good news to a people when that people has felt systematically dehumanized for hundreds of years by the very bearers of this good news. Racial healing can be a reality when both evangelicals of color and white evangelicals are willing to challenge racism *together*.

The chapter started with the notion that acknowledging and uncovering the sociotheological roots of the racial pain *entre nosotros* helps to locate the emergence of the white ideal and its evolution. Such acknowledgment promotes racial healing because

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<sup>151</sup> This brief history of sociotheological racial formation shows the deeply rooted impact of whiteness on American society. Studies continue to show that "blacks and Latinos who seek loans, apartments, or jobs are much more apt than similar qualified whites to suffer rejections, often for vague or spurious reasons" (Delgado and Stefancic, *Critical Race*, 11).

it gives space for an honest dialogue around common remembering.<sup>152</sup> Recalling this common history will spark inquiry and dialogue among Christians that will involve honesty, humility, forgiveness, and a commitment to work together in demythologizing whiteness. The next chapter shows how the evangelical interpretive gap is an epistemological crisis resulting from enlightenment reasoning and postmodern subjectivity. Covenant epistemology is offered as the healing bandage that is broad enough to cover the hemorrhaging wound caused by race.

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<sup>152</sup> “Theorists and theories of race will not touch the ground until they reckon deeply with the foundations of racial imaginings in the deployment of an altered theological vision of creation. We must narrate not simply the alteration of bodies but of space itself” (Jennings, *Christian Imagination*, 63).

## **Chapter Two Ingredient Two: Covenant Epistemology for Racial Healing**

One of my favorite moments in life is when I get to sit across from my mom at the kitchen counter and watch her make one of her delicious salsas. Watching my mom is like watching an artist at work. She doesn't take her time measuring the ingredients like I do; she barely even looks at the ingredients. My mom so thoroughly *knows* her ingredients and her kitchen that she could make salsa blindfolded. While my sisters learned to cook by watching my mom, I had to write down every step and ingredient. The way my sisters learned to make my mom's salsa (by simply watching her) and the way that I learned to make my mom's salsa (by watching her *and* taking notes) are different ways of *coming to know* salsa.<sup>153</sup> Just as there are different ways of knowing salsa, there are different ways of knowing the world. A major impasse in racial healing is that the epistemology of whiteness is formulated as the only legitimate interpretive lens for how we know what we know. As Mark Baker writes, "whiteness creates the lenses by which everything else is seen and defined."<sup>154</sup> Therefore, the second ingredient for our racial healing salsa is a corrective to knowing: a covenant epistemology.

As was shown in chapter one, sociotheological racial formation claimed that whiteness was the only way to interpret the world, the primary vision through which to compare bodies, and the racial optic through which people are judged. Whiteness usurped all other epistemologies. This possession of knowing continues to impact both white bodies and bodies of color. At times we are covenanting bodies because we identify as Christian, but at other times we allow our racial optic to sever our covenant knowing.

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<sup>153</sup> Philosopher Esther Lightcap Meek uses *coming to know* to illustrate the process of knowing. Far from being a static event, knowing is a journey, involving time and participation. See Esther Lightcap Meek, *Loving to Know: Introducing Covenant Epistemology*, (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2011).

<sup>154</sup> Mark Baker, e-mail message to author, April 5, 2017.

Recall the data presented in the introduction that revealed the interpretive gap between white evangelicals and evangelicals of color. This interpretive gap was attributed to a difference in lived experience between racial groups.

One consequence of the racial optic is a tainted and severed epistemology. *How* one knows and how one *interprets* the world is all filtered through a racial optic that severs the land from the person, the mind from the body, and the white person from the person of color. Knowing one's identity used to be constituted by one's ecological and social worlds, but race reconfigured this knowing around the white body ideal. Theories of knowing that sever land from person, mind from body, and people from people are incomplete by their notion of what constitutes the **Real**: either objective data on one hand or subjective plurality on the other. If we want to see racial healing among us, we need to approach knowing one another, our bodies and our worlds through a different paradigm.

Racial healing involves embodying a covenant epistemology *entre nosotros* because it serves as a bridge between the severed groups, giving each group the agency to move toward one another in the journey of reconciliation. Chapter one made the case that a lack of a unified interpretation of the problem of race results in a lack of a unified Christian response to racial injustice. Chapter two explores how covenant epistemology has the agency to bridge the gaps between land and person, mind and body, and white people and people of color. First, an explanation of why racial problems are epistemological problems is provided, followed by an overview of our current epistemological pain. Covenant epistemology is then presented as a key racial healing lens for all to embody. The chapter ends with examples of how covenant epistemology may facilitate the interpersonal and systemic reparations among Christians.

### *The Race Problem as an Epistemological Problem*

The concept of epistemology and how it was impacted by sociotheological racial formation has already been introduced, but a direct definition and brief review is warranted. Epistemology is the study of knowledge. It seeks to answer the question, How do we know what we know? Esther Lightcap Meek's covenant epistemology gives an account of knowing that is more than just *what* is possible to know, but also *how far* one can know, *how exactly does* one know, and could it be that in the *process* of coming to know, we discover that *we too are being known*? For Meek, epistemology is as much about the *journey* of knowing and the *personal subject* seeking to know as it is about the *object* of knowing (the information or data we seek to find).<sup>155</sup> The premise of this chapter is that the western world suffers from an epistemological pain that was planted in Greco-Roman philosophies and flourished during the Enlightenment. I propose that postmodernity is not a sufficient healing agent for this severed epistemology.

If epistemology is how we know the world around us, then the severance of place from identity impacted our worldview construction. In effect, knowledge of the world was limited to what a white, authoritarian, educated figure said; later, such knowledge was limited to what could be scientifically proven. Recall Jennings's articulation that a consequence of sociotheological racial formation was severing our identity from the land. Thus, identity had to be replaced. By separating land from identity, the signifier and

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<sup>155</sup> Meek, *Loving to Know*, 37-43, and 67-103. Meek draws from Michael Polanyi, sociologist Parker Palmer, and missiologist Lesslie Newbigin to make a case for knowing as personed and unfolding.



qualifier of identity became the white male body.<sup>156</sup> Thus, whiteness is a subconscious yet highly operative worldview, just below the surface of our immediate awareness.

Anthropologists created the term *worldview* to describe diverse cultural perspectives.<sup>157</sup> A worldview is how individuals or communities constitute and explain the world around them. Worldviews inform the norms, values, and traditions that peoples wish to live under.<sup>158</sup> It is possible to simultaneously adhere to multiple worldviews. I posit that even with the allowance for a plurality of worldviews, the racial optic has tainted all worldviews. Essentially, whiteness serves as a meta-worldview by wrapping all other worldviews inside its garment of knowing and consequently usurped episteme. Therefore, our epistemological healing ought to account for how we will detach from this garment.<sup>159</sup>

The whiteness epistemology is the norm and the qualifier of knowing. Very little correction is made to white worldview perspectives.<sup>160</sup> The whiteness interpretation of the world is rarely, if ever, questioned. For example, whiteness affords white bodies the freedom to not interpret police action against them as racially influenced, as our examples

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<sup>156</sup> For further insight into the impact of whiteness on indigenous bodies, read Ivonne del Valle, “From José de Acosta to the Enlightenment: Barbarians, Climate Change, and (Colonial) Technology as the End of History,” *The Eighteenth Century*, 54, no. 4 (2013): 435-459.

<sup>157</sup> See Paul Heibert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), ch. 1.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> How to address this garment of whiteness is later discussed. Jennings argues there are two options for addressing the hegemony of whiteness: either capitulate or resist. Christians cannot fully inhabit either of those spaces. However, the Lord provides Pentecost as a third way of inhabiting racial healing. I conclude that Jennings’s vision of racial healing is consonant with covenant epistemology. Willie Jennings, discussion with the author at the American Academy of Religion Conference, November 18, 2016.

<sup>160</sup> One could argue that whites shaped the constitution and culture of the U.S., thus it makes sense that their worldview is the normative. This argument is problematic, however, because the U.S. was first a land inhabited by indigenous peoples with their own worldviews. The norm in the lands now known as the U.S. was not always a white norm. Another contention is that since European immigrants successfully occupied Native lands, the normative of whiteness was inevitable and necessary for continual control of the land. Herein the argument could be validated (with some challenges), but it nonetheless proves the case that whiteness is a hegemonic way of ordering bodies into a hierarchy that is favorable to the empire.

in the introduction revealed. Whites do not have to question if they are being targeted by police, are allowed acceptance into academic programs because of their race, or granted awards on the basis of their skin color. Whiteness affords white bodies the assumption that what they achieve is due to their ability and their agency rather than their race.

Whiteness, however, does not afford bodies of color that same perspective.

Epistemologically, race is always an interpretive factor for bodies of color because of the associations and meanings connected with each racial group. Whiteness is freed from the question of race because as its creator, it is without race; it is a complete human.<sup>161</sup> Returning to the example of police shootings, for bodies of color in a racialized society, even if the data show proportionally similar numbers of deaths across the racial groups, (which they do not) the question of race will come up as a potential factor.<sup>162</sup> As people who have race placed upon them, people of color are forced to take race into consideration in episteme.

Furthermore, people of color carry the burden of having to capitulate to the power of whiteness. **Code switching** explains how people of color navigate different social situations. Code switching is most illustrative when people of color adjust in performance, language, and dress while in predominantly white institutions. I propose that the very occurrence of code switching indicates an understanding by people of color of their requirement to conform to whiteness. People of color subconsciously and consciously learn the rules of what is appropriate, out of bounds, preferred, and rejected.

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<sup>161</sup> My proposal that Western worldviews are tainted by the meta-worldview of whiteness may be questioned by the existence of the dichotomous Individualistic vs. Collectivistic worldviews. Whites tend to adhere to the former and people of color tend to adhere to the latter. I contend that this dichotomy is not based on race, but rather on socioeconomic and cultural factors. I also argue that both worldviews are impacted by whiteness as the ideal. Collectivist indigenous cultures maintain their collectivist worldview even within a dominant worldview of whiteness. I explain this in the paragraph on code switching.

<sup>162</sup> Recall the Pew Research findings that noted differences in interpretation, where black respondents were more likely to attribute race as a factor in officer-involved shootings compared to whites.

Thus, people of color *become* fluent both within the whiteness worldview *and* also within their racialized worldviews.<sup>163</sup> This fluency taints epistemology in such a way that over time, people of color measure their success against white values and norms.

If a person of color becomes aware of their racialization and interprets this as problematic, he will begin to name his point of departure from the whiteness paradigm. He may begin to embrace and articulate a contextualized worldview *as* a person of color.<sup>164</sup> When his growing contextual perspective is articulated in predominantly white spaces, it is first questioned, and then explained across the racialized epistemology of whiteness.<sup>165</sup> Proof of racial injustice is constantly needed in such situations. When proof is not acceptable or readily understood by the listener, the injustice is often discounted as hypersensitivity or as a misinterpretation of the incident.

One illustration of the racial interpretive gap is a comment made to me last year after speaking at my seminary about being Latina in a predominantly white institution. A white-appearing Latina raised her hand to say, “I have not had your experience, I am fair skinned, most people don’t even guess we are Mexican, but we spoke Spanish at home and ate tortillas.” She then asked if my struggle with race had to do with my “historical baggage. From your parents.” She assumed my parents had taught me about race. She continued, “I grew up in California, I don’t feel like I’ve ever been discriminated against.

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<sup>163</sup> It is important to note that fluency within a whiteness paradigm is both an option and a strong force. Jennings notes that whiteness is an invitation. I would add that it is a forceful option, meaning the agency to resist whiteness is small compared to the agency to capitulate to whiteness. Here I am reminded of Jennings’s two options: resistance or assimilation. The conscious person of color has to decide how they will navigate white systems while honoring their cultural distinctiveness.

<sup>164</sup> Beverly Daniel Tatum has created phases for identity development for whites and people of color. See Beverly Daniel Tatum, *Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And Other Conversations About Race*,” (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 216-217.

<sup>165</sup> Articulating a minoritized critical perspective is the goal of this thesis. I am attempting to articulate a theology from a particular epistemology and ethnocultural perspective, fully aware that such articulation necessitates explanation and qualifiers, not just because this is a thesis defense, but also because it is an interpretation across racialized bodies and epistemologies.

So how can we help someone who is *like you*, dark skin, dark hair.”<sup>166</sup> This comment struck me because a Latina was asking me the same questions white people have asked me before. It surprised me because she knew she was white appearing, and self-identified as such, but she did not understand how her appearance impacted her experience of racism. Instead of attributing our different experiences to our different racializations because of our different skin tones, she attributed our different experiences to “historical baggage,” not as a problem of *race*, but as a problem of *my own understanding and interpretation* of the incidents, in this case a result of a faulty history lesson from my parents. Her question illustrates the power of whiteness to infiltrate all ways of knowing and interpreting the world around us. Whiteness interprets racism as a problem with everything else (a bad history lesson, bad appearance, or one’s own faulty interpretation) except whiteness itself.

Whites carry the burden of having a worldview that usurps the embodied epistemology of the covenanting people of God into their ideal rather than the Lord’s vision of *πάντα τὰ ἔθνη*.<sup>167</sup> The Christian must ask whether the ordering of bodies around a garment of whiteness is warranted within the kingdom of YHWH, where *Gentile* bodies are invited into the covenant promise of fellowship with the Lord and the Lord’s people.

Worldviews oriented around an epistemology of whiteness will always be tainted and never bring racial healing. As long as the hegemony of whiteness prevails, the impasse blocking racial healing will continue. The sociotheological account of racial formation highlights that at one point there was an orientation to the Other that was not restrained by a construct of race. Our common history shows that this racial optic did not

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<sup>166</sup> Angela Hernandez and Noemi Vega, “Latinas in Seminary” (Chapel Service, Fresno Pacific Biblical Seminary, Fresno, CA, February, 2016).

<sup>167</sup> “of all the nations” Matthew 28:19.

always exist, that theology was possible before the racial optic and it can be possible beyond. It may feel impossible to remove the racial optic from our theology and to keep from gazing at one another through this lens, but it *can* be healed and it *can* submit to a different episteme. Whiteness is not epistemology supreme just as much as it is not theology supreme. A healing epistemology is both necessary and possible.

What, then, is the way forward? What is the epistemological healing agent for our communities? In the remaining parts of this chapter, I present covenant epistemology as the answer to this question. After first arguing that our default Western epistemology keeps us separated from our own self, from our bodies, and from one another, I then present covenant epistemology as the second salsa ingredient that will serve as the agency for our racial healing.

### **Our Epistemological Pain: Severed Entities**

The study of knowing in the West focused on the object to be known rather than the subject doing the knowing.<sup>168</sup> Few Western philosophers have considered the *subject* of knowing or have ventured to claim that knowing is a *personal* endeavor.<sup>169</sup> By personal I mean both inter-personal (relational) and intra-personal (the individual agent

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<sup>168</sup> Eastern philosophies also focused on the object rather than the subject, see Joya Colon-Berezin and Peter Goodwin Heltzel, “Jesus/Christ the Hybrid: Toward a Postcolonial Evangelical Christology,” in *Evangelical Postcolonial Conversations: Global Awakenings in Theology and Praxis*, ed. Kay Higuera Smith, Jayachitra Lalitha, and L. Daniel Hawk (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014), 156-158, 163. The authors present Eastern philosophy as *apophatic* theology (focusing on the mystery of God) as a response to the certainty claims of Western theology, but I contend that this still does not focus on the one seeking to know and how that might impact knowing God. For a review of the impact of Western epistemology on theology, see Justo L. González, *Mañana: Christian Theology from a Hispanic Perspective*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 48-53, 89-115, and 134-151. Aristotle saw knowing as searching for the ideal good, see Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, translated by W.D. Ross (Kitchener: Batoche Books, 1999), Book I. Descartes’s *cogito* greatly impacted Kant and his search for truth. See Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. Allen W. Wood (Boston: Yale University Press, 2002), 1-63.

<sup>169</sup> Meek notes Søren Kierkegaard, Michael Polanyi, Parker Palmer, and Leslie Newbigin as philosophers seeking to understand the person in acts of knowing. It is also important to remember that Native American and indigenous perspectives on knowing differed from what was taking place in academia. They knew and understood life as connected with land, the elements, and the fauna. Perhaps a return to this way of covenanting with the world can be learned for our racial healing.

seeking to know). Even liberation pedagogies and philosophies such as those of Paulo Freire's or Enrique Dussel's continue to *respond* to the epistemological pain of severing mind from body rather than provide a new method of knowing.<sup>170</sup> Though what they offer is valid and important, it is still wanting as a healing agent for our epistemological divide. The following is a brief overview of our epistemological pain and why neither modern objective notions of knowing nor postmodern subjective notions of knowing are enough to serve as racial healing agents.

Plato and Aristotle's theoretical explorations have greatly impacted epistemology. Plato's forms influenced what one could consider the Real. Plato postulated that the only source of knowledge comes from non-physical entities, which he named *forms* (also known as *arches*).<sup>171</sup> If forms are the primary source of knowledge and the only access to the Real, then there is a separation between the forms (mind/soul) and the body. Dualism emerged as a result of this postulation that relegated the Real to a form rather than to an embodiment of the Real. Gnosticism was a consequence of such thinking that influenced Christianity, peeling away the divinity of Jesus from the humanity of Jesus.<sup>172</sup> The Real became abstract and available only in ideas. Plato's *Meno* presented the Learner's

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<sup>170</sup> Liberation Theology comes close to covenant epistemology by taking seriously the act of knowing *first* from embodied subjective experience and *then* through a formulation of theology. However, liberation theologies also miss the ability to provide a reconciliatory bridge between white experience and people of color's experience primarily because their aim is to bring liberation *to* the oppressed. Future studies could examine how liberating the oppressed is in tandem with racial reparative justice. See Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, translated by Mayra Bergman Ramos (New York: Continuum, 2005), 43-70, 125. Freire attempted a new method of teaching centered on praxis and transformation. While this is close to bridging the racial healing gap, it does not explicitly provide an epistemological corrective to knowing that is focused through a guiding norm. See also Enrique Dussel, *Twenty Theses on Politics*, translated by George Ciccariello-Maher (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

<sup>171</sup> Esther Lightcap Meek, *Longing to Know: The Philosophy of Knowledge for Ordinary People*, (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2003), 28-29. Meek explains how Socrates' execution by the State motivated Plato to show that "some things are wrong and others are right" (28). Before Plato, Protagoras was teaching that man was the measure of all reality. It is interesting to note the historical ebb and flow between two extreme views: essentialism/objectivism on one hand and pluralism/ subjectivism on the other.

<sup>172</sup> González, *Mañana*, 140-143.

Paradox that asked if knowing was even possible. Socrates falsified the paradox, but only by appealing to an immortal soul.<sup>173</sup> Thus, the sources of knowledge remained a mystery and in question.

Aristotle replaced the forms with the *ousia*, which he defined as an ontology or essence of the Real.<sup>174</sup> For Aristotle, knowledge about any object can only be derived from that being's *essential* characteristics. What appears to be a contrast with Plato is in effect very similar. The Real remains a disembodied entity because Aristotle defines the Real in essentialist terms. One could argue that Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (350 B.C.E.) defines the Real in an embodied view of *zoon politikon* (political life). Instead of an ambiguous *ousia*, the Real is a virtuous (ethical) balance between knowledge and passion. Essentially (pun intended), the Real is a hexis; that is, a turning of the self to find balance in the relationship between one's passions and one's knowing.<sup>175</sup> Virtue is learned as a series of choices toward or away from ethical participation in political life. This ethic is concerned with the life of the community over the life of the individual. What remains problematic for Aristotle's theory, however, is whom he identifies as a valid participant in political life. As noted in the previous chapter, if the Real of a person is defined as their essence, then a person born into slavery is *essentially* a slave now and

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<sup>173</sup> Plato, *Meno* 80d1-4. Meno asked Socrates how one can know anything at all. Socrates phrases the paradox: "The claim is that it's impossible for a man to search either for what he knows or for what he doesn't know: he wouldn't be searching for what he knows, since he knows it and that makes the search unnecessary, and he can't search for what he doesn't know either, since he doesn't even know what it is he's going to search for" in Oxford World's Classics: Plato: *Meno and Other Dialogues: Charmides, Laches, Lysis, Meno*. Translated by Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 113-114. Socrates responds that since the priests believed the soul was eternal, it already knew all things. Thus, when a person is searching for X in this world, she knows what to search for because her soul has already known X. Knowing is recollection. This was problematic for philosophers who did not agree with an eternal soul. Even for those that did, the dichotomy that one either knows or does not know remained problematic.

<sup>174</sup> Joseph Agassi, *The Very Idea of Modern Science: Francis Bacon and Robert Boyle* (New York: Springer Science and Business Media Dordrecht, 2013), 22.

<sup>175</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean*, Books 1-2.

for the rest of their life. The *ousia* of peoples prevented Aristotle from seeing how their very *ousia* might keep certain peoples forever separated in a *zoon politikon*.

The roots of Foundationalism, Realism, Universalism, and Absolute Truth can be found in both Platonic and Aristotelian thought. However, philosopher Esther Lightcap Meek makes the case that the “disease of philosophical modernism” fully flourished with Descartes’ *cogito*, *I think, therefore I am*. The results of elevating the individual “I” as the only real source of knowledge were a search for certainty, a need for objectivism, an elevation of the ocular metaphor, and a continued untested essentialism.<sup>176</sup> If the only Real to be trusted was what could be empirically verified, then truth could only be described propositionally. Once certain scientific observations were described propositionally, truth had to be unchanging and the search for truth had to be objective. These ideals toward the Real sealed the separation between mind knowledge and body knowledge. Thus, bodies became objectified beings and the Real was thrust onto a petri dish.

After the Enlightenment, Romanticism and Subjectivism launched a counter-attack against the absolute real. Instead of objective Reality and Truth, philosophers like Nietzsche, Derrida, and Camus questioned their very definition.<sup>177</sup> Far from healing the divide between mind and body, land and identity, and truth as Real versus truth as construct, postmodernity has continued the separation. By replacing the objective Real with the subjective real, epistemology remains elusive. The former could not make space for intuitive, embodied epistemologies, while the latter could not make space for epistemologies grounded in a sense of the Real. The former is plagued by objectivity and

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<sup>176</sup> Meek, *Loving to Know*, 18-30.

<sup>177</sup> Robert C. Greer, *Mapping Postmodernism: a survey of Christian Options* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2003), 223. See 224-228 for a helpful overview of existentialism and postmodernism.



objectification while the latter is plagued by plurality and subjectivity. Neither of these epistemologies respects the knowing itself; neither fully honors the person in her quest to know, and neither honors the Real that one is seeking to know. Postcolonial theologies attempt to restore the body as subject within evangelicalism, but some of these attempts question the Real, the particularity of Jesus.<sup>178</sup> Meek argues, “Christians continue to struggle to value anything material – despite professing the doctrines that God created the world and that Jesus became flesh.”<sup>179</sup>

The lens of covenant presents an epistemology that restores the divide between person and land, mind and body, and person to person.<sup>180</sup> Meek’s *covenant epistemology* respects the Real, the person seeking the Real, and the act of coming to know the Real in such a way that draws these severed entities toward one another. Meek’s is primarily a covenantal, relational knowing.<sup>181</sup> Meek asserts there is a myth of objectivity in epistemology. To know something is more than information; rather, it is transformation, it is to be in relationship with that entity. The etymology of truth is *troth*, an old word for pledge. Thus, knowers enter into a pledge with the known; the two become part of each other’s life. “Knowing becomes a reunion of separated beings whose primary bond is not of logic, but of love.”<sup>182</sup> This hints of a reconciliatory knowing between severed entities. The following describes how covenant epistemology can be used as the impetus for the reparative relationship of racialized beings.

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<sup>178</sup> Colon-Berezin and Heltzel, “Jesus/Christ the Hybrid,” 160-165. This section highlights the tension between holding onto the Real of Jesus’ Jewishness and the Real of what is not known. While I support hybridized theories of Christ, I warn theologians to stay focused on the particularity of Christ, since a tendency in elevating the subject in knowing is to lose focus on the object of knowing.

<sup>179</sup> Meek, *Loving to Know*, 18.

<sup>180</sup> Restoring this way of knowing requires learning from communities that already have this epistemology and have had it throughout time, such as Native American and indigenous communities.

<sup>181</sup> Meek, *Loving to Know*, 36-43.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 41. Citing Parker Palmer, if one terminates the known, one terminates the knower.

### Covenant Epistemology: A Healing Agent for Severed Knowing

Covenant epistemology is rooted in the notion that all knowing is relational. Meek intentionally uses covenant to describe this relationship.<sup>183</sup> Beyond a treaty or promise, covenant is faithfulness forever.<sup>184</sup> Chapter three explores covenant as the Lord's forever faithfulness and lovingkindness manifested through Immanuel. Covenant epistemology sets up this interpretation of Immanuel by reorienting knowing. Instead of knowing limited to information and data, covenant epistemology presents knowing as a transformative and embodied unfolding of relationship. If knowing is relational, then it is a dynamic process between the knower and the known, one that requires patience, respect, and humility. Knowing is best described as covenantal.

Covenant epistemology allows for “knower and known [to be] rehabilitated as personal.”<sup>185</sup> Truth becomes personal, not elusive or merely factual. Seeking truth thus becomes a matter of discipleship, of personal formation and reformation. Seeking to know calls forth faithfulness to that search. Since knowing is covenantal, then there are healthy ways of knowing and there are harmful ways of knowing. In the background of all healthy ways of knowing is caring, or as continental philosopher Martin Heidegger describes, it is *dasein*; which he defined as coping and caring.<sup>186</sup> So again we imagine restorative, reparative knowing as personal and relational, requiring personal skill development in relating to the Other and requiring personal choice to walk toward and

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<sup>183</sup> *Covenant* comes from a medieval term with Latin roots *con* + *venire*. It is defined as distinct parties coming together to give and receive agreements. Translated from Hebrew *berit* and Greek *diatheke*. Covenants have one of two forms: vertical and horizontal. The vertical is a divine-human covenant with stipulations, focusing on loyalty. The horizontal is a person to person agreement “wherein the parties agree to walk together in the ways of God, who is invoked as the source of that relationship, witness to that pledge, and the seal of its sanctity.” Max L. Stackhouse, “Covenant,” *Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics*, ed. Joel B. Green (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2011), 182-183.

<sup>184</sup> Read Psalm 146 as an example of this use.

<sup>185</sup> Meek, *Loving to Know*, 37-39.

<sup>186</sup> Meek, *Longing to Know*, 70.

with the Other, the known, the Real. Knowing is personal connecting, personal searching, and personal passion toward the Known, and regarding the Known as a truth to be honored. Caring, respect, and love undergird this active epistemology. As Meek posits, “The real discloses itself in its own time and way. And when it does it is grace.”<sup>187</sup>

Since knowing is covenantal, there is something Real to be known. Covenant epistemology is a form of realism. “In our knowing, we access the real, in fact, the real has transformative primacy in our knowing.”<sup>188</sup> Since there is a Real to be known, the process of knowing is covenantal ontology. In other words, everything that exists is covenantally characterized, holding certain and distinct features that are uncovered on the Real’s own terms. I can know the world because creation presents itself to me through the sound of the wind or the fluttering of a butterfly. I do not control these; I have to wait on these Reals to reveal themselves to me. I can know myself as I pay attention to the signals my body puts forth via, for example, hunger pains or the acquisition of skill in learning to play the trombone. Similarly, I can better know my white neighbors or my neighbors of color as they choose to reveal their reality and their truth to me. Covenant epistemology respects the Real and the search itself all the while maintaining the particularity of the one seeking to know. This coming to know is also a coming to be known. The knowing process develops our humanity by better connecting us to the world, our bodies, and to one another, *entre nosotros*.

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<sup>187</sup> Meek, *Loving to Know*, 37.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 400. Meek draws this from Polanyi’s tacit knowledge.

*The Knowing Process in Covenant Epistemology*

Meek claims that all knowing is covenantally constituted, as hinted by the **personed** epistemology of Søren Kierkegaard and explicated by Michael Polanyi.<sup>189</sup> For a visual diagram of the knowing process as described in what follows, please refer to Appendix B on page 131. Michael Polanyi was a polymath, a trained physicist, chemist, scientist and philosopher of knowing. Polanyi's *Personal Knowledge* (1958) and *The Tacit Dimension* (1966) describe knowing as personal and attainable. Polanyi was ahead of his time in respecting the subject who is seeking to know while at the same time respecting the Real of what could be known. Polanyi recognized that knowing comes from clues, or **subsidiaries**. Meek adds to his theory of subsidiaries by grouping clues into three primary access points: the world, the body, and the normative word.<sup>190</sup> The world provides clues from the background, the foreground, situations, and circumstances. The body provides clues through skill acquisition and signals throughout the body. "As we gain skill, our body knowledge is shaped and developed. Then, we add tools. In our skilled use of them, it's as if our body extends to their edges. We internalize them, or indwell them."<sup>191</sup> The **normative word** is the guide that provides the direction of our knowing. This could be in the form of a coach, a map, or for Christians, the Lord. The world, the body, and the normative word are thus subsidiary clues among us for knowing.

Knowing is derived from subsidiaries that are integrated through a focal pattern that begins to emerge. As one is seeking to know, one is paying attention to the subsidiaries to see if they point toward a focal pattern. Once a pattern is discerned, one sees the subsidiaries in a focalized, transformed way, like a gestalt. "The act of knowing

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<sup>189</sup> Meek, *Loving to Know*, 67-122.

<sup>190</sup> Meek, *Longing to Know*, 47.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

is the human's skilled coping with the world through achieving a coherence, an integrated pattern, a making sense of things, that opens the world to us."<sup>192</sup> The goal of knowing is to go from the particulars to the focal pattern. We don't leave the particulars behind; rather, we continue to rely on them to focus and once we discern the pattern, we can focus beyond them to know the Real. Recall how much I love to watch my mom making salsa. I didn't learn how to make salsa just by watching her, just by attending to the particulars. Over time, as I attended to her actions and her ingredients, wrote these down, and tried them out on my own, the focal pattern of making salsa emerged. My mouth tasted the difference between *tomatillos* and *tomatoes*. Now I can go beyond the particulars and the focus to further attune to the kind of salsa that I most enjoy, *pico de gallo*. Before I learned how to make *pico de gallo*, salsa was an ambiguous, challenging task that I wanted to know.

Knowing unfolds and self-corrects, it does not end once I have learned to make salsa. The next phase of knowing is integration; it is dynamic in form. Integration involves trial and error, where gaps in knowing become apparent. These gaps testify to the three-dimensional nature of knowing. Meek explains that the gaps present **indeterminate future possibilities**. These possibilities are grouped through an emerging focal pattern that constitutes and is consistent with the Real, i.e. the known. Thus, the human knower cannot totally determine "his or her 'own' truth. For too much of it is future, and we are always surprised."<sup>193</sup> Gaps necessitate humility in knowing, an awareness of the world as vast and inexhaustible, and imply that ones' achievement of a known may be inaccurate. Knowing is the dynamic unfolding of the knower and the

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 129.

known. If the knower misconstrues the known, the knower can re-integrate new subsidiaries that better honors the known. Covenant epistemology is unique in that it offers particularity of experience grounded in a normative reality, all done with caring *dasein*, a **noticing regard**.

### **Covenant Epistemology as Healing Agent for our Racial Pain**

Racial pain is a result of sociotheological racial formation that impacted epistemology by separating place from identity, mind from body, and person from person. Covenant epistemology is a significant racial healing agent because it grounds us in the possibility of accessing the Real while humbly allowing for error and reintegration. Covenant epistemology serves as a healing agent in five regards: it allows for knowing to be a journey of opening oneself up to the Real, it is constituted in covenant friendship with the other, it maintains a healthy differentiation from the other, it invites a noticing regard for the other, and it illustrates knowing as a healing dance with one another.

If knowing is relational and a journey of opening oneself up to the real, knowing requires humility, a willingness to be transformed, and a commitment to the goal of knowing for shalom. Both whites and people of color are prone to postulating their understanding of how race “actually” works in the U.S. with an unmovable and divisive rhetoric. To counter this, humility is required from both parties. Transformation is required of both parties. Whites need to humbly accept that the wrongs of the past continue to manifest themselves in wrongs and harms of the present. People of color need to humbly acknowledge that anger exists and allow that anger to fuel racial *healing* instead of racial harm.<sup>194</sup> Transformation, and (I would add) in the form of discipleship, is required by both parties. Racial healing is much like journeying with Jesus to the cross.

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<sup>194</sup> Once we achieve access to influence, let us not oppress as we have been oppressed.

We need to remember that we are bystanders to his unique journey to the cross and that most of us are Gentiles invited into his covenant people. If we can remember this posture, this humility, then racial healing conversations among us, even when we talk about relational *and systemic* reparations, will bring the shalom our world needs to witness.

This shalom is evidenced through covenant friendship with the other.<sup>195</sup> In my eleven years of working with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, I have learned that multiethnicity is not the same as racial healing. In fact, an ethnically diverse community does not necessarily indicate an embrace and welcome of diverse leadership styles. However, when a group is committed to multiethnicity *and* racial healing, the dynamic is vibrant, rich, and inviting. Covenant friendships emerge when two very different parties choose into faithfulness together. It is evidenced when there are authentic conversations of race, where whites and people of color allow their experiences to be told and their reals to be honored, all interpreted through the normative word.

One of my favorite memories on staff with InterVarsity was when I stopped our regular evening schedule during a six-week urban program because the white staff leader and I were having racial conflict. We first addressed the conflict between us, and then we invited our diverse community to join us. We did this because we wanted to show our students that even when racial pain and mistakes happen, reintegration and racial healing occur together, but only when both parties are committed to one another.

Commitment to one another in covenant friendship does not negate the particularity of people's cultures and background. A common misinterpretation of racial healing involves assuming that all have to be the same. Galatians 3:28 is often cited as

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<sup>195</sup> "Knowing healingly is what humans were made to do. We have been called in our earth stewarding to promote shalom...A healthy act of knowing leaves neither knower nor known where it was, but constitutes an intersection of trajectories down the road" (Meek, *Loving to Know*, 51).

the justification for all peoples being one, all being the same. This is a misinterpretation of the text. Groups ought not to focus on particularity, since that would be falling into subjectivity and elevating one's body as the ideal, (infer in this sentence the idolatry of the self).<sup>196</sup> Neither should the focus of the group be uniformity to a hegemonic norm (infer in this the idolatry of the norm, or the subconscious allegiance to whiteness). These idols are the myths that covenant epistemology weeds out. By personing knowledge and respecting the knower, differentiation is possible. Particularity is maintained within the covenant relationship, as is evident in the Trinity. In the Trinity we see mutual submission and mutual responsibility, particularity even within unity. This grounds truth in the Real. Thus, while race is a construct imposed on a person, ethnicity and culture are embodied, lived out ways of being. One can respect their cultures and ethnic backgrounds while remaining in covenant relationship with the other.<sup>197</sup> Commitment to covenant necessitates respecting and not appropriating other's cultures. This is healthy differentiation.

As one grows in maturity and in knowing oneself, they are better able to have a noticing regard for the other.<sup>198</sup> I interpret this noticing regard as that which I have for my mom when she makes salsa, or sits in front of the television watching *Caso Cerrado*. My noticing regard is a loving look that contours my face when I take the time to appreciate my *ama*, to be present to her, and regard her with care. Can you imagine if we were to replace the racial optic with a noticing regard for one another? The racial optic is so

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<sup>196</sup> We need to center our ego in God's presence so that its defensiveness and fear can be removed. No longer the center, the ego "can be freed to encounter the other with love" (Meek, *Loving to Know*, 186).

<sup>197</sup> I need emphasize that whites have ethnic backgrounds, but racialization has usurped these.

<sup>198</sup> See Jeffery Scott Mio, Lori A. Barker, and Jaydee Tuma, *Multicultural Psychology: Understanding Our Diverse Communities*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, (New York: McGraw Hill, 2009), 269. The authors cite research for the importance of self-awareness in cross-cultural therapy.



invisible, subtle, and powerful that it will take a great deal of effort to look at one another with a noticing regard. I will not look at strangers or friends with the kind of noticing regard I give my mom, but ever since coming across covenant epistemology, I have practiced seeing the other with this care and concern. It is an attempt to see the best of who a person can be, to regard their presence as welcome, to be open to their presence in my life, and to be faithful and hospitable to their unfolding and openness toward me.

Can you see how this noticing regard for the other could bridge our racial divides? Instead of focusing on data illustrating why people of color and whites are so disparate, we learn to focus on the possibility that this person before me has something to teach me about the Real. That this person in front of me has value and worth, that their presence is a gift, and even a necessity for my own racial healing. A noticing regard for the other surprises us when we see, in the face of the other, a noticing regard toward us.

Covenant epistemology provides a racial healing dance among us. It is a dance filled with indeterminate future possibilities. It is a dance that we are always invited into, even if we have made mistakes before. It is a dance that a person is always learning, even if that person has written a thesis about racial healing. It is a dance because it is give-and-take; we must be open to the possibility of the other, by the reality of the other, be open to the Real racialized stories of the other. We must be willing to both learn from the other and follow one another. In doing so, the interpretive gap will be closed.

Willie Jennings envisions racial healing as the ability to tell one another's stories. I learn the history of my Native American neighbors, of my Swedish-German co-worker, of my Italian friend. I learn the stories of my white neighbors whose ethnicities have been usurped by whiteness and whose healing means finding their cultural heritage. But I don't

stop at learning, I also tell. I share their stories because it furthers racial healing among us. It reminds us that we are covenantally constituted, wired to be in relationship with another. In the end, we are more like porcupines dancing. We will inevitably and inadvertently prick one another in the process, but we continue the dance, because it is fun, because we too are being known, and because we are in covenant.

An entire book could be written on how covenant epistemology could practically serve racial healing efforts in the U.S. I have presented introductory ideas that I hope in the future will manifest into realities. Chapter three is a biblical exploration of Immanuel that attempts to apply what we have already learned: a gentile remembrance and a covenant epistemology. In the next chapter, I interpret the biblical exploration with humility, reading it as a Gentile entering into the covenant story of Israel being invited into that transformation. Chapter four is an attempt at an *Evangélica* application of Immanuel through a covenant epistemology. By this I mean to take seriously the subsidiary clues from my world, my lived body, and my normative grounding in the Word and integrate these through the focal pattern of a *Mexicana* growing up in, being shaped by, and living in the U.S. Ultimately, I am making the case for continued stories to inform the racial healing conversations among us. My attempt is just one story of the many that need to be told, welcomed, and retold.

**Chapter Three Ingredient Three:**  
**A Theology of Immanuel for Racial Healing**

The third ingredient in our racial healing salsa is a theology of Immanuel, of God with us. Chapter one exposed a sociotheological racial formation that tainted the way the West continues to understand and interpret the world across a racial lens. Chapter two presented covenant epistemology as a healing agent for that interpretive gap. This chapter makes the case that a theology of Immanuel through the lens of covenant epistemology further facilitates racial healing *entre nosotros*. A theology of Immanuel rooted in covenant epistemology is the gathering force from which various peoples and communities are drawn together to engage in sincere and long-lasting racial healing work for the following reasons.

First, a covenantal lens of Immanuel heeds Willie Jennings's warning to read theology with Gentile Remembrance (ch. 1). The following is a humble approach of a Gentile (myself) entering the covenant story of Israel and the biblical concept of Immanuel. Second, a theology of Immanuel serves as a bridge in the interpretive gap between whites and people of color as will be shown through the noticing regard of covenant epistemology (ch. 2). This chapter explores a theology of Immanuel by answering these questions: who are the recipients of Immanuel (who are the "us"?), and in what way does Immanuel show his presence "with us" as a newly formed covenant community across, but not ignorant of, the racial lines?<sup>199</sup> The chapter hopes to show how a theology of Immanuel provides rich new applications in our racial healing work using a covenant epistemology.<sup>200</sup> First, a theology of Immanuel is presented and then discussed

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<sup>199</sup> Danny Carrol helped me formulate these questions, e-mail message to author, June 20, 2016.

<sup>200</sup> Recall the indeterminate future possibilities grounded in the normative word from chapter two. In this case the normative word is a theology of Immanuel or God *entre nosotros* and the indeterminate

in the context of a covenant epistemology. Chapter four carries Immanuel forward using a **minoritized critical perspective** and exploring implications of “God with us” for racial healing. As Jennings and covenant epistemology remind us, entering the story of Israel and entering into the knowing process is a work of transformation.

### *A Theology of Immanuel, God With Us*<sup>201</sup>

#### **Method**

This theological study of Immanuel begins with an analysis of the three literal statements of “God With Us”: Isa. 7:14, Isa. 8:8, and Matt. 1:23. The texts are explored within their biblical context and sociopolitical conditions. Each verse answers two questions: “Who is us,” and “How does God show himself as ‘with us,’ in this context?” To expand the biblical understanding of Immanuel, this chapter explores **theophanic sketches** of the Spirit of God in Matthew.<sup>202</sup> Specifically, verses containing the word “πνεῦμα” are explored. By connecting the Holy Spirit with Immanuel as “God with us” today, the thesis shows how Immanuel serves as a guide for the community of believers. The biblical exploration of Immanuel ends with a summary of conclusions gathered from the texts, but the theological concept of Immanuel unfolds throughout the rest of the thesis as it is interfaced with covenant epistemology and articulated through an *Evangélica* perspective.

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future possibilities are found in the interface between covenant epistemology and Immanuel. “God with us” is the primary focal integration whereas covenant epistemology, a Latina theology of Immanuel, and applications of these are subsidiaries through which we interpret, apply, and are molded by Immanuel.

<sup>201</sup> “Immanuel” is the Hebrew word *לֵאמֹן* translated into English, Emmanuel is the Greek word *Ἐμμανουήλ* translated into English, and both mean “God with us.” The thesis uses Immanuel as a theological concept and “Immanuel” when exploring its scriptural references.

<sup>202</sup> A theophany is a “physical appearance or personal manifestation of a god to a person.” Charles Lee Feinberg, “Theophany,” *Homan Bible Dictionary*, 1991, 1338.

### Immanuel in Isaiah:

#### An Assurance of God's Presence Amidst Confusing and Turbulent Times

Isaiah is composed of literature ranging from prophecy, history, narrative, judgment, and poetry. Tim Bulkeley divides Isaiah into three sections: chapters 1-39 describing YHWH as “The Lord of Israel and of Imperial Overlords,” chapters 40-55 pointing to an aretology of “the Only God,” and chapters 56-66 declaring YHWH as “Israel’s Lord.”<sup>203</sup> These categories show how the book of Isaiah is concerned with communicating the continued covenant between Israel and YHWH during times of war, exile, and political instability. At this moment in Israel’s history, the covenant promises were observably insecure: would YHWH hold to the Mosaic and Davidic promises even when Israel was not faithful? The question was pressing for the Israelites living “under the shadow of empires,” first the Assyrian and then the Babylonian.<sup>204</sup> Christopher Hays describes the prophet Isaiah as a colonized poet-intellectual.<sup>205</sup> Isaiah’s “Immanuel” significantly appears at the beginning of Israel’s shadowed existence under empire, at the moment the Israelites questioned if their covenant with YHWH would still remain.

#### *Isaiah 7:14*

“Immanuel” appears in chapters seven and eight, with both appearances positioned within the account of the Syro-Ephraimite crisis.<sup>206</sup> Ahaz, king of Judah, was

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<sup>203</sup> Tim Bulkeley, “Living in Empire: What Purposes do Assertions of Divine Sovereignty Serve in Isaiah?” in *Isaiah and Imperial Context: The Book of Isaiah in the Times of Empire*, eds. Andrew T. Abernethy, Mark G. Brett, Tim Bulkeley, and Tim Meadowcroft. (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2013), ch. 4.

<sup>204</sup> Andrew T. Abernethy, “Eating, Assyrian Imperialism, and God’s Kingdom in Isaiah,” in *Isaiah and Imperial Context: The Book of Isaiah in the Times of Empire*, eds. Andrew T. Abernethy, Mark G. Brett, Tim Bulkeley, and Tim Meadowcroft. (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2013), ch. 2.

<sup>205</sup> Christopher B. Hays, “Isaiah as Colonized Poet: His Rhetoric of Death in Conversation with African Postcolonial Writers,” in *Isaiah and Imperial Context: The Book of Isaiah in the Times of Empire*, eds. Andrew T. Abernethy, Mark G. Brett, Tim Bulkeley, and Tim Meadowcroft. (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2013), ch. 3.

<sup>206</sup> Bulkeley, *Living in Empire*, ch. 4.

facing threats from Israel (Ephraim) in the north and Syria (Aram) in the east for refusing to join their coalition against the Assyrians. Ahaz's relationship with the Lord was characteristically unsteady as he followed the ways of the surrounding kings, created images and idols for worship, and burned his own sons.<sup>207</sup> Perhaps it was Ahaz's behavior that made him shake at the thought of Syria and Israel's alliance (7:1-2). Desperate, Ahaz "thought his only hope lay in securing aid from the Neo-Assyrians."<sup>208</sup> Ahaz wanted to seek the aid of a bigger empire for protection.

In the midst of desperation, Ahaz turned to Isaiah, who reminded him to trust in the Lord's protection over Judah (7:3-11). Ahaz refused Isaiah's advice to ask for a sign, saying, "I will not ask; I will not put the Lord to the test" (7:12). This exchange highlights Ahaz's inability to perceive YHWH as faithful to his covenant. Had Ahaz trusted God, he would have asked for a sign and received encouragement amidst his nation's predicament. The Lord gave Ahaz a sign nonetheless, the sign of "Immanuel."

The first appearance of "Immanuel" (עִמָּנוּאֵל in Hebrew) is found in Isa. 7:14 and means "God with us" or "with us is God." Isaiah tells Ahaz, "the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel." Isaiah then prophesied the demise of Syria and Israel as originating from an even greater threat, that of the king of Assyria (7:17-25). "Immanuel" was a signpost to the coming Assyrian invasion, "For before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste" (7:16). Two primary questions emerge in examining the "Immanuel" announcement in this text. First, if

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<sup>207</sup> II Chron., 28.

<sup>208</sup> Bruce C. Birch et. al, *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 320.

“Immanuel” means “God with us,” then who is the “us” referring to in this text and how will God show himself as “with us” in this context?

The immediate answer to the “us” question in Isa. 7:14 is King Ahaz and the people of Judah. Immanuel is both symbolic (pointing to the time that is to come) and covenanted (the sign of “Immanuel” revealing YHWH’s presence with Israel even amidst these times). The birth of Isaiah’s son signaled to Judah that they were to start steadfastly preparing themselves for the coming Assyrian invasion. Such a proclamation of God being *with* the people of Judah amidst conquest evoked both comfort and fear among the people, but primarily the latter. They would have found comfort in knowing that their covenant with YHWH would be spared from complete destruction, but feel profound fear at the impending Assyrian threat. Thus, through “Immanuel,” God was with the people of Judah by providing a signpost of the imminent imperial conquest. “Immanuel” was a warning image to prepare for the time at hand. But is “Immanuel” only a sign for Isaiah or is Isaiah’s second use in chapter eight (discussed in detail below) indicative of a larger promise of covenant faithfulness? Further study will highlight the latter as encompassing both Isaiah’s use of “Immanuel” amidst confusing and turbulent times as well as Matthew’s use of Jesus as Immanuel throughout time.

#### *Isaiah 8:8*

Isaiah continues the Immanuel theme in chapter eight with a nuanced significance. The larger pericope of the Immanuel theme is found in 7:1-12:6 and is commonly referred to as the Book of Immanuel. For the second appearance of “Immanuel,” the immediate pericope is 8:1-8:18. One may argue that the pericope ends at 8:18, after the voice of the Lord has spoken through Isaiah. However, the theme of God’s

redemption through the promised royal son of David, (an understanding of Immanuel throughout the ages), appears through chapter twelve.

Chapter eight begins with the Lord instructing Isaiah to write the words *Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz* on a scroll. Isaiah is instructed to give this name, which means, “swift is booty, speedy is prey,” to his son. The name symbolized the coming Assyrian conquest of Ahaz’s enemies, Damascus and Samaria (v. 4). The scene is legal and covenantal in tone. It is legal in that the Lord called for a “reliable witnesses” to prove Isaiah’s receipt of the message. It is covenantal when the Lord instructed Isaiah to make “love to the prophethess” to show Isaiah’s obedience to the message and his covenant with his wife (vv. 2-3). A prophetic judgment speech follows against Judah, first for rejecting the Lord’s sustaining love and second for rejoicing over the deaths of Damascus and the king of Israel (vv. 5-18).

The judgment speech contains one literal reference to “Immanuel” in v. 8 and one allusion to Immanuel in v. 10. The former is “עִמָּנוּאֵל Immanuel” and the latter alludes to Immanuel in the phrase, “God is with us.” Both iterations provide symbols of hope amidst judgment. In contrast to the first literal occurrence that signaled “Immanuel” would be present in the coming invasion, the second literal reference in 8:8 and the allusion in 8:10 exhibit “Immanuel” as present amidst invasion. The Assyrian invasion would impact Judah as well (8:7-8). Significantly, the judgment speech ends with the pronouncement of “Immanuel.”

Once “Immanuel” is announced, the tone shifts from one of judgment against Judah to one of protection from its enemies. Thus “Immanuel” in 8:8 indicates both judgment and covenant faithfulness. God is with Judah both in judgment and in covenant.



God is with Judah in judgment against the nation's separation from covenant with YHWH and its neighbors. God is with Judah by keeping YHWH's *own* faithfulness to the covenant as evidenced in the subsequent verses.<sup>209</sup> The Lord challenges the invading armies in v. 9, "Be broken, O peoples, and be shattered," and repeats "Gird yourselves, yet be shattered." In v. 10, the Lord again summons the nations, "Devise a plan, but it will be thwarted; State a proposal, but it will not stand, *for God is with us*" (emphasis added). Isaiah describes YHWH as sovereign among the nations, claiming that even the governing empires are "being used unknowingly as a tool by YHWH."<sup>210</sup>

After the judgment speech against the nations, Judah receives instructions for living as a conquered people. Isaiah reminds Judah of "Immanuel" when he depicts his children as embodied "signs and wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion." Thus, again the Immanuel theme is seen as a glimmer of good news in the midst of judgment and turmoil. The general outline of judgment speech followed by a salvific or restorative proclamation follows the rest of the Immanuel book. Significantly, 12:6 ends the Immanuel book by declaring that the Lord's presence remains among the people of Zion, "Cry aloud and shout for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel."

Who is Immanuel for in this chapter? The people of Judah are the recipients of the Assyrian invasion, thus the recipients of Immanuel. God is declaring his continued covenant faithfulness in the midst of war and judgment. God will be with the people of Judah through his faithfulness to the house of David even in the midst of judgment (e.g.

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<sup>209</sup> God's covenant faithfulness in spite of Judah's *unfaithfulness* is a significant theme of the OT. See Katherine Doob Sakenfeld, *Faithfulness in Action: Loyalty in Biblical Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 22-26, 40, 44, 49, 59, 67, 126, 139.

<sup>210</sup> Bulkeley, "Living in Empire," ch. 4.

9:1-7 and 10:20-12:6). One may wonder, how does God maintain his presence among his people even while allowing them to go through downfall? This is the story of Immanuel and the covenant faithfulness of the Lord throughout the biblical narrative: God is “with us” even when it is difficult to perceive as a promise, even when YHWH’s presence feels far away or absent. Isaiah received this judgment word from the Lord, but even so signs of YHWH’s presence and the eventual redemption of YHWH’s people are provided. How did the conquered people, Isaiah’s audience, respond to such a pithy statement of “Immanuel”? Would they have perceived it as flippant or persuasive? As a painful remembrance of their sin or as a hopeful image of what could be once again? I posit that the actuality of Immanuel, YHWH with us, is both frightening and comforting, and thus the original audience would have felt both exposed in their fear and comforted in their pain.

The theological question concerning the recipients of Immanuel’s covenant faithfulness is significant. Old Testament scholars note that, “Isaiah is the first to suggest that there is a comprehensive and comprehensible plan that involves all creation.”<sup>211</sup> But how is the gap between the “us” that refers to the covenanting people of God, i.e. the Israelites, and the “us” of the covenanting peoples of God across the world bridged? Will Immanuel eventually come to include all peoples within the family of God, even those from non-Israelite backgrounds? The question is particularly interesting for this thesis because it alludes to the immanent reality that somehow, in time, God intervened to be among “us” not just for his people in Zion, but also for those who are invited to participate among such a people. Matthew’s iteration of the Immanuel theme will help answer this question.

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<sup>211</sup> Birch et. al, *A Theological Introduction*, 319.

### Immanuel in Matthew: An Assurance of God's Presence Throughout Time

#### *Matthew 1:23*

The third literal occurrence of “Immanuel” is found in the beginning of Matthew’s Gospel. After presenting the genealogy, Matthew identifies Jesus as “the Messiah,” the anointed deliverer of Israel. Jesus “will save his people from their sins” (1:21).<sup>212</sup> Matthew uses the introductory narrative to inform the reader about the fulfillment of a prophecy: just as in the time of Isaiah, God will be and is indeed currently with his covenant people (v.22). Matthew then quotes Isa. 7:14 and interprets this verse as “Immanuel” present (v. 23). Why would Matthew echo this specific Old Testament theme?

Matthew is drawing the reader into a recollection of Isaiah’s affirmation of the Yahwistic covenant in the midst of felt prophetic judgment. Matthew understands Jesus as Immanuel “to be a fulfillment of the whole of Scripture...the one who represents the continuing divine presence among the people of God.”<sup>213</sup> Matthew’s original audience immediately recalled the context of exile and empire in which the people of Judah received Isaiah and identified with such exile and empire under their own Roman occupation.<sup>214</sup> Thus, Matthew’s readers could clearly identify with a state of uncertainty regarding their own peoplehood.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> J. Willitts, W. Wrede, and M. Zetterholm, “Messiah,” *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Joel B. Green (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 115-125. Matthew begins his Gospel with “Messiah” to “show that Christians follow an authentically Jewish Messiah” (121).

<sup>213</sup> “Immanuel,” *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, Vol. VIII, ed. Leander E. Keck et. al, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 135.

<sup>214</sup> For insight into how Matthew’s Gospel encouraged his readers to remain in covenant with God in spite of their circumstances, read Stanley P. Saunders, “Connecting the Dots and Filling the Gaps: Imagining God with Us,” *Word & World* 34, no. 3 (2014): 255.

<sup>215</sup> L. Michael White, “Matthew’s Jewish Christian Community,” *PBS Frontline*, April 1998, accessed March 13, 2017, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/story/matthew.html>.

Juxtaposing Matthew's use of "Immanuel" with that of Isaiah's reveals telling differences. Isaiah's explanation of Immanuel, which begins with "therefore," in 7:14 contrasts with Matthew's exclamation, which begins with "behold;" in essence declaring, "Behold, the time of Immanuel has come as it once did with Isaiah." Unlike Isaiah, throughout the biography, Matthew is making the case that "Immanuel" is more than just a symbol. "Immanuel" is now the prophetic fulfillment of God literally *with us*.<sup>216</sup> This is further evidenced in Matthew's omission of Isaiah's introduction to "Immanuel." Matthew leaves out, "Therefore, the Lord Himself will give you a sign." There is no sign in Matthew of "Immanuel." The person of Jesus is presented as God incarnate; more than a sign, Jesus was an actual person pointing toward an actual reality. The reader is left to wonder how Jesus was this actual fulfillment of Immanuel.

New Testament scholars corroborate Matthew's central theme of "God with us."<sup>217</sup> The primary case for this is the way Matthew chooses to begin (1:23 explicitly) and end (28:20 implicitly) his narrative with the Immanuel theme. The Gospel's last verse holds the Immanuel promise: I am with you (28:18-20, echoing Exod. 3:14). The culmination of Matthew's Gospel is the promise that YHWH, via the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, will be with us always, even to the end of this age. If Immanuel is the central theme in Matthew, then our two guiding questions are of great importance: who is the "us" in Matthew and how is it that God is "with us" in this particular context?

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<sup>216</sup> Matthew first uses the word "fulfill" in 1:22, right before his use of "Immanuel." The fulfillment formula, "that what was spoken through the prophet(s) might be fulfilled," occurs twelve times in the biography (1:22-23; 2:5-6; 2:15; 3:15; 4:14; 5:17; 8:17; 12:17; 13:14, 35; 21:4; 27:9). The first fulfillment is about the virgin birth from Isaiah 7:14, the second is about Jesus' birth in Bethlehem from Micah 5:2, and the third is about the exodus from Egypt from Hosea 11:1. By having the first fulfillment reference "Immanuel" in Isaiah, Matthew's Gospel is set up to show how each subsequent fulfillment passage illustrates Immanuel among "us" in human form.

<sup>217</sup> Tim Geddert, "New Testament" (class lecture, New Testament Theology, Fresno, CA, September 30, 2015).

*Who is Us?*

Matthew's Gospel was written for a Jewish-Gentile audience.<sup>218</sup> It has a strong Jewish focus and attempts to instruct those new to the faith, including Gentiles. Matthew's genealogy suggests that the "us" is referring to the chosen people of God *and also* to those that have chosen *into* living among the people of God. This is evidenced in Matt. 1:3,5, with the inclusion of three Gentile women in Jesus' family line: Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth. These three women chose to enter into the covenant family of the people of God, becoming part of the Israelite family and their way of life. Ruth's declaration exemplifies the process of entering into this community and family: "Ruth said, 'Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God'" (Ruth 1:16). Ruth's statement is an example of how the nations may come to know the Lord of the Israelites and how such a submission grants access to YHWH's presence, Immanuel.

If fulfillment of the OT is significant in Matthew, then the "us" in his introduction is an important fulfillment of an even wider inclusion than previously believed. For God to be among "us" in a Gospel that ends with sharing the good news to the ends of the earth and to all of the "ethnos" implies that the "us" is first among the people of Israel *and now also* to the rest of the nations. The "us" is expanded beyond the imagination of the people of God to include an invitation to the Gentiles to be grafted into this covenant people.<sup>219</sup> Jesus shapes the way of life that this new covenant community ought to reflect.

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<sup>218</sup> Donald A. Hagner, "Matthew," *Word Biblical Commentary: 33A*, ed. Bruce M. Metzger (Dallas: Word Books, 1993), lix-lx, lxiv.

<sup>219</sup> Willie Jennings's forthcoming commentary on Acts explores how the Spirit has "the power to press through centuries of animosity and hatred and beckon people to want one another and envision lives

In his five key speeches throughout Matthew (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1), Jesus instructs the people in this fulfilled Torah way.<sup>220</sup> Therefore, the “us” are those choosing into this new lifestyle modeled and taught by Jesus, who is Immanuel.

*How is God with us in Matthew?*

Recall Isaiah’s politically tumultuous context. By the time the people of God were in exile, Immanuel came to be viewed as the future hope for salvation and liberation from empire. The last third of Isaiah is seen as an eschatological book pointing toward the coming inauguration of the Kingdom of God on earth. Isaiah is written with this future hope in mind, attempting “the revivification of a people who had previously been portrayed as dead,” and a restructuring of a world confused by revolt, war, violence, conquest, and exile.<sup>221</sup> Around five hundred years after Isaiah, Jesus arrives as Immanuel in Matthew. God was with “us” in Matthew inaugurating signs of the coming Kingdom of God through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is a foreshadowing of his shalom Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

For Matthew, Jesus is Immanuel, the arrived and coming Kingdom of God. Immanuel provides liberation from oppression and freedom from sin. For Matthew, Jesus was Immanuel declaring the breaking in of this Kingdom here and now, but not yet fully arrived. The promise of his presence with us is kept “even to the end of the age.” Yet, *how* is it that Immanuel is with us even to the end of the age, even in these present times when the absence of his presence is felt? Isaiah answered this question with an eschatological image of hope. Matthew answered this question with Jesus’ promise to be

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woven together.” Willie James Jennings, *Acts: A Theological Commentary on the Bible* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2017), 12.

<sup>220</sup> Manlio Simonetti, “Matthew 1-13,” in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament Ia* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 18-19.

<sup>221</sup> Hays, C. “Isaiah as Colonized” ch. 3.

with us even to the end of the age. However, the question of *how* Immanuel is present *today* remains. Theophanic sketches of the Holy Spirit in Matthew preliminarily answer this question.

### **Immanuel and the Holy Spirit in Matthew: God's Presence in Present Time**

Matthew declares that the scriptures are being fulfilled particularly within the person of Jesus as Immanuel. To look at the *how* of Immanuel is to look at the life of Jesus. Chapter three significantly announces a new way of God being with us, the way of the Holy Spirit (3:11). In this chapter, John the Baptist is preaching a message of repentance “for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (3:2). John further declares, “He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire,” with the ἅγιος πνεῦμα (3:11). After John’s statement Matthew records Jesus’ baptism in water and the πνεῦμα of God (3:16). Jesus’ identity as the Son of God, as Immanuel, is solidified in Matt. 3:17 with a theophanic voice from the heavens declaring, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”<sup>222</sup> The πνεῦμα as “God with us” is significant. Of the many theophanies that could be explored, the πνεῦμα will connect the presence of God from the time of Jesus’ life to the time of Matthew’s audience and our present time as a covenanting people of God.

The πνεῦμα of God or the ἅγιος πνεῦμα occurs 12 times in Matthew (1:18, 20; 3:11, 16; 4:1; 10:20; 12:18, 28, 31, 32; 22:43; and 28:19). Matthew 1:18 and 20 refer to the ἅγιος πνεῦμα as the cause of Mary’s miraculous pregnancy. This is not a general statement of how the ἅγιος πνεῦμα is with us today, but a statement of how the ἅγιος

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<sup>222</sup> A theophany is a “physical appearance or personal manifestation of a god to a person.” Charles Lee Feinberg, “Theophany,” *Homan Bible Dictionary*, 1991, 1338. Five forms of manifestations are traditionally identified: *human* (Exodus 24:10; Genesis 32:30), *in vision* (Num. 24:3-4; Isa 6), *by the ‘Angel of the Lord’* (Gen. 16:7-13, Gen. 22), *not in human form* (e.g. burning bush Ex. 3:2-4:17), and as *the name of the Lord God’s sacred name* represented in his presence (Deut. 12:5; 102:15; Isa. 30:27; 59:19).

πνεῦμα was at work specifically within Mary's body and largely within the Jewish story of the Messiah. Matthew 3 announces Immanuel as receiving the ἅγιος πνεῦμα and baptizing "us" (those who repent of their sins and enter into covenant with God) with the ἅγιος πνεῦμα (3:11, 16). This promise of the πνεῦμα is for John the Baptist's primarily Jewish audience, for Matthew's mostly Jewish, but also mixed audience in exile, and for those of us who have chosen to enter into this faith community.

Matthew 4:1 is the next example of the πνεῦμα and Immanuel. Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to pass through a series of temptations and angst. The readers of Matthew may relate to the temptations of Jesus and find solace in the fact that even Immanuel faced temptation. Jesus overcame this struggle with temptation through scripture and the πνεῦμα presence. Jesus thus models a way of overcoming temptation, through scripture and an awareness of the Lord's presence. In this regard, Immanuel is present with to guide us in overcoming temptation.

Matthew 10:20 presents the πνεῦμα present in the midst of mission. The twelve disciples were sent with authority over unclean spirits and sickness, and to declare the kingdom at hand (10:1, 7). Signs of this kingdom include healing the sick, raising the dead, cleansing the lepers, and casting out demons (10:8). An intriguing reminder that Israel is God's chosen people is present in v. 6.<sup>223</sup> Gentiles find hope with the declaration that those who receive the disciples receive the Lord (vv. 32, 40). This passage further shows the πνεῦμα will be a guide for the disciples in their coming persecution from the courts, governors, and kings (10:18). Jesus said, "But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say...For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit

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<sup>223</sup> Recall Jennings's reminder that those outside of Israel are *invited* into this covenant. I read from this outsider perspective, with preliminary thoughts on an Immanuel theology. I present my reading of Immanuel via the πνεῦμα in Matthew with respect and thanksgiving.



of your Father who speaks in you” (10:19). Immanuel is thus declared a present advocate with the disciples via the πνεῦμα during their times of trial.

Matthew 12 has four occurrences of the πνεῦμα presence of God: vv. 18, 28, 31, and 32. The first is from an OT prophecy in Isaiah 42:1-4, where the servant of God is promised. Isaiah 42:1 declares, “Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold...I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.” The Hebrew word for πνεῦμα in this text is רוּחַ or *ruwach* meaning wind, breath, mind, and spirit. The Hebrew word for nations is גּוֹי or *gowy* and shows up in Abraham’s call, conveying the idea that the Lord will make him into a great nation and bless him to be a blessing (Gen. 12:2). *Gowy* also appears in Gen. 17:4 where the Lord promises Abraham will be a “father of a multitude of nations.” Matthew uses this Isaiah text to extend this blessing to the nations, to the Gentiles, “and in His name the Gentiles will hope.” Therefore, in this instance of Immanuel, he is with those of us who choose to put our trust and our hope in his name.

Matt. 12:28,31, and 32 are concerned with the right interpretation of the ἅγιος πνεῦμα. Where the Pharisees rebuked Jesus for casting out demons by uncouth spirits, Jesus declares, “If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you.” The last two verses are warnings for those who speak against the Holy Spirit, against the Kingdom of God, against God himself, and, I infer, against Immanuel. These three verses communicate the importance of interpreting the correct moment of the Kingdom of God breaking through via the πνεῦμα. They elevate the Spirit of God to the presence of God. “Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him” (12:32).

Immanuel is pointing us to a right interpretation of the πνεῦμα at work among us through freedom from oppression, and through healing and discernment.<sup>224</sup>

In Matthew 22:43 Jesus asks the Pharisees, if Christ is the son of David, “how does David in the Spirit call Him Lord?” Here Matthew echoes Psalm 110, a psalm of David. Jesus continues, “If David then calls Him, ‘Lord,’ how is He his son?”<sup>225</sup> In this case the πνεῦμα of the Lord is moving David to prophetically acknowledge his son, through the line of David, as “Lord,” above David. Thus, one may conclude that Immanuel is revealed through the πνεῦμα of God. This revelation helped David see the coming Christ through his line. This revelation also helps us see the Christ as Lord. Jesus is not a mere son of David, but Immanuel.

Our last πνεῦμα passage is Matthew 28:19. The ἅγιος πνεῦμα of God is the third name that the disciples are to baptize the nations. Furthermore, here Jesus Immanuel declares, “I am with you always.” We may conclude that God is Immanuel through the baptism of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The followers of Jesus are a covenant community that is to teach the nations in all that has been instructed. Immanuel remains with us, even to the end of the age. For the Jews, whose Temple was destroyed in 70 AD, the presence of God was now available through the presence of Jesus.<sup>226</sup> Access to the presence of God is given now through the death and resurrection of Jesus! The inauguration of the Kingdom of God on earth has begun and through the πνεῦμα one is instructed, guided, formed, liberated, healed, empowered, sent by, and in community with the God who is among us. Immanuel *entre nosotros*.

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<sup>224</sup> It is important to observe that the Spirit is offended when right interpretation is not present.

<sup>225</sup> There are several OT echoes in Matthew. For an overview see Richard B. Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014).

<sup>226</sup> For an elaboration of this theme, see N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996) 204-206, chapter 8, 499 and 619.

The theophanic sketches of Immanuel through the  $\pi\nu\epsilon\tilde{\upsilon}\mu\alpha$  in Matthew reveal key characteristics of how God is with us today. First, God is with us through the power and baptism of the Holy Spirit (ch. 3). Next, God is with us as a guide to overcome temptation (ch. 4). God is with us as teacher, sender, communicator, and advocate through persecution and trial (ch. 10). God is with His chosen people, the Jews, and also with us as hope for the Gentiles (ch. 12). God is with us as liberator from oppression and as the Spirit of truth who teaches us to discern and test the spirits (ch. 12). God is with us as the revealer of his identity (ch. 22), and as the Spirit is present with us throughout eternity (ch. 28). Ultimately, God is with us in the most intimate, knowing, covenanting way possible. God is with us through relationship, an invitation presented first to the Jews, and then to the Gentiles. Immanuel is the image of a covenanting community that represents, embodies, and lives into the Kingdom of God breaking through, awaiting the final fulfillment of God once more among us in physical space and practical justice.

In conclusion, Immanuel is the prophetic utterance of Christ's life, teaching, death on the cross, and resurrection from the dead, first through Isaiah's eschatological hope, and then through Matthew's embodied savior. Through the theophanic sketches of the  $\pi\nu\epsilon\tilde{\upsilon}\mu\alpha$  in Matthew we learn that Immanuel's salvific work as Messiah continues through the proclamation and life of the covenant community. Immanuel is the unifier in the evangelical interpretive gap. If Immanuel is for the nations, then Immanuel is for the police officer and Immanuel is for men of color. Immanuel is for each of our communities. We are taught how to love, how to live, and how to serve one another through the  $\pi\nu\epsilon\tilde{\upsilon}\mu\alpha$ . The  $\pi\nu\epsilon\tilde{\upsilon}\mu\alpha$  instructs us in the way of Immanuel, guides us, walks with us, and forms Us, the larger community, as the embodied presence of God. The

Holy Spirit is a form of theophany and Immanuel proclamation in present times, for “God is always present in the risen Christ and the Holy Spirit.”<sup>227</sup> Covenant epistemology sheds further light on how Immanuel serves as guide toward a covenanting community and guidepost that practices racial healing.

### **Immanuel and Covenant Epistemology in Conversation**

A covenant epistemological reading of Immanuel furthers its theological significance for the community of believers today. The key tenants of covenant epistemology are knowledge as relational covenant and truth as personed, or embodied. Seeking truth becomes a matter of discipleship supported by a noticing regard of the sought-after truth. Knowing implies there is a Real to be known that discloses itself to us in its own time and way. The normative word guides the direction of our knowing. Should we ever misinterpret the Real, the guiding norm interpreted through a focal pattern corrects our understanding. Thus, knowing necessitates humility and transformation. The following are insights into a covenanted epistemology of Immanuel.

First, covenant epistemology honors and reveals truth as guided through a normative word. The normative word in a theology of Immanuel is “God with us.” In other words, the focal pattern through which to interpret the world around us is through the guiding questions that Immanuel brings forth: who is God with and how is it that God is “with us” in this present context? I interpret Immanuel through the larger biblical narrative of Jesus the Christ and honor this as truth. Immanuel was real in the time of Isaiah, real in the time of Matthew, and real in our present age. Immanuel as the Real will reveal himself to me in his time and in his way, inasmuch as I am willing to open myself

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<sup>227</sup> Feinberg, “Theophany” 1338.

up to his Real. Immanuel is present throughout the ages, to the end of time, but I will only benefit from relationship with Immanuel if I allow myself to be open to this reality. Second, covenant epistemology honors the presence of the other through a noticing regard, *dasein*. Immanuel is the noticing regard of God toward us. This is God *with* us, choosing to be in covenant *with us*, choosing to model for us this covenant community as depicted in the Kingdom of God. *Dasein* is the ocular framework with which followers of Immanuel are to regard the other, taking off our racialized lenses and putting on *dasein*. Followers of YHWH are to regard others as YHWH modeled for us through *hesed*, his covenant faithfulness throughout Isaiah and the OT. Likewise, followers of Jesus are able to regard others through the same *dasein* that Jesus embodies throughout Matthew and the NT. Ultimately, it is remarkable, impressive, and unique that the God of the universe would choose to be so intimately connected to his creation and that he does this through his embodied presence and noticing regard.

Covenant epistemology makes the case that knowing is a journey of transformation and covenant friendship. Anyone that follows Immanuel is transformed, from exiled believers in Isaiah awaiting their savior to the exiled believers in Matthew trusting the message of Jesus as Immanuel and savior. More than just transformation, Immanuel invites people into covenant friendship. Jesus' embodied presence among us gathered at least twelve men to be part of his inner circle of friends, but his teachings depict a genuine care of love and friendship with those even on the listening edges.

Last, covenant epistemology informs Immanuel in its healthy differentiation from the other. YHWH is sovereign, but the nations were not; Jesus was divine, but his friends were not. Only Immanuel can be God with us; his followers cannot. This healthy

differentiation reminds believers that we are all dependent on learning from, being guided by, and being in relationship with Immanuel. It reminds believers that the interpretive gap can be closed. Through the Holy Spirit, the community of believers finds hope and guidance in Immanuel, but we exist in healthy differentiation from our savior. In other words, my friend, my theology, my perspective cannot save me, but Jesus can. Thus, we both need and depend on Immanuel for this covenant friendship to work. We depend on Immanuel even more so in difficult conversations such as racial reparations. With that in mind, the next chapter highlights implications for Immanuel in racial healing work. I hope that our emerging theology of Immanuel serves as an entry point, a healing agent, and a covenantal friend to accompany us through to the last chapters of this thesis. Thank you for accepting my invitation to read Immanuel and joining me in the process of racial healing.

**Chapter Four Ingredient Four:**  
**Entre Nos, an Embodied Perspective of Immanuel Theology**

The fourth ingredient in our racial healing salsa is *Entre Nos*, a shortened form of *entre nosotros* meaning “among one another.” In its positive form, “*entre nos*” is a Spanish idiom referring to a special conversation among close friends. An embodied theology of Immanuel through the perspective of *Entre Nos* provides productive applications for racial healing work with our three prior chapters in mind: the need to acknowledge the sociotheological racial formation and its effects among us, the need to incorporate a covenant epistemology, and a proposed Immanuel theology for racial healing. *Entre Nos* is an embodied theology of Immanuel that has the potential to facilitate and bring breakthroughs in racial healing among the community of believers. This theology of Immanuel, however, will remain incomplete without the participation of other perspectives, just as a salsa with only diced onion, tomato, and lime juice is bland. The addition of jalapeño, cilantro, a bit of salt, and maybe even some mango to taste produces a flavorful explosion of delight. This chapter illustrates the rich interaction between the previous three ingredients according to one minoritized critical perspective. First, a clarification of *Entre Nos* as a minoritized critical perspective of Immanuel is given and then the embodied theology of Immanuel that I have named *Entre Nos* is explained.

***Entre Nos* as a Minoritized Critical Perspective of Immanuel**

A **minoritized critical perspective** of theology assesses current theologies and how accurately they resonate with minority groups.<sup>228</sup> There is a difference between a

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<sup>228</sup> Federico Roth, “The Promise of Perforated Characters: Comments on Migration, Economics, and Militarization” (paper presentation, Society of Biblical Literature Conference, San Diego, CA, November, 2014). Roth advocates for biblical scholars to work toward meaning-making using identity,

minoritized critical perspective and a minoritized theology. The former posits a perspective from the margins; the latter starts a theology from the margins.<sup>229</sup> One is perspective; the other is Theology. Thus I present *Entre Nos* as a minoritized *evangélica* critical perspective on a theology of Immanuel, rather than a *Latino/a* theology of Immanuel. Because this approach is central to deconstructing racial identities and constructing a theology that invites diverse perspectives and conversation, three more justifications are needed; each is explained below.

### *Racial Faith vs. Gentile Remembrance*

Willie Jennings identified racial faith as one rooted in the hegemonic perspective of a sociotheologically formed white episteme, as was discussed in the first chapter. Racial faith would thus classify my theology of Immanuel as a *Latino/a* theology, perpetuating the sociotheological racialization prevalent in our constructions. Take, for example, the attempt that liberation theologians made to describe a theology from the community.<sup>230</sup> Gustavo Gutierrez and Leonardo Boff did not set out to begin a *Latino/a theology*, but racialization has confined liberation theology as such. Liberation theologies had its genesis in Latin America, but equating it with a *Latino/a* theology does little to describe the varied liberation theologies that were motivated by and emerged from liberation theological postulations. Furthermore, categorizing liberation theologies as the *exemplar* of *Latino/a* theology limits any exploration of the various formulations of

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gender, and issue-focused study of the biblical text. He calls on scholars to deconstruct theologies “not to fragment or atomize our understandings of them, but to create an expanding mosaic of hyphenizations that will lead to a celebration of composite and alloyed characters, plots, and themes wherever they appear.”

<sup>229</sup> Gilbert Lozano and Federico Roth, “The Problem and Promise of Praxis in Postcolonial Criticism,” in Kay Higuera Smith, Jayachitra Lalitha, and I. Daniel Hawk, *Evangelical Postcolonial Conversations: Global Awakenings in Theology and Praxis* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 191-195. Here Lozano and Roth outline a minoritized critical approach to theology.

<sup>230</sup> For a commentary of *campesinos* theologians from a small community in Lake Nicaragua, read Ernesto Cardenal, *The Gospel in Solentiname* (New York: Orbis Books, 2010).



theological expression within Latin America or within Latino/as in the U.S. such as the emergence of various forms of Pentecostalism.<sup>231</sup> Similarly, labeling Pentecostalism as a Latino/a theology limits exploration of the various expressions of Pentecostalism itself in the U.S. and its influence on the charismatic movement within Catholicism. *Entre Nos* refuses to conflate race with ethnicity and culture.

Gentile remembrance, on the other hand, honors the perspective of Immanuel; it does so first through its Jewish meaning, as good news first for the Jews, and then, as good news for the Gentiles. Thus, I enter the biblical narrative as a reader from the margin of a Jewish faith and hope, as Ruth was clinging to Naomi, as the Canaanite woman was clinging to the crumbs. Gentile remembrance expands the imagined possibility for the nations through Isaiah's eschatological hope for the nations, the *gowy*, and through Matthew's Immanuel statement in 28:20. *Entre Nos* refuses to serve as a hegemonic interpretation of Immanuel.

*Racial Faith compartmentalizes theologies and forever refuses transformation*

A central tenant of covenant epistemology is that knowledge invites transformation and necessitates conversation. Contextualized theologies have gifted the academy by exposing the hegemonic orientation of whiteness as theology supreme. While classes on Christian contextualizations of theology exist (e.g. Asian American, Native American, Latino/a, and womanist theologies), I question how they are being perceived. Whiteness as theology supreme has usurped identity from place, and thus usurped an awareness of contextualization from theology. Far from being introduced as

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<sup>231</sup> Ricardo Franco, "Women and Distribution of Power in a Latino Pentecostal Church" (presentation at the American Academy of Religion, San Antonio, TX, November, 2016 Cite AAR seminar 2016). Franco discussed the difference between the church in Oregon and other Pentecostal churches, noting socioeconomic and communal backgrounds as potential explanations for the difference.

also existing within a context, the theologies of Martin Luther or Karl Barth or Wayne Grudem were all presented simply as Theology. While the inclusion of contextualized theologies has been helpful for academia, there has also been a tendency to relegate any theologizing outside of a white male body to the margins and name that theology contextual rather than a Theological system. I claim that all theology takes place within an episteme that involves one's world and one's body, and is filtered through one's guiding norm. For Christians, our guiding norm is the Bible. Labeling some theologies "contextual" and white theologies not perpetuates the illusion that whiteness is Theology supreme. In order to rescue racialized theologies, every single person and organization discussing theology must be aware of the sociotheological racial formation under which we operate, be willing to dismantle such identities, and reconstruct theology by inviting other perspectives to shape the conversation.

Racial faith compartmentalizes contextualized theologies, keeping them from being full participants in kingdom-shaping constructions.<sup>232</sup> Labeling *Entre Nos* as a Latino/a theology might relegate it only to a Latino/a audience. *Entre Nos*, which springs

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<sup>232</sup> See Brian Bantum, *The Death of Race: Building a New Christianity in a Racial World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016). In it he uses the phrase "the confluence of colonialism and whiteness" that I find helpful to understand the hegemony of race on all bodies (12). I am trying to communicate that while black, womanist, Latino/a, and Native American theologies and many others are doing great work in thinking through *racial* perspectives, we run the risk of perpetuating *racialization* and *essentialization* of bodies. For example, I "learned" to be "more Latina" (or perform in a more Latino/a cultural way) when I entered my Latino/a student ministry, LaFe. But what I mean by "more Latina" is actually how to worship in an evangelical context *as* a Mexican American woman. What I mean by "learned" is that even though I grew up in a Spanish-speaking, first generation church, I had to "learn" to "be Latina" in a new context (college educated young professionals). Thus, while my cultural awareness of being Latina has been helpful for my walk with Jesus, I cannot control how outsiders *interpret* my "Latina faith" (and it is most likely often through) a racialized lens. That is why Jennings calls out "racial faith" and Bantum calls for the "Death of Race," because while it exists, it is not the way it ought to be nor the only way we can imagine *being* within our Christian community. Furthermore, idolization of racialized bodies is a temptation. We need to return to a Gentile remembrance lest we replace the Jewish body of Christ with our own racialized bodies. We see Jesus in our image, but we also must remember to meet the Jewish man from Galilee that walked among a Jewish community living under empire. I wonder how much freedom can come to both whites and people of color if we were to really think through practicing Gentile remembrance. It will definitely challenge (and has personally challenged me) the way we do theology from here on forward.

from and is formed by my ethno-cultural experiences, is a theology of Immanuel for all people to consider. *Entre Nos* refuses stagnation and invites other perspectives to shape Immanuel for racial healing in our covenant community.

*Covenant epistemology allows for particularity within a guiding norm*

One potential problem with postcolonial theologies is that truth becomes subjective and based only on lived experience, as will be later shown. Far from honoring truth and meaning, subjective faith distorts truth and dishonors the truth conversation from the past community of believers. Hebrews 11, for example, is a list of followers of YHWH who remained faithful to covenant with the Lord, even while they did not receive what they were promised in their lifetime.<sup>233</sup> They are regarded as a “great cloud of witnesses” whose faith pointed to the Messiah.<sup>234</sup> Subjective faith would replace the covenanting work of the Lord throughout time as exemplified by the witnesses in Heb. 11 with one’s own experience, one’s own truth. Thus, subjective faith is tempted to ignore or replace the narratives recorded by the biblical authors, tempted to replace faith in the Messiah with faith in lived experience. Truth, however, is honored when one acknowledges there is a truth to be held. Covenant epistemology allows for particularity of expression, but always interpreted and re-interpreted through the guiding norm of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection.

*Entre Nos* is a particular expression of Immanuel which seeks the truth of Immanuel through my embodied subjective experience. However, my minoritized critical perspective is held accountable by the truth of Immanuel through the focal pattern painted by the scriptures. This focal pattern was presented in chapter three, but will

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<sup>233</sup> Heb. 11:39-40.

<sup>234</sup> Heb. 12:1-2.

remain incomplete until other perspectives participate in shaping a theology of Immanuel. Thus, truth is relational, transformative, and transformed, always through the guiding norm of YHWH's vision for his covenanting people. *Entre Nos* imagines a way of doing Immanuel that fully honors my mother's story and fully invites your mother's story to shape my own, with both stories continuously shaped by our Yahwistic covenant community.<sup>235</sup>

### **Preconditions for *Entre Nos* as Embodied Immanuel Theology via the Holy Spirit**

#### *The Method*

Gilberto Lozano and Federico Roth outline the method of a minoritized critical perspective: 1) show solidarity with the oppressed, 2) dialogue with the oppressed for reconstruction, 3) make space for liberation and postcolonial praxis to be initiated and guided by the oppressed themselves throughout the process so that all parties become more fully human, 4) discover the oppressor's identity, and 5) allow for new knowledge to emerge and reinvent the biblical understanding.<sup>236</sup>

As an *evangélica*, I am conscious of the minoritized perspective I bring to the theological concept of theophany via the Holy Spirit and the biblical concept of Immanuel. I am among the oppressed as a woman of color in the academy, as a once undocumented child in the U.S., as a woman leader who ministers within predominantly conservative and evangelical contexts, and as a person from a lower socioeconomic

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<sup>235</sup> I borrow this language of story-telling from Willie Jennings, discussion with the author at the American Academy of Religion Conference, November 18, 2016.

<sup>236</sup> Lozano and Roth, "The Problem and Promise", 192-194. Latin American political philosopher, Enrique Dussel, agrees with the method of making space for the marginalized to name the oppression and guide liberation for the transformation of all. Dussel names this community power, *potentia*: the will-to-live and the agency of the oppressed to draw strength (*Twenty Theses*, 17).

background attempting to navigate fundraising and life management. As much as I have been able, I have informally but intentionally facilitated conversations about Immanuel and its implications within my circle of friends, some of whom are undocumented, single parents, working in the fields, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival recipients, or holders of a U-Visa, but all of whom would be referred to by someone as the oppressed among us, i.e., *entre nos*.<sup>237</sup> In the concluding paragraphs of this thesis I name the oppressor not as human or biological in form, but as a systemic, epistemic, structural, and hegemonic power. Throughout, I hope to present new insights into an embodied theology of Immanuel via the Spirit among us.

*Embodied Theologies and the Need for Embodied Immanuel*

Scholarship on “the body” and “embodiment” has increased since the women’s liberation movement. While this has empowered contextualized *mujerista* and womanist theologies, I contend that they continue the subjectival episteme of postmodernity. By elevating the body to be the primary source of knowing truth, the Real of the body of Immanuel may be distorted. It is necessary to examine *how* embodiment is understood in current scholarship and how an *embodied Immanuel* theology is distinct from these. I contend that embodied theologies have attempted to replace the body of Christ with our own bodies, but an embodied theology of the Spirit through the lens of covenant epistemology helps correct the subjectivity these theories might promote.

Ignacio García’s sociohistorical work on *chicanismo* describes embodied Latina life in the mid-twentieth century. García wrote about the *chicanas*’ embodied activism and their significance in the civil rights era. He states that *chicanas* saw “their historical

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<sup>237</sup> Undocumented people in the U.S. have limited entry points toward residency. Two of these are through the presidential Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals initiative by President Obama and the U-Visa, a special, difficult visa to obtain, granted to survivors of extreme abuse, requiring police records.

importance: as Aztec goddesses, as union organizers, as radical journalists, and as *soldaderas*.”<sup>238</sup> Their liberation was embodied through *corridos*, *teatro*, poetry, and art.<sup>239</sup> *Chicanas* could not separate their *belief* in equality from their *behavior* in advocacy.

In the literary world, Gloria Anzaldúa’s work significantly impacted Latino/a scholars seeking to interpret the world through their life experience.<sup>240</sup> Anzaldúa broke the mold and norms of a *Chicana* author, poking fun at footnotes, traditional notions of the sexual, and traditional literary norms by combining prose, poetry, and prophesy. Anzaldúa writes, “We are taught that the body is an ignorant animal; intelligence dwells only in the head. But the body is smart...It reacts equally viscerally to events from the imagination as it does to ‘real’ events.”<sup>241</sup>

Acknowledging that the body is a legitimate source of knowledge and the Real allowed for both helpful and skewed postulations. This theory helped Anzaldúa describe the ethnically mixed person as a *borderland* body filled with “internal strife” that “results in insecurity and indecisiveness.”<sup>242</sup> It also freed her to explore the benefits of this borderland body, in that “though it is a source of intense pain, its energy comes from continual creative motion.”<sup>243</sup> There is poetic beauty in Anzaldúa’s description of the redefined mixed body: “We are the people who leap in the dark, we are the people on the knees of the gods. In our very flesh, (R)evolution works out the clash of cultures.”<sup>244</sup> But

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<sup>238</sup> Ignacio M. García, *Chicanismo: The Forging of a Militant Ethos among Mexican Americans* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1997). *Chicana* activists were diverse, from women with and without families, to those directly supportive of the feminist struggle and those only indirectly involved.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, 52-53.

<sup>240</sup> The Hispanic Summer Program has highlighted Anzaldúa’s impact in June 2015 and 2016.

<sup>241</sup> Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 59-60.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

as our previous chapter highlighted, a subjective experience must be filtered through the guiding norm in order to truly and accurately honor the Real.

Philosopher Susan Bordo sought to highlight the harm that this subjectivity inflicted on actual bodies. Bordo explains how subjectivity does not fully liberate the body from “thing-hood.”<sup>245</sup> Using *anorexia nervosa* as an example, Bordo shows how a community’s perception of the aesthetic impacts standards of beauty and perpetuates harmful behavior. “We may be *obsessed* with our bodies, but we are hardly accepting of them.”<sup>246</sup> Bordo calls this the “politics of appearance” and states that a mere gaze of disapproval is enough to enhance unhealthy body consciousness.<sup>247</sup> Bordo shows how discourse on the body “encourages us to ‘imagine the possibilities’ and close our eyes to limits and consequences.”<sup>248</sup> Bordo warns that the consequences of a liberated body as idealized by social norms may lead to a prevalence of eating disorders rather than to actual liberation.

A Latina multi-media journalist, Sandra Guzmán, exemplifies the tension in the discourse on the topic of bodies. In her second book to Latinas, Guzmán advises on sex and sexuality from her liberated perspective. Although liberating for some, this sexual revolution has made a way for heightened scrutiny and abuse within Latino/a households.<sup>249</sup> Guzmán writes, “Latina beauty is constantly under siege, either because of total omission, limited representations, outright misrepresentations, or stupid comments”

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<sup>245</sup> Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 5-11.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>249</sup> Sandra Guzmán, *The New Latina’s Bible: The Modern Latina’s Guide to Love, Spirituality, Family, and La Vida* (Berkeley: Seal Press, 2011), 269-270.

such as describing someone as too skinny, too fat, or just white enough.<sup>250</sup> Citing the 2000 Census, Guzmán shows that eighty per cent of Texans closer to the border were more likely to self-identify as white compared to their north Texan neighbors.<sup>251</sup> While influential Latinas like Guzmán and Anzaldúa have expressed judgments placed on Latinas, their notions of liberated bodies (“liberated” sexuality) are not fully congruent with those wanting to covenant with the Lord.

Theologians have attempted to construct a theology of the body, but have been influenced and limited by the mind-body dualism of early philosophies such as Aristotle’s erroneous postulations about the female body. Aristotle taught, “The conception of a female child was the result of some mishap.”<sup>252</sup> Attempting to correct this divide, Mary Proxes defended the idea that an embodied faith was apparent in the New Testament writings “which affirm that Christianity, from its inception, was closely identified with specific claims concerning the body” revealed by Jesus “in his Self-gift in the body and blood.”<sup>253</sup> Proxes emphasizes that an incarnated faith was assumed for the early church.<sup>254</sup>

M. Shawn Copeland takes the theological concept of the body a step further. Her aim is to make the body the new anthropological subject with the focus specifically on

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<sup>250</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid., 55

<sup>252</sup> Mary Timothy Proxes, *Toward a Theology of the Body* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1996) 9. Early Christian Jewish heritage viewed the human being as a “single psychosomatic unity of two elements” (Proxes, *Toward a Theology*, 8). Later, the Gospel of Thomas and other Gnostics further subjugated the female body by claiming that in redemption they would take on the form of a male (10).

<sup>253</sup> Ibid., 1-3. Citing 1 Cor. 12:27, the Second Vatican Council described the Church as a *mystical body*, attempting to return to the embodied notion of faith.

<sup>254</sup> Beth Jones extends Proxes’s view that the Bible is replete with embodied examples of faith. Citing Ps. 16:9 and 31:9, Jones writes: “the anthropology of the OT focuses on the whole human being in relationship to God.” For Jones, “The resurrection of the Lord is tied to the resurrection of humans in general, and for this reason, the life of the body takes on tremendous moral significance.” While Jones provides a helpful overview of embodiment in the scriptures, she does not explore the significance of such embodiment for a particular theology. Beth Jones, “Body,” *Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics*, 105 -106.



the bodies of the “exploited, despised, poor women of color,” what she calls the *anawim*.<sup>255</sup> As a self-described black theologian, Copeland asks if a Christology can include all dimensions of the body. She asserts, “Just as a black Christ heals...black bodies, so too a ‘queer’ Christ heals the anthropological impoverishment of homosexual bodies.”<sup>256</sup> Copeland may have found her theological justification from Latina theologians and from Anzaldúa.

Latina feminist theologians start from a borderland *nepantla* identity. María Pilar Aquino presents the following preconditions for all theologies: utilizing a *nepantla* understanding of identity as dimensional and spectral, utilizing subjectivity on behalf of the oppressed, “*honesty* with the real,” utilizing a strong amount of hope, and utilizing “an *evolving* truth.”<sup>257</sup> I warn, however, that postulations solely based on the body may produce “truths” that are not consistent with the story of scripture. A Catholic nun named Sor Juana, for example, envisioned humanity as created in the image of God. The Imago Dei is a biblically rooted starting point for theology, but Sor Juana took it a step further and considered the universalism of Christ, an event “for humans in their plurality and difference, as a community of God’s creatures.”<sup>258</sup> While the premise and vision may sound appealing, the universal salvation of peoples is not consonant with the judgment passages throughout scripture concerning the forces of evil, oppression, and death. Universal salvation is far from good news for the *anawim* whose bodies have been

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<sup>255</sup> M. Shawn Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Being* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 90-91.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>257</sup> María Pilar Aquino, “Latina Feminist Theology: Central Features,” in *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology: Religion and Justice*, ed. María Pilar Aquino, Daisy L. Machado, and Jeanette Rodríguez (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 149-150.

<sup>258</sup> Michelle A. González, “Seeing the Beauty Within Torment: Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and the Baroque in New Spain,” in *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology: Religion and Justice*, eds. María Pilar Aquino, Daisy L. Machado, and Jeanette Rodríguez (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 17.

tormented by poverty, sexism, racism, classism, capitalism, socialism, and human structures not centered on shalom, the Torah way.

I question the freedom employed by theologians to imagine Christ's body in our own image. In chapter one I showed the violence on bodies when race usurps one's identity derived from place and consequently serves as a hegemonic orientation of the aesthetic. Does imagining a black Christ or a Virgin Mary in the form of *La Virgen de Guadalupe* genuinely heal the *anawim*? As a woman of color, I find beauty and significance in the contextualization of the Gospel across cultures, but as a racialized body, I find that these images take me temporarily away from the Jewish body of Christ and the implications of his life on all of my life.<sup>259</sup> Is there a way to hold onto both Christ's embodied Jewish life, death, and resurrection and the embodied significance of these for the *anawim* without perpetuating subjectivity and racialization? I present the way forward through a covenant epistemology that continues to honor the Real, which in this thesis refers to the truth of the Gospel first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles. Far from preventing postulations for black, Latino/a, Indigenous, Asian, queer, or any other bodies, covenant epistemology makes space for these reflections while orienting them around the focused patterned truth of the biblical narrative.

*Embodied Immanuel: Theologies of the Spirit as Presence*

Embodied theologies have attempted to replace the body of Christ with bodies in our own image, but an embodied theology of the Spirit helps correct the subjectivity such theories promote. Furthermore, Immanuel as God with us, *Entre Nos*, focuses embodied

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<sup>259</sup> "The flesh of the church is marked (as was his flesh) by race, sex, gender, sexuality, and culture" (Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom*, 81). However, Christ's flesh was not marked by race because racialization was not a guiding norm at the time. Nor was it marked with modern notions of gender. This may be an anachronistic description of Christ's body and can only be done without a guiding norm.

theologies on the presence of the Lord among us. In the previous chapter, I argued that Immanuel via the Spirit continues God's presence among the community of believers; that is, the Church. This section draws closer to a theology of Immanuel by examining previous scholarship on the presence of the Holy Spirit. I posit that such a focus will help the *ekklesia* more fully embody Immanuel today.

The Holy Spirit “fulfills an ongoing but invisible role of connection and communication between people and God.”<sup>260</sup> Based on this understanding, I posit that the Spirit is Immanuel for us today. Biblically, the Spirit has taken on physical expressions through forces such as the wind, a breath, dove, fire, fragrance, or oil. The Spirit's role in Jesus' life empowers the life of his disciples and his followers.<sup>261</sup> Theologians from Wolfhart Pannenberg to Jürgen Moltmann and Charles Pinnock have presented personed images of the Spirit. Pannenberg described the Spirit as *presence* in public and truth, Moltmann as *communal* and *holistic*, and Pinnock showcased the Spirit as *salvifically* significant the role the Spirit plays in *transformation, union, and personal relationship*.<sup>262</sup> For Moltmann, the personhood of the Spirit gives life to the personhood of the Church: “The church never exists for itself, but is always in relation to God and the world; therefore, it is a serving, missionary church.”<sup>263</sup> Pneumatology lends itself to missiology in that the latter cannot wholly operate without the former. The latter is dependent on the former for its life, vision, and mission.

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<sup>260</sup> M.M.B. Turner, “Holy Spirit,” *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, Eds. Leland Ryken, James C. Without, and Tremper Longman III, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 390-393. Images of personal relationship by the Spirit are in John 14:26; 16:7, 13; and Rom. 8:26 to name a few.

<sup>261</sup> Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 36.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.* For Pannenberg see pp. 117-121, for Moltmann see pp. 126-131, and for Pinnock see pp. 143-144.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

The history of the Hispanic church in the U.S. is nascent in terms of scholarship, but not in its life. One of the first Latina historian theologians, Daisy Machado, writes a history of the U.S. through the lens of a borderland person. Describing the clashing of cultures in the Texan terrain both from the North/South border and the East/West border, Machado asserts, “Indigenous people were identified as inferior because of their race, religion, and culture.”<sup>264</sup> With such a heritage, Latino/a historians tell the story of Latino/a Pentecostalism through the lens of identity and embodiment.<sup>265</sup> In writing a history of Latino/a Pentecostalism in the U.S., Arlene M. Sánchez Walsh observed “on the one hand, they tend to subsume their ethnic identity...on the other hand, Latino Pentecostals/charismatics bolster their ethnic identity,” as a means for evangelism.<sup>266</sup> The recorded history shows a racialized Latino/a Protestant church ambivalent about its Latino/a identity, embracing its cultural signifiers when necessary, but ignoring this embodiment when it contradicts their theology.<sup>267</sup>

Latino/a theologians respond to this ambiguity with an invitation for the church to be formed, empowered, and emboldened by the Spirit. Samuel Solivan proposes the Spirit as a salvific “incarnation power of the Scriptures that addresses us and localizes the I AM of God in ways that transform our daily lives.”<sup>268</sup> The Spirit is significant for “a voiceless and often powerless community,” the Spirit is the force helping the Church to

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<sup>264</sup> Daisy L. Machado, *Of Borders and Margins: Hispanic Disciples in Texas, 1888-1945* (New York: Oxford, 2003), 5.

<sup>265</sup> See for example Jackson “La Raza,” 117-118. Here he notes the development of the “Indio” identity and the imposition of such on behalf of the Spanish.

<sup>266</sup> Walsh, *Latino Pentecostal*, 1.

<sup>267</sup> Hosffman Ospino, “Hispanic Ministry in Catholic Parishes: A Summary Report of Findings,” *The National Study of Catholic Parishes with Hispanic Ministry* (Boston: Boston College, 2014), 6. The study shows language and culture remain important for the ethnic survival of Mexicans in Catholicism.

<sup>268</sup> Samuel Solivan, “Sources of a Hispanic/Latino American Theology: A Pentecostal Perspective,” in *Hispanic/Latino Theology: Challenge and Promise*, eds. Ada María Isasi-Díaz and Fernando F. Segovia (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1996), 144.

“regain its voice and power.”<sup>269</sup> Oscar García-Johnson describes God as the “*creator of the visible and the invisible*,” including cultural creation at Pentecost.<sup>270</sup> The “created invisible” is the intersection of the Spirit of God with humanity, a reality “to be understood as the *experience of the Spirit*.”<sup>271</sup> Thus, “Christian items must be shaped by the Spirit in a *Pentecost way*.”<sup>272</sup> For these Latino/a theologians, embodied faith assumes a faith in the Spirit, one that transforms and empowers both believer and community into mission.

### *Entre Nos:*

#### **An Embodied Immanuel Theology via the Wild Child**

The Wild Child is the Spirit embodied as imaged by Latina *Evangélica* scholars.<sup>273</sup> The Spirit is God in us and God for us, “*ruach, elohim*, the flaming divine *pneuma* that is always ‘going native’ because she wants to be encountered by all.”<sup>274</sup> For *evangélicas*, they “know this wild child, who is often preferred as absence rather than *presencia* because we too have experienced being treated as no-bodies and invisible nothings.”<sup>275</sup> “*Evangélica pneumatology* [perceives the Spirit to be]...a Person, God made palpably present in all the spaces of the daily lives of *evangélicas*.”<sup>276</sup> Similarly, salvation is an “embodied event that brings about *santidad* ([for] vocation), *sanidad*

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<sup>269</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>270</sup> Oscar García-Johnson, *The Mestizo/a Community of the Spirit: A Postmodern Latino/a Ecclesiology* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2009), 64-65, 81-82.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>273</sup> Loida Martell-Otero, Zaida Maldonado Perez, Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, *Latina Evangélicas: A Theological Survey from the Margins* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2013).

<sup>274</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid., 39.

(holistic healing), and *liberación*.<sup>277</sup> Since the Spirit is holy, we are made holy, and since the Spirit is God, “God is active and present among us.”<sup>278</sup> *Entre Nos*.

Compared to previous embodied theologies centered in the subjectivity of an anthropological body, an embodied theology of the Spirit has the redemptive power to humanize all bodies through the guiding norm of Immanuel. The Spirit gives a vision for life and “exposes the lies of the non life that have been constructed by oppressive social structures...She teaches us to be a holistic community, to be *familia sana*.”<sup>279</sup> This humanization happens with the kingdom of God as our guide, our focal pattern through Immanuel. “In him we are to see again God’s vision for humankind. *Hay fiesta con Jesus*.”<sup>280</sup> This celebration, started by the Godhead in mutual relationship and celebration, pours forth onto believers as in Pentecost, and invites all to participate. The Spirit indwells, empowers, and liberates the person and the community in an everyday, embodied way. The Kingdom of YHWH breaking forth on earth as it is in heaven, Immanuel *Entre Nos* through the personal, excitable, loving, laughing, consoling, advising, advocating, and guiding wild child.

### **The Wild Child *Entre Nos* for Racial Healing**

The wild child is like the *llorona* (crier) for justice. The Spirit cries out to the community of believers, reminding us of our *familia* belonging from the time of Pentecost and of shalom life painted throughout the biblical narrative.<sup>281</sup> The Wild Child Immanuel *Entre Nos* serves as a racial healing agent among us because Immanuel points us (focuses our integrations, i.e. clues from the world, body, and guiding norm) to the

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<sup>277</sup> Ibid., 34. *Santidad* – holiness, *sanidad* – healing, and *liberación* – liberation.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid., 114. *Hay fiesta con Jesus* – There is a party with Jesus.

<sup>281</sup> Two of my favorite texts for shalom vision are John 13:34-35 and Ephesians 2:11-18.

*communal reality* of the Kingdom, reminds us of *the noticing regard* we have from Immanuel and the noticing regard we are to show others, and invites us into racial healing that is *embodied* and seeks *reparations* in order to keep and honor the covenant we have with one another and with the Lord.

First, Immanuel *Entre Nos* points us to the communal reality of the Kingdom. As we noticed in Matt.28, our God is triune: Father, Son, and Spirit. This Trinitarian relationship is mutually serving, mutually giving, and mutually receiving. Immanuel is a model we can follow through the gift of the wild child Holy Spirit. When I am sitting across the table from a white person who does not understand my experience as a woman of color, I can choose to remain at the table or I am free to leave. I experienced the freedom of the wild child *llorona* during a conversation with a white Christian faculty at an elite university. She made light of her son's racial jokes during our conversation, taking them lightly as she laughed, and looking at me with what I perceived as a racial gaze rather than a noticing regard. I excused myself from the company, cried in the restroom, and sent a text to my *familia* community, asking them to pray for me. After dinner, Immanuel *Entre Nos* gave me the courage and the words to express my experience to my coworkers. This led to conversation *entre nosotros* about the faculty's inappropriate racial dialogue. My coworkers honored Immanuel among us by continuing their racial healing conversations with one another. Community connected by the Spirit *entre nosotros* was essential for embodying Immanuel and Immanuel was essential for keeping us present to one another in this dialogue that later led to actions.

Second, *Dasein* reminds me to see others as well as myself with eyes of love and Immanuel invites me to embody this love with *actions*. Immanuel's noticing regard is for

both people of color and white people in moments of tense conversation *entre nos*. For example, I was invited to participate in Bible study training because I spoke Spanish. However, whenever I participated and shared biblical insights from Spanish with the group, the facilitator discounted them as extraneous. After a while, the facilitator stopped calling on me. The honoring and healing work of race encourages me to ask myself: what do I need in this moment to take care of myself and to stay in this conversation? Do I need a break, a pause? That is ok, I can ask for this break. Do I need to press in; do I need to present my perspective? That is ok, because Immanuel can guide me in how to do this. In the aforementioned example, I chose to express how I was feeling silenced with a trusted participant at my table. She showed *dasein* by listening and respecting my truth. She invited me to consider other interpretations for the facilitator's behavior and asked if we could take the action of repairing trust. Later, the facilitator and I sat together with my friend to talk about the misses in communication between us. *Dasein* is *imperative* for racial healing to function well. Without a noticing regard of love for our neighbor, without that feeling of belonging that Pentecost provides the community of believers, these conversations will remain shallow and ineffective. People must know that they are valued, loved, respected, and honored.

Third, Immanuel invites us into racial healing that is *embodied* and seeks *reparations* in order to keep and honor the covenant we have with one another and with the Lord. If I have chosen into a faith community that is centered on Jesus and my neighbor of a different race has also entered into this faith community, Immanuel teaches me that we are now *familia*. This is our bridge across the racial lines. The interpretive gap is closed when we can see one another as *familia*. Immanuel is the invitation into this



fellowship and commitment to one another. Our community is the embodiment of the teachings of Jesus, empowered through the gift of the Spirit, and guided through the Father's grand narrative of salvation life. As much as God is with *me*, God is also with my neighbor, and ultimately God is with both of us, *entre nosotros*. *Entre Nos* teaches us to embody a *covenant knowing*, one that understands that my neighbor's Real is *necessary for me to better understand my Real*, that what my neighbor is impacted by also impacts me. We are not autonomous entities in relationship with one another, we are interconnected beings, distinct in our own personhood, but covenanting together, standing by, with, and for one another as Immanuel teaches. Practically, this means that it is important for me to be concerned about my neighbor's welfare. Racial healing cannot take place without this noticing regard. It cannot take place without understanding that race must be eliminated and a kingdom covenanting must be embodied. The embodiment of love is accompanied with action, for love without actions is an elusive hope, but embodied actions of reparations are expressions of love.

These three concepts combined (a commitment to the communal reality of the Kingdom, keeping a noticing regard for one another, and an embodied and reparations-seeking love among us) will help us press into the deeper conversations of reparations. In my view, reparations are active, action-oriented steps to the restoration of relationship with people of color. If Immanuel is God with us, then I am to ask God how my friends of color are not experiencing the fullness of the Kingdom of God with them. I ask how my behaviors and how historical actions have broken relationship and covenant with communities of color. If I see myself as truly and authentically connected to Christ, then I am truly and authentically connected to the *familia* of Christ. I must see and acknowledge

their pain, their reality, and their truth through our covenanted epistemology. Our truth grounding is not on our subjective embodied experience, but on the indeterminate future possibilities of our truth clues interpreted through our focal pattern, our normative word of Immanuel. God *Entre Nos*.

If I see God with me, but not God with my neighbor, I have to support this continual absence of God with neighbor biblically. Hint: this is impossible. We are commanded in Matt. 28 to go and make disciples of *all nations*. Were we not promised that God would be with us, even to the end of the ages? Then I am to find the places where the flourishing and shalom of God's kingdom is absent in our communities today, where structural and communal sin is prevailing. Then the nations will know we are Christ's disciples, by the love we show *en acción* and in our partnership with the wild child *llorona* for shalom *Entre Nos*.

People who understand reparations for racial healing and embody such as much as they are able in their context are applying *Entre Nos*. This kind of racial healing has empowered my own ministry to bring students, faculty, staff, our campuses, our cities, and our worlds into the truth, beauty, and goodness of Jesus. In order to be a campus minister, people have to raise financial support. Historically, an individual fundraising model has limited the potential for staff of color and for women<sup>282</sup> to *begin* campus ministry and to continue in their calling beyond five years.<sup>283</sup> Knowing this Real that I face as both a person of color and a woman, my current supervisor chose to *embody* Immanuel (my phrasing) by paying attention to my financial limitations. Typically, staff

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<sup>282</sup> Samuel L. Perry, "She Works Hard(er) for the Money: Gender, Fundraising, and Employment in Evangelical Parachurch Organizations," *Sociology of Religion* 74, no. 3 (2013): 392-415.

<sup>283</sup> Samuel L. Perry, "Diversity, Donations, and Disadvantages: The Implications of Personal Fundraising for Racial Diversity in Evangelical Outreach Ministries," *Religious Research Association* 53 (2012): 397-418.

who move from one context to the next lose some funds. My supervisor and others on his team advocated for a grant that allowed me to maintain my current salary during my move. Furthermore, during the hiring process, one of the staff on the team asked, “What do you need *as a Latina* in order to feel welcomed into our community?” This seemingly insignificant question signaled to me that this team understood the Real obstacles that I would face moving from my home to a new context, from a team where I was fully comfortable and felt known to a completely new team, and that this might be a particular challenge as a person who has a high ethnic identity such as myself. During my transition from California to Texas, I have felt Immanuel’s noticing regard and covenant more so than his absence. Through the conscious questions and practical actions of welcoming me to Texas, my new staff team embodied the love of *Entre Nos*.

The promise of Immanuel *Entre Nos* is only just beginning to unfold. We have not even examined how Immanuel can be the music that we dance to in racial healing *fiestas*, how the work of racial justice can be delightful and good when *dasein* is honored and reparations are embodied. Just knowing the theology of Immanuel is not enough and does not work for racial healing. It must be embodied and lived out. I hope that our emerging theology of Immanuel *Entre Nos* may serve as an entry point, a healing agent, a guidepost, and a covenantal friend to take us through to the conclusion and, eschatologically, to the end of the ages.

**Chapter Five Ingredient Five:**  
**Living into a Racially Healing Community *Entre Nos***

We are now ready to make salsa! With our four ingredients, we have the basic flavors necessary for a delicious treat. Our first ingredient was chopped onion, the acknowledgment and uncovering of the sociotheological racial formation *entre nosotros*. Next, we added diced tomato, a covenant epistemology to bridge the gap in perception between whites and people of color. Our third ingredient was lime juice, a theology of Immanuel sprinkled throughout the eschatological hope in Isaiah and Spirit-empowered Christ in Matthew. Finally, we flavored this basic salsa with a bit of jalapeño, a minoritized critical perspective of embodied Immanuel as empowered by the Spirit, the wild child *llorona* for justice *Entre Nos*.

As delicious as this salsa may taste, it is incomplete. Our salsa could be made richer by adding a combination of these delightful ingredients: cilantro, mango, different types of *chiles*, and different types of seasonings. There are myriad of (indeterminate future) possibilities and mixtures for our future *Entre Nos* salsa! I propose that each ingredient represents a “voice,” a critical perspective of Immanuel that can shape the way Christ’s love among us is lived out. If we were to taste the *Entre Nos* salsa, we might miss the absence of these delicious ingredients. Additionally, salt is a key ingredient in salsa (and for our Christian witness). In this analogy, the salt is the entirety of our collective voices *filtered* through the normative word of Immanuel. Many ingredients may be added to enrich the *sabor* of the salsa, but salt is the corrective force that brings the taste to life in a way that is palatable and thus more enjoyable. Similarly, Immanuel as our guiding norm has the power to invite these voices and arrange them into a chorus

rather than a cacophony, thereby inviting culturally nuanced perspectives of Immanuel that further the biblical narrative of salvation in Jesus.

This chapter explores implications of *Entre Nos* for living into a racially healing community. I caution against reading these as a systematized racial healing checklist. To read in such a way is to miss the point of the thesis, which is that racial healing will take intentional, embodied effort as guided and fueled by the Spirit. Without a commitment to remaining in covenant with the Lord and with one another, these implications will sound like tasks to accomplish rather than invitations to embody a racially healing presence. It is the difference between duty and embodiment, between temporary behavior and lifestyle change. It is important to understand that we cannot stay committed to racial healing without staying committed to YHWH and to one another, without covenant *Entre Nos*. First, I propose the mutual responsibilities that both people of color and white people have for racial healing within the Church.<sup>284</sup> I then provide specific implications for white people, followed by specific implications for people of color. I conclude with the eschatological hope of Immanuel *Entre Nos*.

### **Our Mutual Responsibilities *Entre Nos***

We live in a racialized society where bodies are judged on the black-white spectrum, and those bodies are deeply affected by how they are graded in that system. Living into a racially healing community means understanding this sociotheological racial formation and its impact on our lives today. The first chapter made the case that all peoples are affected in a racialized society. Thus, there are certain responsibilities that all of us, together, need to own for the healing of the *ethnos*: reject the racialization of our

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<sup>284</sup> Yancey, *Beyond Racial*, 77-87, 94-98, 108-110, 138-144.

self and others, embrace our ethnic identities and cultures, and actively seek to dignify our cultures and ethnicities.

*Reject racialization of self and others*

Rejecting racialization means paying attention to and letting go of the essentializing language, attitudes, and references about peoples. Take caution to not use absolute and universal statements about people groups such as “Latino/as are relational so we can expect them to be friendly,” or “Black and Native people value relationship over timeliness so we can expect them to be late,” or “Asian Americans are excellent academics.” These essentializing comments perpetuate racialization of these groups because they are phrased in concrete language. Essentializing language does not allow for the variety of personality, strength, and difference within each community. For example, I am Latina, but do not cook well, Native American academics exist, and not all white people are time oriented. Racialization essentializes peoples and promotes stereotypes that are not biologically supported.

Rejecting racialization involves actively cultivating a posture of Gentile remembrance when approaching the biblical narrative. For most, this means remembering that we are Gentiles who are invited into the covenant community of YHWH. It is a conscious effort to not usurp Israel’s place as a central and chosen people. Recall from chapter one how racialization replaced salvation with whiteness. Instead of the Jewish Jesus who provides freedom from enslavement to sin and oppressive powers and provides salvation in this life and for eternity, a Jesus clothed in white missionary apparel was presented. This clothing was tainted with a colonial vision for expansion and wealth. Our white missionaries replaced indigenous cultural expressions of worship with those of

Europe, relegating the music and song of the Natives to dehumanized and demonized status. Further, our white missionaries neglected their role of personally learning more about a covenanting life with Jesus. Instead of being transformed in the process of their mission, they entered the mission as the perpetual teacher, in what Jennings calls “pedagogical imperialism.”<sup>285</sup>

I invite us to never forget this history of ours, for remembering will keep us from substituting our own bodies with Christ’s incarnate. Remembering our Gentile background will keep us from pedagogical imperialism, from assuming we have all of the answers for racial healing. For example, when I am called to enter a neighborhood or mission field, I have to remember that I am not Christ incarnate. My body does not replace the image of Immanuel for the people I am called to share *in* the good news *with*. Rather, my transformed and growing embodiment of Immanuel *points to* Immanuel and the Spirit in me reflects the Spirit *of* Immanuel. Covenant epistemology reminds us of a healthy differentiation from the other. There can only be one Immanuel, one God *entre nosotros*. Let the Spirit shape and guide how our neighborhoods and communities image the Kingdom of God. Trust the Spirit to transform our cities and mission fields. I, as a follower of Jesus, am empowered to proclaim this good news to the nations, discipling them in the way *of Jesus* as evidenced in the Bible, not in *my* way, *my* methods, or *my* understanding. If this statement makes us nervous, we can remember that we have a guiding norm. We have Immanuel throughout scripture and we have the Bible to guide us into truth. Covenant epistemology allows for trial and error, always bringing us back to the Real, our normative Word.

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<sup>285</sup> Jennings, *Overcoming Racial Faith*, 8.

Rejecting racialization for yourself and others will take conscious effort.

Rejecting racialization does not mean we are blind to racial categories. We can continue to critically analyze the way racialization impacts our society as we continue to live in a structurally racialized society.<sup>286</sup> Rejecting racialization means we take racial categories as the truth that they are: groupings of people based on their skin color and placed on an evaluative scale created by people seeking to maintain power over others. These groupings continue to spread the lie that our race evidences our worth and personhood. Sociologists and theologians call this a social construction around whiteness; I call it a power and principality that must be named, prayed against, and actively eliminated.

*Embrace your cultures and ethnicities*

One consequence of racialization is elimination of a people's history. While race is assigned to you by society, ethnicity is the history of your family's origins, their migration pattern, tribal customs, and ancestral norms. Theologian Leticia Guardiola-Saenz observes the first phase in identity formation is a self-reflective dialogue.<sup>287</sup>

Embracing your ethnic background means engaging in the inner dialogue, learning *your* family's history, listening to the stories about *your* grandmothers and great grandfathers, and looking back so that you may understand the present and have hope for the future.

Knowing your family's ethnic background and your cultural affiliations makes you a better racial healing agent than someone who enters the conversation without an awareness of their history and our society's sociotheological racial formation. For example, as you embrace your family histories, you will most likely notice migration as a

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<sup>286</sup> Refer to the introduction and chapter one for problems arising from racialization.

<sup>287</sup> Leticia A. Guardiola-Saenz, "Reading from Ourselves: Identity and Hermeneutics Among Mexican-American Feminists" in *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology: Religion and Justice*, eds. María Pilar Aquino, Daisy L. Machado, and Jeanette Rodríguez (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 87-88, 97. The phases are an inner dialogue, a dialogue with the community, and an outward dialogue.



part of that story, even if it is only from one neighborhood to the next. This may result in noticing how your own ethnic groups responded to the push and pull factors of migration. In turn, you may notice you have more in common with migrating peoples today than you realized. I invite you to think about how you will tell your family's migration stories, your communities' stories, and your racial healing stories for the healing among us.

Another consequence of racialization is an essentializing, fixed idea of peoples, limiting cultural expressions within such. Culture is, instead, a wide range of practices, customs, groupings, and norms within societies that change, grow, and fluctuate. While there are certain cultural characteristics that remain perennial, such as the Mexican Catholic celebration of *Día de los Muertos*, there are others that pass with the latest trend such as the *hipster* phenomenon among affluent youths in the U.S. Cultural referents are a vital part of human life. Sociologist Irene Blea writes, "Without cultural references, people are empty; they may feel lost and confused... The person without culture is not rooted and has a difficult time relating."<sup>288</sup> Racialized identities essentialize, but cultural identities provide space for diversity, nuance, and expression. For example, a racialized identity says all Latino/as are essentially the same or extremely similar, even beyond the U.S. In this paradigm there is no room for understanding the rich differences between Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, between *Newyoricans* and Puerto Ricans, between *Salvadoreños* and *Hondureños*, or between Mexicans and Puerto Ricans.<sup>289</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> Irene I. Blea, *La Chicana and the Intersection of Race, Class, and Gender* (Wesport: Prayer Publishers, 1992), 123.

<sup>289</sup> "They were Americans, but they would not stop being Mexican... They preferred the dual role of American and Mexican." Ignacio M. García, *Chicanismo: The Forging of a Militant Ethos among Mexican Americans* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1997), 20.

*Dignify other's cultures and ethnicities*

Imagine being a community where all peoples practiced and cultivated a noticing regard for one another. Recall the concept of *dasein* where a covenant epistemology encourages encountering the Real with wonder, awe, and notice. Far from a racial gaze that encounters the Real of the other cloaked in their racial formation, *dasein* sees the other through the lens of a covenanted friendship. Immanuel reminds me that God is with *us*, meaning my neighbor as well as myself. Since friendship is covenanted, it must be concerned with the wellbeing of the other. Covenanted friendship is connected to the other, thus the Real of the other impacts the Real of me. If a friend is not experiencing dignity in a certain social situation, such as one resulting from generational struggles of poverty because of racialized neighborhoods, then I must ask what restoring and drawing forth that dignity will look like. How do I partner with my friend in restoring impoverished neighborhoods, in restoring relationship impacted by a racial divide, in restoring the Church to be *ekklesia* for all, not just for my friends?

Imagine working to actively draw forth the dignity of others. When we do service projects to under-resourced neighborhoods, we think of dignified ways of partnering with the community. We ask if others have gone before us and learn from what they have tried. We ask if indigenous leaders from these communities have attempted to start something, but because of lack of resources they have struggled. Dignity in this situation would mean honoring those stories and coming alongside indigenous leaders, advocating for resources and making space for those that have been there longer than anyone else and who will most likely stay longer than short-term missionaries will.<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>290</sup> Dignifying communities means we keep in mind the hegemonic tendencies of our own. Mexican-Argentine philosopher Enrique Dussel invites us to imagine “A world in which all the world fits”

Interpersonally, drawing forth each other's dignity through a loving regard takes patience, grace, and practice. It takes patience with one another and understanding that the racial dialogue may feel tense, misunderstood, and uncomfortable. It is a dialogue that invites one another into deeper relationship, and thus it takes a great deal of risk, trust, and grace. We can assume that mistakes, or misunderstanding may unintentionally happen, but grace for one another through Immanuel's loving regard will keep racial healing moving forward. It is important to understand that not one person, or community of peoples is the enemy. White people, you are not the enemy of people of color. People of color, you are not the enemy of white people. White people, people of color are not your enemy. People of color, white people are not your enemy. I understand how at times it may feel like we are enemies. Indeed, there are powers and principalities that thrive under this falsehood. Media sensationalism and an increasingly polarized political climate have fanned into flame this lie. For the followers of Jesus, however, the actual enemy is the power of sociotheological racial formation around whiteness as a hegemonic reality. Our defense is a covenanted epistemology centered on the guiding norm of Jesus and his salvific, liberative, reconciliatory work on the cross. This is *so* necessary to understand and embrace lest you read the following implications as impositions and with defensiveness rather than as an invitation for healing and openness. Pay attention to your thoughts and emotions as you engage in these conversations. Honor your truth and filter it through the *dasein*, which is Immanuel's covenanting and noticing regard for you *and* for me, *entre nos*.

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(*Twenty Theses*, 107). This requires assessing "the demands of all sectors, their different identities. Through mutual understanding... this allows them to move forward with construction of an *analogical hegemon* supported by all" (107). The noticing regard of other communities ensures we stay connected and present to the work of racial healing, it allows for the potential of a *hegemon* supported by all.

### ***Entre Nos* Implications for White People**

While there are similar implications for Immanuel *Entre Nos* for all peoples, there are certain responsibilities that differ between whites and people of color because of the different experiences of racialization. The former experiences a world that was shaped by their ancestors with notions of innate superiority. The latter experiences a world that was formed for their subjugation and service. I propose the following implications for my white brothers and sisters in embodying *Entre Nos*. I attempt to write with a noticing regard toward you, your history, and the way that race has negatively impacted your being and worth. I write as one connected with you through our mutual covenant with the Lord. I hope to write as a woman seeking the *dasein* in you, and as a covenanting friend to provide ideas that may be filtered through our guiding norm of Immanuel, God with us. There are three main implications for white people to engage in racial healing *entre nos*: honor the Real, cultivate a noticing regard, and embody Immanuel.

#### *Honor the Real*

1. As we have explored our racial history, I invite you to actively work against the power and principality of whiteness structurally. We have already read about this formation in chapter one, explored covenant epistemology as a healing agent in chapter two, and learned to view Immanuel as a motivator and guide for our racial healing work. However, this understanding can stay at the level of knowledge and runs the risk of never being applied. Honoring the reality of racialization implies actively working toward deconstructing the power of whiteness. Since whiteness was formed and constructed, it is not a biological reality, thus, it is open to critique. Whiteness is a tremendous power among us that has affected all areas of life, including the zip codes we are born into, and

the types of education and health services we have access to. By keeping the focus on whiteness as a person or an ethnic identity rather than a system that continues to function, whiteness as a principality will never be overcome. Remember that whiteness is a power that has impacted societal structures of education, health, wealth, and political participation. The healing of the nations depends on white people actively participating in dismantling the power of whiteness. I invite you to actively identify where and how whiteness operates in your context, asking who is being affected by race in overt and covert forms and how you can partner with others in its exposure and erasure.

2. A first crucial step in working against this principality is to acknowledge the reality of racialized bodies and accept the truth that race is a type of formation. This formation was presented in chapter one where I gave an account of how racialization has impacted the Western understanding of the world by giving us racial lenses. To acknowledge is to honor other's experience of race; it invites trusting these stories and accounts, though they differ from your own. As covenant epistemology shows, you may filter what you learn through the guiding norm of Immanuel, but this filter must always be committed to trusting that the friend of color who is sharing a racial incident with you is genuinely experiencing this pain. Rarely does a person of color share stories of racialization with people they do not trust. I invite you to reciprocate that trust and honor their Real.

3. Seek to repair relationship with people of color whose reality you have not honored. True covenant friendships acknowledge conflict and work through it to be mutually strengthened as a result. Resist pedagogical imperialism when hearing their stories, but honor the Real by asking questions for clarification. It is ok if you do not fully

understand racialized incidents or situations, since it is impossible for you to fully be able to do so in a racialized society. But you may ask questions such as, “Can you trust me to share a little more about that?” Or be fully honest and say, “I *cannot* see how that is a racial incident, but I *trust* your reality. When and if you are ready to help me understand your experience a bit more, I am here and open to learn from you.” You may read these as generic statements, but I have thoughtfully crafted them. I do not expect white people to fully understand the Real of people of color, but I do hope that you, as friends in covenant relationship with YHWH and with people of color, would be open to learning about how race impacts people of color in the everyday.

4. Honor the Real by seeking a learning community. First, find a mentor of color. This is the best way to grow as a racial healing agent who honors the Real. A mentor of color is someone whom you’ve intentionally asked to help you see the racialization in society. Try to find someone who is engaged in her own journey of racial healing and is willing and able to bring you along in that journey. I also invite you to learn from other white voices in the journey, followers of Jesus who are seeking to dismantle racism. Since whiteness is an oppressive power that seeks to destroy life, cultivating a community that is living into racial healing may renew life. Finally, since people of color are more aware of the impact of race on society, elevate those voices in your pedagogy.

5. Be aware of the space you take up in conversations and be willing to share that space. Multiply your influence by empowering others in their leadership. For people of color whose default is to defer to others in conversation, it is difficult to address moments when a white friend is taking up a lot of space in a conversation. I need you to be aware of how many times you speak in a group, how long you speak, how many ideas you

propose, and who you are not allowing to speak in the moment. Communities that come from hierarchical cultures tend to wait to be invited to speak.<sup>291</sup> Honoring the Real means providing everyone in your conversation with the opportunity to speak. This is not forcing them to speak, not shaming them into sharing, but making space for them to contribute.

*Cultivate a noticing regard*

At this point you may feel some tension. I invite you to listen to that thought or emotion and ask why. Why are you doubting or accepting this? What questions do you have? At this point, I invite you to take a noticing regard of yourself. Healing of the nations will occur when we have more grace, both for ourselves and for others. I invite you to resist the power of whiteness that brings with it defensiveness upon hearing the implications of our sociotheological racial formation. People tend to respond with defensiveness or with paralyzing guilt. I invite you to move out of guilt and into the loving embrace of Jesus, who liberates from guilt and took on shame. Do this so that you may continue to grow as a person who embodies racial healing.<sup>292</sup>

White people have been stripped of their heritage and encouraged to cultivate cultural amnesia, and may be oppressed by the lies that things will never change or that it is too late to change whiteness as a construct. Cultivating a noticing regard means practicing historical remembrance; in other words, a Gentile remembrance, embracing

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<sup>291</sup> A good resource in understanding power dynamics in groups is Eric Law, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb: A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community* (Danvers: Chalice Press, 1993).

<sup>292</sup> See Lynne M. Jacobs, "Learning to Love White Shame and Guilt: Skills for Working as a White Therapist in a Racially Divided Country," *International Journal of Psychoanalytic Self Psychology* 9 (2014): 297–312. Jacobs writes guilt and shame inevitably follow the "awareness of the advantages and exclusivity that our white situation accords us" and that the first reaction is defensiveness (301). "If I resist my guilt, I resist knowing my privileged position. If I resist my shame, I remove myself from the visceral experience of the assault on dignity that my participation in privilege enacts" (304). Therapists ought not ignore these. Jacobs encourages therapists to be open to dialogue and ask, "What, in my perspective, limits my capacity to find the sense, the truth, in the patient's perspective?" (308).

your ethnic identities, and understanding that these can be separated from nationalism. Cultivating a noticing regard for self and others will bring more freedom from a racialized gaze. Cultivating a noticing regard for others will help build trust with people of color. I invite you to recall how whiteness distorts perception. Be conscious and aware of the moments, subtle though they may be, when you are viewing others through a racial lens. Seek a noticing regard of others so that you may honor their dignity.

*Embody Immanuel – Listen and act wherever the Spirit leads*

*Entre Nos* shows how Immanuel is embodied among the community of believers through the Spirit. Our biblically covenanted community depends on the formation of the Spirit for our continued connection and mutual healing. The Spirit can guide, empower, give insight to, and find creative ways of embodying racial healing among us. The only way that the interpretive gap can be closed is if we embody Immanuel in the places we serve. The Spirit may lead some of you to take a critical look at your institutions, churches, and communities to see where the power of racialization is at work. I pray and hope the Spirit will lead all of you to actively work on dismantling racialization. The Spirit will remind you to see others with a noticing regard. If you feel powerless to address racism and to bridge our racial healing gap, it is because you are. We are. But take heart. We have been given the power of the Holy Spirit, just as the disciples were in Matt. 10, to free the oppressed, heal the sick, and preach the good news of Jesus as Messiah, our ultimate *dasein*. Embody Immanuel *entre nosotros* for the healing of the nations. Dismantling whiteness is not an option; it is necessary for our mutual healing.



### ***Entre Nos Implications for People of Color***

People of color have the similar responsibility to honor the Real, cultivate a noticing regard, and embody Immanuel. I provide the following nuances and invitations for people of color and hope to live by them as well.

#### *Honor the Real*

First, I invite you to be open to racial healing in yourself. People of color are impacted differently from whites, but also from one another. Racialization works in such a way that preferences lighter skinned individuals. In a racialized society, people assign a racial category to you depending on the color of your skin, even before they get the chance to have a conversation with you. Thus, you may culturally identify as a person of color, but if you have the appearance that passes for white, then the impact of race on your person is more difficult to ascertain. In contrast, my darker skinned brothers and sisters may have developed a greater self-awareness of racialization on their person because of the frequency and extent of the impact of race on their being. For this reason, I have chosen to make separate invitations for honoring the Real *entre nosotros*, the *hermano/as* of color.

For my lightly shaded friends, I invite you to critically examine the role that your hue has played in your life. I refuse to place you within the white section because you have still experienced racialization, regardless of how aware of it you may be. However, I invite you to acknowledge that the closer you are to appearing white, the closer you are to receiving the preferential treatment of being white in a racialized society. Honoring the Real for you means taking an honest assessment of your perceptions of race in this country. You may feel resistance to what I have written regarding race, ethnicity, and

culture. You may feel *ni de aquí, ni de allá*, neither fully belonging in the white camp nor fully belonging in the person of color camp. This is an ambiguous place to be and with ambiguity comes either ambivalence or anxiety. I invite you to honor your Real by honoring the way that race has *and has not* impacted your life. Seek racial healing for yourself *and* for others. When you grow in awareness of the impact of race on your friends or even on other members of your family, you may be at a better place to impact predominantly white institutions and dismantle racialization in these. But more than this, you will be a part of the racial healing community that we are all invited to be a part of.

For my darker skinned brothers and sisters, I invite you to honor the Real by being open to racial healing. The impact of racialization has taken the greatest toll on your body and being. An honest reflection on how race has impacted your life is necessary, not only for your own racial healing, but also for the healing of our community. As a woman of color who is on the slightly darker spectrum (I am the darkest in my family), growing in awareness of the invisible yet palpable power of race *entre nosotros* has strengthened my voice and solidified my confidence in Jesus. I find my healing in the one whose body was judged and violated on the cross, but whose resurrection defeated the powers of hatred and death. I find my healing in the one whose body was later distorted into a racialized ideal to serve economies and empires, but who dispels this racialization with our Gentile remembrance. I find my healing in Jesus who comes to us in contextualized Spirit-filled ways, teaching us to follow his way more fully, worshipping him with our cultures and ethnicities, yet continually speaking into our cultures and ethnicities to reflect more of his Kingdom. My dear friends, I invite you into this critical reflection of racialization. As bodies whom have experienced the greater toll

*entre nos*, you are able to more clearly see how an embodied Immanuel *Entre Nos* can be lived out for our communal racial healing. I invite you to guide us in racial healing.

Second, for all peoples of color, I invite you to be open to seeing the racial healing in others. I understand that I am asking for a lot. It takes much courage to trust someone on the racial healing path. It takes courage because though we can trust they are on the journey, we cannot guarantee that they will not make faux pas or do other things that hurt us, along the way. This is where I invite you to honor the Real of your own journey. Remember that when you were growing in racial healing and awareness, there were also faux pas that you made when speaking of other ethnic groups. We will all make mistakes on this racial healing journey; we are bound to prick one another, intentionally or not, like dancing porcupines. For those times when there is intentional disregard of people of color, we ought not continue in conversation with those people because they have shown themselves closed off to racial healing. However, for the unintentional consequences of racial healing conversations, for the times when we hurt one another unintentionally, I invite you to remember the covenant relationship that followers of Jesus have with one another. Choosing into the community of believers means choosing into a healing community that reflects Christ's love, grace, and healing to the world.

Third, honoring the Real for people of color means embracing the gifts God has given you. Growing up in a racialized society may impact someone's self-perception in ways one may not fully understand at first. Personally, I am still working on dismantling some of the lies and stereotypes I have believed about my people and myself, about being Mexican-American. Thus, I invite people of color to actively work against the lie that presumes that you are incompetent. While we may not often see professors of color,

executives of color, lawyers of color, or doctors of color, this does not mean that we could never enter those spaces, or that we could not survive in those places. The existence of a few shows us that it can be done; bridges have been built. True, we lack the ability to socially imagine ourselves in those spaces, but we need to be in those spaces for the sake of dismantling the racial paradigm. We enter into these spaces not for racial justice, though that is a consequence, but for adding the wealth of our perspectives to those communities. We enter those spaces to reflect the glory of God's gifts, as Immanuel has shaped us.

We don't just lack the ability to *imagine* being in predominantly white spaces, but we also do not have the structural agency to thrive in these places. This is why it will take our entire community of color and white partners along the racial healing journey to dismantle structural racism. Honor the Real in your life by honoring the gifts, competencies, perspectives, partners, and opportunities that the Lord has blessed you with. This may feel a bit challenging for those of us who do not like to boast about our abilities, but this is not boasting. This is taking an honest assessment of the gifts God has given you. I invite you to take a moment to journal or think about the strengths and resilience you have seen in your life. I pray Immanuel empowers you as you enter into difficult spaces.

*Cultivate a noticing regard*

Honoring the Real of our racial formation will be difficult if we do not practice a noticing regard for ourselves and for others. I invite you to resist making white people the enemy. As chapter one highlighted, sociotheological racial formation around the hegemon of whiteness is a power and force that is bigger than any one person or one

group. It is an invisible, powerful impulse to elevate whiteness above all other identities, epistemes, theologies, philosophies, pedagogies, and ways of being. In moments of racial strife, remember who the real enemy is, the power of whiteness. Please do not misunderstand me and assume that I am oblivious to the way whiteness is lived out among some white people, including hate groups, nationalist politics, and in subtler forms among predominantly white leadership in organizations. Deconstructing whiteness will involve naming the action of evil *and* seeking to *humanize* those committing that evil. We see Jesus, Immanuel, reaching out to enemies across the ethnic and spiritual divide, seeking their full salvation and humanity.<sup>293</sup> Jesus fully understood the distortion that evil does to a person and actively drew forth their dignity in their salvation.<sup>294</sup> Far from a noticing regard at evil, Jesus shows a noticing regard for the whole, restored person that only his kingdom can foster.

Immanuel helps us discern when and how we connect with white people who are on the racial healing path. Some of us are called to be bridge builders with the white community, serving as translators and cultural brokers between our two groups for racial healing, but this is not the call for all. Others are called to create new leadership structures, new therapy models, new business practices, or new trainings that dismantle race and honor the Real of all groups present. Wherever you are called to lead and serve, pay attention to fatigue. If you begin to lack a noticing regard for those genuinely trying to work on racial healing, it may indicate you need to take a Sabbath from these conversations and reflect on Immanuel's noticing regard for you.

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<sup>293</sup> Jesus heals a demoniac and a bleeding woman in Mark 5, two "enemies" of society.

<sup>294</sup> The Syrophenician woman in Matt. 15:21-28 or the salvation of Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1-10.

Cultivating a noticing regard takes practice and discernment, for not all are on the racial healing journey. I caution us in trying to foster or maintain relationships with people who do not show signs of trustworthiness or truthfulness. We are not called to be doormats; we are all called to be servants as Jesus was a servant. While we may struggle to have a noticing regard for others, our heavenly Father as Immanuel *Entre Nos* will guide us in how to put this into practice in a way that heals our multiethnic communities and ourselves.

Lastly, I invite you to cultivate a noticing regard for yourself, your own being. As persons of color with an education, we may feel like we live in the hyphen of life, the both/and reality that while we have learned to perform in academic institutions, we also know how to fit in with our family cultures.<sup>295</sup> Especially for those of us with a B.A. and beyond, we may feel distanced from our families of origin, from fully fitting into our homes. We may also feel like we do not fully fit into academia or our work places. I contend that most people of color are proficient in multicultural settings, able to navigate multiple contexts and situations. Most of us have learned to live in that hyphen of life, the both/and, learning unspoken rules of society in order to survive. You have accomplished a lot. Immanuel has his noticing regard of love and joy for you. When the racial gaze appears, hold on to the truth of Immanuel. He is with you. His noticing regard is on you. His life, death, and resurrection have dignified you. The Spirit as Immanuel *Entre Nos* sees you, names you worthy and good, and humanizes your being. If this is hard for you to cultivate, I invite you to seek out mentors of color who have been on the racial healing journey longer than you and remind you of Immanuel's noticing regard.

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<sup>295</sup> See Daniel A Rodriguez, *A Future for the Latino church: Models for Multilingual, Multigenerational Hispanic Congregations* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2011), 50-51. He writes that most Latino/as "live in the hyphen," as Mexican-American, Educated-poor, immigrant-documented, etc.

*Embody Immanuel – Listen and act on wherever the Spirit leads*

Lastly, dear reader, I invite you to act with the courage, power, and love that comes from being led by the Holy Spirit *Entre Nos*. As this thesis has made the case, systemic and interpersonal racism is a power of evil, an invisible yet palpable and effective source that continues to impact our full humanity. We need every follower of Jesus to actively work against racism and our racial formation. I invite you to listen to the Spirit and ask where you can pursue racial healing in your life and in your community. Latino/a churches often preach and model a holistic gospel “in the barrio,” in our neighborhoods.<sup>296</sup> For many people of color, we cannot separate our spiritual reality from our material reality. We ask how the salvation given to us by Jesus can show itself in the salvation of our community. As the Kingdom of God breaks forth more fully into my life, how can I partner with God to see the Kingdom break through more fully in the life of my communities? I invite you to pursue the Spirit in the transformation of your neighborhood, your city, your campus, and your life. Where can you affirm cultural beauty and gifts, where does race need to be dismantled?

I invite you to be a structural change agent, to critically reflect on structures that perpetuate racism and segregation. This might mean you attend city hall meetings, become more informed in the issues surrounding your neighborhoods, ask questions of your current institutions and discern where racial healing needs to begin. If you are in a place of influence, do not shy away from it. In order to change systems, we need to influence at multiple levels of society, from the ground floor to the ivory tower. Rarely does one person hold all of the influence, which is why we depend on networks. We do not network for self-advancement, but for the building of covenanting relationships and

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<sup>296</sup> Ibid., 159.

systems. If all of this feels like too much to take on, it is because it is too much for one person to handle. We need one another. We need white allies in the journey of dismantling racialized agendas. I need you, dear reader, to continue to press into the covenanting *familia* of YHWH, embracing the noticing regard of Immanuel *entre nosotros* for our racial healing.



**Conclusion:**  
**Immanuel *Entre Nos*, even to the end of the age**

When Jesus appeared as embodied savior, Immanuel, in the form of a vulnerable baby with vulnerable parents, the powers of evil shuttered at their defeat. The power of Immanuel, Christ *entre nosotros*, is more immense than we can imagine. Isaiah pointed toward the hope of Immanuel even in the midst of despair and hopelessness. Matthew chronicled Christ's life among us empowered by the Spirit *entre nosotros*. Neither Isaiah nor Matthew could have imagined how significant Immanuel would be for us today. Racialization is a young evil compared to the ones of mammon and enslavement, but it is attached to the eternal evil that seeks to dehumanize and bring death to relationship with YHWH, with one another, and with our land. Immanuel's *hesed*, covenant faithfulness, destroys the evil among us and invites us all to participate in lovingkindness toward one another. Immanuel *Entre Nos* will be the person we honor and our host for our *fiesta* in the heavenly welcome as painted in Revelations 7:9-10.

I once asked an undocumented student what kept him involved in the Church, given his racial experiences. He wrote, "I am reminded of what the Kingdom of God will look like. People of all nations and different cultures will be there without concern of their immigration status. In Luke 13:29, we read 'People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the Kingdom of God.' This reminds me that we will all be immigrants when entering the Kingdom of God." His hope was in this multiethnic vision! Today, we can embody Immanuel's noticing regard for one another, work to dismantle racialization among us, and the Spirit can empower us for this tremendous task at hand. Take heart, dear reader, for Immanuel promises to be with us as we seek racial healing *entre nosotros* today, tomorrow, even to the end of the age.

## Appendix A

### Glossary of Terms

***Borderland/Mestizo/Nepantla*** – a person living with two or more strong worldviews such as Mexican and American. It is a hyphen identity, the liminal space found in the hyphen, the both/and, the common mixture of epistemes found at the intersection of many national borders. If you ever make it to the Mexico-U.S. border, you will notice even though the wall is made of concrete, it is not solid, though parts of the wall are made of planks of wood, it is still see-through, and though the border tries to give the illusion of the Us-Them black-white dichotomy, it is just an illusion because you begin to see that the land cannot so easily be divided and that the WE Reality of our cultures extends for miles beyond the border.

***Chicanismo/chicano/chicana/chicanx*** – a term emerging in the sixties and seventies for Mexican-Americans who identified with the civil rights movement of the era. Today, it is used to self-describe the both/and borderland identity some Latino/a Americans feel. Personally, for example, at times I prefer to use *Chicana* as a descriptor other than Latina to highlight the value of activism and community concern I hope to embody. While Delgado and Stefancic identify Chicano as Mexican-American<sup>297</sup> and García defines the Chicano as “the prototype of the new Mexican American,”<sup>298</sup> I have met non-Mexican Americans who identify with the Chicano movement. Chicanismo, like cultural identifiers, is a fluid concept that people can choose to take on as an identifier, characterized by activism for Mexican American communities.

***Code switching*** – a skill employed by people of color to adapt and appropriately perform/behave/conform/submit their cultural behaviors to the ideal of whiteness. For example, the observable change that happens in social performance when a Mexican American theology student is hanging out with friends from her downtown neighborhood vs. when the same student is hanging out with friends from her seminary class. The former may have more expressive physical communication and employ slang and the latter may have more reserved physical communication and employ academic jargon.

***Covenant epistemology*** – knowing is a process of integrating various clues from the *world* around us, our *bodies/lived experiences*, and from our *guiding norm*. Knowing is not a static event, but an unfolding journey. It is not only objective reality, but also subjective interpretation of experience, all filtered through the guiding norm. Knowing involves participation and movement and, most of all, knowing is covenantal in form, a relationship between Knower and Known, between the subject seeking to know and the object one seeks to know. Esther Lightcap Meek uses the example of learning to ride a bike. One does not learn to ride a bike by only reading the instruction manual. One learns to ride a bike by getting on the bike, feeling the cause/effect action of pedals moving the bike forward, falling and getting back up. One learns to respect the reality of the bike, its limitations and dangers, while experiencing fun along the process of knowing. Covenant epistemology takes these tacit ways of knowing into account.

***Entre nosotros*** – Spanish for “among us” or “between you and me.” Used throughout the thesis to exemplify the communal, interpersonal, and familial bond among Christians across racial, ethnic, cultured, gendered, and economic divides.

***Entre Nos*** – a minoritized critical perspective of Immanuel, the theology of God among us. *Entre Nos* views the Spirit as Immanuel *entre nosotros* today. Enriches racial healing conversations by seeking to honor the other with a noticing regard.

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<sup>297</sup> Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic define it in more general terms: “View of history or an event that challenges the accepted one,” in Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 158.

<sup>298</sup> Ignacio M. García, *Chicanismo: The Forging of a Militant Ethos among Mexican Americans* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1997) 12, 35, 60.

**Epistemology** – the theory or theories of knowledge, methods and validity of knowing.

**-white** – the idea that whiteness is an all-encompassing interpretive framework from which whites and people of color know and understand the world.

**-people of color** – the idea that people of color have a parallel interpretive framework for knowing the world that is influenced by their lived experience of race in the United States.

**Essentialization/essentialism/essentialist** – a consequence of race that describes a body as fundamentally confined to their race and the meanings associated with their race, an example of the hegemonic power of race over all bodies.

**Ethnicity & Culture** – Ethnicity involves your family heritage, your tribal and migratory history, usually connected to a geopolitical place. This identity is fluid and has the space to include multiple ethnicities. For example, racially, I am only White (according to the U.S. Census, depending on the year). Ethnically, my parents and I originate from Mexico. However, since I have spent the majority of my life in the U.S, I now also identify as “American.” Thus, I am ethnically Mexican-American. Culture is a large range of expressions of communal affinities. Cultural artifacts, music, attributes, whatever groups of people produce are examples.

**Evangélica**<sup>299</sup> – Latinas that partially identify with the confessional evangelical tradition, but choose to define themselves as distinct in a couple of ways. First, it is a postcolonial theology, discerning traditions of our faith that have been colonized. Second, Latina *evangélicas* honor our *abuelita theologies*, the faith of our grandmas and *commadres*, close friends, and *tias*, that “taught us to love the Lord and to demonstrate that love in the world.” Third, it employs a *praxis of accompaniment*, theologizing from our lived experiences resulting from participating in our communities. Fourth and most significant, it emphasizes “the importance and presence of the Holy Spirit.

**Evangelical** – Christians in the U.S. that are defined by the evangelicalism movement characterized by the following beliefs: the Bible is the final authority (over human reason, personal experience, tradition, and individual preference), Christ died to save all and is the only way to eternal life, one who makes a decision to follow Jesus is “born again” and given new life, evangelism is the mission of the Church, and concerned with orthodoxy.<sup>300</sup>

**Gentile Forgetfulness** – Reading scripture in one’s own image instead of as a Gentile entering into the covenant family and story of God. Reading scripture through any interpretive lens as *the primary* interpretive lens. The tendency to usurp the scriptures for personal gain, intentionally or not.

**Gentile Remembrance** – the active attempt and remembrance to read scripture as a Gentile if one is not ethnically/religiously Jewish. The active attempt to recover a connected epistemology: to one another, our places, and our Lord.

**Guiding norm or the Normative Word** – the guide that shapes and focuses the direction of knowing. Meek posits everyone is submitted to a normative word, a golden rule of sorts for one’s life. A person can be submitted to their coach, eating plan, academic goals, a deity, a parent, etc. All knowing is impacted by and filtered through this normative word.

**Indeterminate future possibilities** – since the knowing process involves gaps in knowing (because it is a process), there is an undetermined (infinite) amount of possibilities of how one knows and understands the Real, the object one is seeking to know. Far from chaotic, these possibilities are

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<sup>299</sup> Loida Martell-Otero, Zaida Maldonado Pérez, and Elizabeth Conde-Frazier. *Latina Evangélicas: A Theological Survey from the Margins* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2013), 2-9.

<sup>300</sup> Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3.

filtered through a focal pattern that emerges in the knowing process. Thus, the future possibilities are indeterminate, but shaped by the guiding norm.

**Latinidad:** - the ethnic identification and expression of someone whose families come from Latin America. Could be an essentializing and racialized category if expressed as the supreme representation of Latino/as in the U.S, but does not have to be.

**Minoritized critical perspective-** theological and biblical reflection from a minority perspective with an attempt to recover meaning from identities usurped by the colonial enterprise such as gender, issue-focused studies, identities, etc. Rather than deconstructing to the point of removing traditional theological notions, a minoritized critical perspective deconstructs with the intent of meaning-making, what Federico Roth phrases as creating “an expanding mosaic of hyphenizations that will lead to a celebration of composite and alloyed characters.”<sup>301</sup> I further contend that minoritized critical perspectives are distinct from minoritized theologies in that the latter *begins* its theological inquiry from identity, creating a Latina theology for example, and the former *enters* theological inquiry as a perspective of theology, reading Immanuel through the minoritized lens of *evangélica* theology for example.

**Noticing regard/ Dasein** – looking upon someone with awe, wonder, and love, interpreting their presence as a gift shared with you if they so choose.

**Personed knowing** – contrary to a strictly empirical and objective knowledge, personed knowing acknowledges the subject in the knowing process and that the source of the knower is a being seeking to know.

**Post-Racial** – describing a society that has eliminated racial prejudice and discrimination

**Race** – A category assigned to individuals in a racialized society based on observable phenotypical differences such as eye shape, skin color, and hair type. In the U.S., these categories are limited and defined by the 2010 Census as White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. Notice missing is Hispanic/Latino, who “may be of any race.”<sup>302</sup> Race is often confused with *ethnicity*, but it is significantly different. Where ethnicity is based on a family’s origin narrative, *race* is based solely on what a person looks like. A person may define their ethnicity, but not their race; race is placed *on* the person. For example, if a Mexican immigrant living in the U.S. has white features they will be granted the privileges of being white in a racialized society.

**-problem of/ the racial problem** – a phrase used to encompass the many factors negatively impacting all individuals objectified by race, including whites and people of color. Race is problematic because its use and prevalence impacts the quality of life for all individuals. As a problem, race requires an answer. Problems of race include, but are not limited to, residual effects of segregated neighborhoods, biased mass incarceration against men of color, poor quality of health care, lack of access to health care and prevention, and lower life expectancy rates.

**Racial formation theory** – Omi and Winant propose the racial formation theory to describe race as a formulated, evolving way of “making people up.”

**Racial gaze** – the intense gaze from a person who appears to be staring out of prejudice and differentiation, perceived by a person of color. Interpreting someone as a race and all of the associations with that race rather than a whole person. Sometimes the stare is one of curiosity (why is her hair like that?), one of animosity (they don’t belong here), one of suspicion (what are they doing here?), or a

<sup>301</sup> Federico Roth, “The Promise of Perforated Characters: Comments on Migration, Economics, and Militarization.” *Society of Biblical Literature*. Fall 2014. Paper presented at SBL 2014, San Diego.

<sup>302</sup> “What is Race?” United States Census Bureau, last modified January 12, 2017, accessed March 31, 2017. <https://www.census.gov/topics/population/race/about.html>.

mixture of these. The racial gaze is felt as a subtle superiority over the person of color. The gaze is palpable and observed, such as when someone raises an eyebrow when you explain you were born in the United States and not in Asia. The gaze may be hostile, such as when a person of color is followed by a security guard or the store attendant, even when that person of color is dressed as a professional.

**Racial healing** – the active engagement among peoples in the dismantling of race as a hegemonic power. Acknowledges race as a sin that requires healing and saving from. Involves supporting ethnic identity and cultures and dismantling racialization. Involves identifying and changing structures that perpetuate racialization.

**Racialization/Racialized Society** – the process of making a structure or system or individual fit the hegemonic narrative of race. For example, a black appearing person from Nairobi who immigrates to the United States is racialized socially, structurally, and eventually psychologically into black performance because of the way race is organized in the U.S. That person may not identify as African American, but they will be treated as such.<sup>303</sup> Racialization impacts all levels of individuals and societies.

**Racial justice** – the active work of addressing injustice done to individuals, structures, and societies caused by racialization. Justice seeks more than equality, it seeks equity, more than conversation, and it seeks action. With action, it seeks reparation of relationships. Sometimes, these reparations will cost sacrifices to dominant groups. Racial justice is necessary for racial healing.

**Racial reconciliation** – the long-held value among evangelical social justice workers calling the church toward reconciliation. Recent scholars such as Native American Mark Charles point out the misnomer. Reconciliation implies there was once wholeness in connection between the peoples, but from its very inception the U.S. was not in whole relationship with Natives. Such scholars, myself included, prefer other terms such as racial healing or racial justice. Racial reconciliation conversations might stop short of action steps. But racial healing and racial justice honor the truth that conversations on race need to begin by addressing the pain of the past and need to address change for today.

**Racism** – the impact of race identifying whites as superior to people of color. Racism is the embodying of this superiority in interpersonal interactions, social systems, and government structures.

**Real** – that which exists, acknowledging there is a Real to know. Modernity finds the Real through objective, scientific data. Postmodernity finds the Real in subjectivism. However, the world is not entirely subjective, nor is the world entirely objective. The thesis uses The Real as a way of honoring actual *beings* that can be known and that can choose to seek to know. Covenant epistemology honors the objectivity of the Real while allowing for the subjectivity of the one seeking to know and their interpretation of the Real through the guiding norm.

**Reparations** – Compensation for people who have been wronged. The goal is to repair the broken relationships between people of color and whites along the interpersonal, intrapersonal, and structural level.

**Revisionist history** – examining historical records to account for racial formation.<sup>304</sup>

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<sup>303</sup> Emerson and Smith define a racialized society as one “wherein race matters profoundly for differences in life experiences, life opportunities, and social relationships,” 7. In the U.S., they posit race is increasingly covert, embedded in everyday institutions, invisible to most whites, and resulting in “diminished life opportunities,” 9.

<sup>304</sup> Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic define it in more general terms: “View of history or an event that challenges the accepted one,” in Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 172.

**Social construction theory** – giving a people group or a concept meaning, “a delineation, name, or reality.”<sup>305</sup> A social imaginary assumed to be a given reality.

**Sociotheological** – a term I use throughout the thesis to describe the parallel and concomitant development of social and theological views of race. It accurately addresses the creation of race as a politico-social creation *and* a theologically reinforced, interpreted, and imagined event.

**Subsidiaries** – clues one gathers in the process of knowing, derived from Polanyian epistemology

**Theophanic sketches/ theophany** – a theophany is a physical appearance or personal manifestation of a god to a person.<sup>306</sup> Five types of manifestations in the Bible are observed: deity takes on human form, deity appears in a vision, God represented as the “Angel of the Lord,” God represented in a form other than human (e.g. burning bush), and God represented with the words “as the name of the Lord God’s sacred name.” **Theophanic sketches** is my way of explaining the method of exploring God With Us via Immanuel, by exploring scenes, or sketches, from Matthew’s Jesus and his relationship with the *pneuma* of God. My theophanic sketches presuppose the *pneuma* as Immanuel. In other words, I am exploring the following questions: “Is the *pneuma* a form of theophany? If so, does a theology of Immanuel need to include a theology of the *pneuma*?” And ultimately I am seeking to know, “Is the *pneuma* Immanuel today?” or “How can we understand and embody *pneuma* as Immanuel today?” The thesis does not have space to fully explore these presuppositions and guiding questions, but I present them here as insight into my logic. Thus, I understand my theology of Immanuel more like theophanic sketches over and against a systematic theology of theophany and a biblical theology of Immanuel.

**Whiteness** – a powerful and forceful invitation to see, live, and submit to the world where white-appearing bodies are the central facilitators of reality. The power and agency to create and sustain this social imagination. It is a usurpation of knowing and truth. A usurpation of ethnic identity for whites and a hegemonic imposition of a European ideal for people of color. As the central facilitating reality, whiteness imposes itself on structures and systems, infiltrating prejudice and racialization in such. For example, whiteness deemed black and brown families unfit for living among white families. This racial prejudice was systematized and structuralized when Jim Crow laws were introduced. Whiteness was sustained in the form of the war against drugs, mass incarceration, and perpetual segregation of neighborhoods, among other forms. Whiteness continues to be a central facilitating reality as evidenced by the racial discourse throughout the Obama administration and the recent presidential election.

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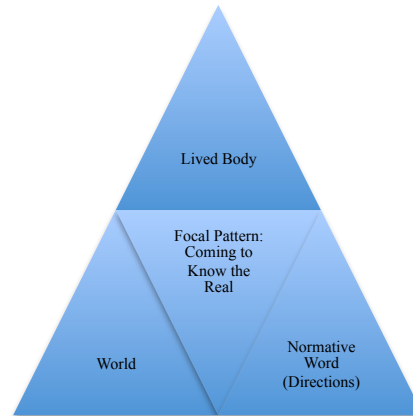
<sup>305</sup> Ibid.

<sup>306</sup> Charles Lee Feinberg, “Theophany,” *Homan Bible Dictionary*, 1991. 1338.

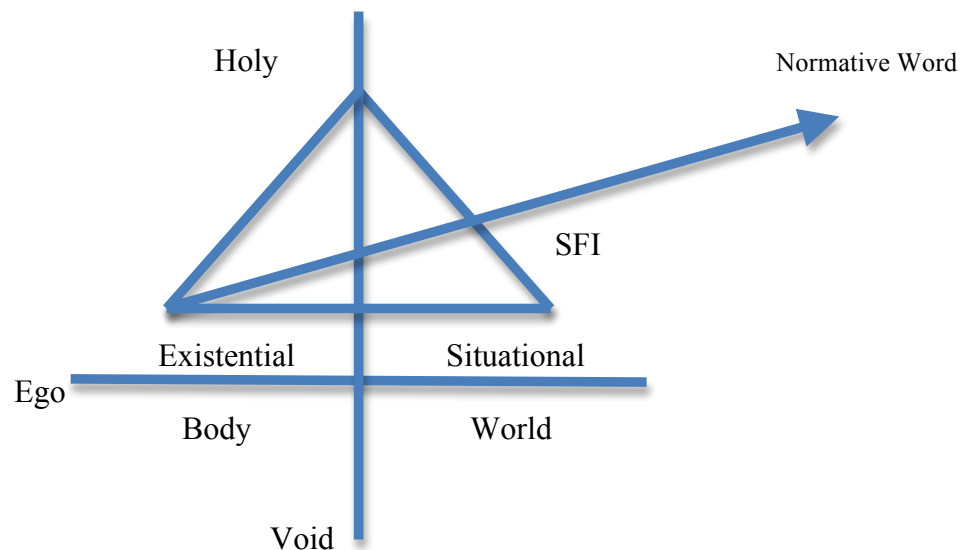
## Appendix B

### Diagram of the Knowing Process in Covenant Epistemology<sup>307</sup>

The diagram below illustrates subsidiary focal integration, the process of coming to know through the clues provided by the three venues. These three venues provide the clues or subsidiaries that one integrates through a focal pattern as one discerns the Real.



The diagram below illustrates how the focal pattern orients the person towards the real and towards covenant faithfulness with the Lord.



The void depicts the way of anti-realism, a rejection of the known. The Ego and the World are on the horizontal axis illustrating the tension in the knowing process experienced intrapersonally and interpersonally. The triad of subsidiaries remains: existential is parallel to body cues; situational is parallel to world cues, and the Normative parallel to the guiding norm. Subsidiary Focal Integration is the arrow towards the normative word, depicting the knower going from their embodied perspective towards an integrated understanding of the Real as guided through the normative word.

<sup>307</sup> These diagrams may be found in Meek, *Loving to Know*, 158 & 294.

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