

# **Vanguards of a Missionary Uprising**

*Challenging Christian African-American Students to Lead Missions Mobilization*

**Michael V. Fariss**

Kindle Edition

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## **VANGUARDS OF A MISIONARY UPRISING**

ISBN: 978-0-9776180-4-0

All Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

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**Dedicated to the memory of my dad,  
Rev. Fred M. Fariss**

## Preface

In faith that Jesus Christ will do a new thing to extensively empower Christian African-American students, I challenge you to step up and lead. Several reasons compel me to put this challenge in writing. First, while reading my late father's diary, which predates the Civil Rights era, I discovered that he recognized your great potential for radically changing international ministry. Many Christians call this international ministry, "world missions."

Then, several Norfolk State University students invited me to lead a Bible study on their campus. Their strong desire to know and obey God's will inspired me to begin writing. I appreciated their love for Christ and how kindly they welcomed me. A few of them, along with other students, joined me on an outreach trip to Jamaica. Witnessing their ability in Christ to dynamically fulfill God's eternal purpose created a sense of urgency in me. I felt compelled to spur them on in this high calling so they might unleash their potential upon the world. Some of this book comes from notes I used in Jamaica to introduce them to Jesus' great mission for their lives.

I attempt to explain how world missions' complicated history impacts every aspect of student life and cultural identity. Many African Americans' experiences in the past two centuries have been greatly impacted by missionaries. Christian missions influenced African-American culture and values significantly and people of African descent participated in missions in every way but one. This book challenges you to take on the one identity denied Christian African Americans so far: to become the vanguard leaders who mobilize a unified American witness for Christ. This leadership role in missions, in regard to Africa, was once the dream of many black Christians after Emancipation. I challenge you to "lift up your eyes," as Jesus commanded, and dream even bigger. Lead to fulfill His mission in the entire world.

I divide my challenge to become a vanguard for Christ into two sections. First, I focus on challenging you to discover your great potential as a missions leader. I define His mission and explain true discipleship's vital role in your cause, since a vanguard must know both well to strategically lead. I offer encouragement to deploy yourself and others as freedom forces who are organized and ready for action. I stress finding your new identity in Christ to discover your freedom and calling to pioneer as His vanguard through discipleship. I challenge you to dedicate yourself to prepare now for God's high calling as a missionary vanguard who leads His people. In Part II, I provide insights into missions' historical background, breaking the silence about structural problems that still hinder African Americans from extensively participating in missions so you may overcome them.

But most of all, I encourage this new missions ideology to free myself. I have read about the difference between dreamers and visionaries. Successful visionaries *act* to make a dream happen, while dreamers do nothing.<sup>1</sup> This year, I prayerfully determined to take initiatives to become a visionary and not remain a mere dreamer stuck in the status quo. I explain how most black and white American Christians in my generation remain so caught up in past dramas that we have become dreamers, rather than visionaries. Our ministry structures still chain us to the

segregated status quo. Nothing changes while ministry leaders talk a good game about vision for your future. You remain uninformed about Christ's Great Commission and left out of your vital leadership role. We all need a spiritual revolution!

In his book, *The Souls of Black Folk*, African-American civil rights leader W. E. B. Dubois illustrated the tragedy of African-Americans' unrealized leadership potential.<sup>2</sup> Yet, like me, a growing number of Christian leaders in my generation see your amazing leadership potential to revolutionize what it means for believers to love Christ and follow Him in discipleship. What my father saw in you has come true. This is your day to lead, extensively mobilize, and bring Jesus' great glory overseas.

Bringing a spiritual uprising that extensively mobilizes Christian races together will require a spiritual revival and more. The Holy Spirit must create this racially unified movement by transforming both individuals and institutions with the truth of God's trustworthy, inspired Word – the Bible. I will explain how the Spirit's work and Word revive with new spiritual experiences and lines of reasoning that past generations thought impossible. Yours is the first African-American generation experiencing the freedom and evangelical Bible training to mobilize this kind of breakthrough uprising.

Writing this challenge reminds me of my first year in full-time ministry in 1980. My race and my age (just 23 at the time) troubled many people who openly doubted that I could relate to 30 or so black teens from a nearby high school. I began by asking those teens to keep an open mind and give me a chance. Some of those original students still live in Norfolk today. More than 30 years have passed since I held my first Bible study with them, but I am confident that many of them would speak up for me now. So I carefully write this challenge to you with the same request. Please keep an open mind and give me a chance. I believe God has chosen you, and your generation of African Americans, to fulfill His highest and most glorious calling.

I aim to heighten your sense of destiny as one of Christ's disciple-makers who combine evangelism with social concern. Some evangelists dreamed of this possibility but most still remain handcuffed by the black-white racial problem. Embrace your identity as Christ's ambassador with the vision of leading a diverse but unified witness for Christ. Introduce individuals to Him for personal salvation through God's supernatural power in the true Gospel. All the while, bring Christ glory by mobilizing many to extend mercy, act justly, and confront society's institutionalized sins.

Mobilizing Christian blacks and whites for Christ's unified mission will require more than overcoming the race problem. This book explains how to navigate unresolved issues from the past that lead many of both races to disrespect the Bible's authority as God's Word. I challenge you to unify black and white Christians with all believers, under the one true purpose that God reveals in the Bible. Rise above the contradictions that have plagued Christianity and still discredit faith in Jesus as the only way to receive His life and salvation. You possess much potential as His vanguard to bridge over racial and doctrinal divides that undermine true discipleship and effective missions.

With the word “uprising,” I introduce a new missionary ideology. I coined it to challenge you to step up and take a noticeable stand for Christ with your rightful identity as a missions leader. This concept plays on the word “uplift,” which is the lingering ideology that needs replacing. To show the need for a new missions ideology, I contrast *uprise* with uplift, which has been demobilizing African Americans since the Civil War. An uprising implies motion and the need for changes in missions structures that hold you down.

This contrast between uplift and uprising also helps me challenge you to create a revolutionary movement that mobilizes many to complete Christ’s global mission. Calling for revolution would be rhetorical excess unless I address the basic “nuts-and-bolts” mechanics for spreading a new missions ideology.<sup>3</sup> An uprising describes my spiritual motivation as well. Looking to meet our risen Lord, up in the air, inspires obedience to spread His Gospel, teach His Word, love justice, and extend mercy while anticipating His return.

I write, therefore, to inspire you to step up as a spiritual activist. By God’s grace and the Holy Spirit’s power, may you mobilize many for freedom’s cause. Follow Christ by forging a new path as a vanguard of a spiritual uprising. Jesus commanded you to take up this right. He is definitely worth it. Take His Word to the bank. Courageously fulfill God’s eternal purpose by loving and obeying Christ. Make your life count for eternity and for the great glory of our unstoppable Lord.<sup>4</sup> Then you will win spiritual liberty and justice for all. Weigh carefully my challenges and you will discover the glory of putting your life on the line for Christ’s great love and mission.

With much gratitude, I acknowledge those who blessed me as I wrote this book. My wife, Kim, with Ken Watson, Greg Johnston, Margo Taylor, and Nicole Hankerson, encouraged me from the start. Faithful prayer partners interceded for me and my writing. Several college students, my Urban Discovery Ministries colleagues, and others studied my rough drafts and gave invaluable feedback. Honest and insightful, they provided gracious and bold criticism that I needed. I praise God for the help that all of these friends provided.

Respectfully,

**Michael V. Fariss**

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# **Part I: Challenging the Vanguard**

## **Chapter 1**

### **Know the Mission Well**

#### *A Vanguard Understands the Uprising's Purpose*

#### **Discover Your Revolutionary Potential**

African-American student, get ready to shock the world. I write to challenge you as a mentor who respectfully believes in you and sees your tremendous potential to change the world for Christ. Prayerfully open your heart as I dare to speak for Him.

To help you discover your global potential, my three purposes for this chapter center on understanding and obeying Jesus Christ's mission assignment called "The Great Commission." First, I define Jesus' mission in light of God's eternal purpose. This might sound complicated, but I will break it down so you will appreciate its vital importance. Second, I introduce your potential as His vanguard who recruits, equips, and leads students to fulfill Christ's mission worldwide. You will hear me use the word "mobilizing" a lot. I explain the vanguard's role in rallying other Christians to complete Christ's Great Commission. Third, I explain how only legitimate discipleship fulfills this mission. Jesus calls you to real discipleship and I begin by explaining what this really means. If you understand and heed this call, He can empower you to rise up and lead a spiritual revolution on the international level.

Unlike any other generation, yours enjoys the freedom to extensively mobilize and take its rightful place of leadership in His great cause. Your background and experiences only increase your potential to lead. I believe that God prepared you for such a time as this. He gave you amazing potential to pioneer for Christ worldwide. I am not the first one to see your great vanguard, your revolutionary potential to fulfill His mission and impact the world.

#### **Check This Out**

Before I was born, God gave my father a clear vision of your great value and spiritual destiny. Despite my role in ministry with African Americans since 1979, my father never shared this vision with me. After his death, my mother gave me an article from a South Carolina newspaper. It described his attempt to start a Bible institute in the mid-1950s for African-American students. Also, my mother provided his personal diary that corroborates the newspaper's account. Though my father's Bible school closed for financial reasons, his initial purpose for starting the school astonished me.

Before the first Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court decision overturned legally sanctioned segregation, my dad embraced what most black and white Christians still do not comprehend today. He saw the justice and wisdom of equipping African Americans and putting them into motion for world missions. Dad went on to pastor a church. Later, he watched me found Urban Discovery Ministries (UDM), but gave me no input from his experience in South Carolina. Ironically, his visionary purpose for African-American college students now fuels my life and syncs perfectly with the mission of UDM. Those who prayed for God to accomplish



Dad's vision in the 1950s would rejoice to see how God has not forgotten their requests. He continues to answer these along with the prayers offered for my life's work today.

An African-American pastor once told me that Dad's Bible school attempt was an act of justice against segregation. He meant segregation in classrooms. Additionally, I believe Dad's vision was also an act of justice against segregation in the mission field. If you embrace this vision, you will become a vanguard on the cutting edge of new things that God is doing in the world. It will be the greatest challenge of your life.

### **A New Black Thing**

A quote from the article explains my father's vision and purposes for the Bible school in the mid-1950s:

Christ's final commission will be continually stressed because "we believe God is doing a new thing in missions. For the first time, in an extensive way, colored people can be used around the world as missionaries. There are places today where a white missionary has two strikes against him, but a Negro can go without opposition."<sup>1</sup>

I believe that Christ can use anyone of any race to fulfill His mission anywhere. Yet, this "new thing" that Dad believed God was doing in missions back then has yet to be fulfilled. After nearly 60 years, African Americans in world missions remain an overwhelming minority. In 1980, God called me to minister to inner-city youth. This calling expanded to family outreach, then to church planting and consulting. Despite this progression in purpose, I finally understand that this work merely laid the foundation for my ultimate purpose: your mobilization. After reading the article, I began praying all the more that Christ will mobilize people of African descent for world missions "for the first time, in an extensive way!" This prayer sums up my passion to encourage you to fulfill your great calling and assignment from Christ.

About 200 years ago, a European missionary began the modern missions movement. Since then, this movement mobilized thousands of missionaries from many different races. What kept African Americans from participating in this movement and, thereby, denying your full destiny in Christ? Why did white Christians from my father's generation fail to equip blacks for this cause? Why did white missions leaders exclude African Americans from the decision-making process? Why has little changed since the 1950s in missions? You deserve to know. Also, you deserve to know your rights and responsibilities for bringing Christ's Gospel to the nations.

I attempt to address these issues and challenge you to grapple with their ramifications. Sixty years ago, my father appreciated God's vision for extensively mobilizing African-American students for missions. Envision yourself, along with Christian African-American students from across our nation, rising up to obey Christ's wonderful Commission. See yourself, with many other people of African descent, leading a revolutionary movement of Christ's love for the lost by the Holy Spirit's power. Leading this spiritual revolution will allow you to take your rightful

place at the forefront of Christ's witnesses in the world. Lead from the front and become Christ's amazing vanguard in missions.

### **What is a Vanguard?**

This book uses the term "vanguard" to emphasize mobilizing many to obey Christ's Commission through revolutionary, innovative, and courageous leadership. I bring out these aspects of the word from its political, business, cultural, and military meanings. Politically speaking, a vanguard is the party that places itself in the center of a revolutionary movement and at the forefront of a mass action. In a business sense, vanguards lead through innovation by creating new thinking and ideas.<sup>2</sup>

Referring to culture, vanguards influence how people from different cultures view and connect with one another. To mobilize missionaries cross-culturally, for example, the vanguard equips them to add new values, traditions, and customs to their existing cultural frameworks. For vanguards on the cutting edge of this cultural leadership, the word "avant-garde" (advance guard) characterizes their innovation. They love to experiment with social norms and embrace new ideas and practices that break through traditional barriers to widespread missions mobilization. As a spiritual vanguard, Jesus authorizes you to pioneer with correct doctrine, righteous creativity, and mobilizing ingenuity. Adding cross-cultural dynamics to students' experiences equips them to glorify God with greater unity and from different frames of reference. Such a culturally innovative uprising will radiate the Lord's glory to the ends of the earth.

Most of my challenges center on the bold leadership that is best described by the term's military definition. A military vanguard is the unit that advances in front of the army to lead it into battle. A vanguard's primary objective is to put the military formation into motion. Its job is to mobilize soldiers by leading from the forefront position.<sup>3</sup> Vanguards muster first as the bravest, most committed, and best-prepared military element in an army. These elite, action-oriented leaders know they will endure hardship and personal suffering. Even so, they willingly sacrifice themselves to lead the rest of the army forward. As the "guard" portion of this word suggests, a vanguard defends from the front as well. They knock out enemy strongholds to shield the soldiers who follow their lead.

African Americans serve honorably, even courageously, in all branches of our military. Many made the ultimate sacrifice for our country, like the young man I knew who died fighting in Iraq. African-American soldiers, sailors, and marines continue a long legacy of bravery and valor. Their reputation for fighting fiercely at the "tip of the spear" has been evident in all of America's armed conflicts.

Before the Emancipation Proclamation, insatiable love of freedom and equality inspired slaves to take up arms and impact the world. In 1791, for example, intense passion for liberty and equality with white plantation owners motivated slaves in Saint Dominique, Haiti, to organize and revolt.<sup>4</sup>

Following this initial uprising, ex-slaves in Haiti impressed or intimidated world powers with their resolve to mobilize for strategic warfare and defend their newly won freedoms. Self-emancipated vanguards in Haiti mustered a people's army and defeated the French. With unyielding solidarity, the masses chose to die fighting rather than become re-enslaved. Indeed, they fought off 20,000 troops that Napoleon sent to reinstate slavery in Haiti. After the French lost 55,000 soldiers, Napoleon abandoned his attack in 1802.<sup>5</sup> Fearing the slave's vanguard ability to incite uprisings, U.S. President Thomas Jefferson shut down trade with Haiti in 1806.<sup>6</sup>

Yet, inspired by the Haitian victories, ex-slaves in the U.S. fought willingly alongside the British in the War of 1812. Men, women, and children paddled canoes to British ships anchored in the Chesapeake Bay to escape slavery during this war. Foregoing the option to emigrate immediately to Trinidad and freedom, about 300 men elected to remain in the U.S. and serve voluntarily in England's Corps of Colonial Marines. Trained at a base camp on Tangier Island along Virginia's Eastern Shore, these black soldiers displayed combat effectiveness that rivaled their experienced, but battle-weary, British counterparts. A British vice admiral reported how the escaped slaves were "... indeed excellent Men, and make the best skirmishers possible for the thick Woods of this country." A captain observed that the deaths of black marines, incurred in several battles, inspired rather than disheartened the rest who fought on. He commended their excellent discipline, vivacious spirits, and perfect obedience, describing them as "infinitely more dreaded" than British troops.<sup>7</sup> Like them, spiritual vanguards must love Christ's freedom enough to brave the relentless attacks of the evil one and throw off sin's slavery. They sacrifice willingly to lead the body of believers in obeying Christ's command to make disciples of all nations.

Often vanguards of Special Forces pay a steep price to lead from the front. In 1800, the Saint Dominique uprising inspired a slave, named Gabriel, to organize an ambitious slave revolt from Richmond, Va., that included slaves from Norfolk. When a slave betrayed them and the revolt failed before it began, Virginia hanged Gabriel and 26 other slaves - even though they killed no white people. Gov. James Madison and Vice President Thomas Jefferson discontinued the hangings to avoid criticism from other states and world opinion. Virginia reimbursed slave owners for those who were executed and then sold some of the remaining condemned slaves to states farther south.<sup>8</sup>

When British forces left after the War of 1812, black and Indian soldiers who fought with them took charge of their fort in Florida. This stronghold defended runaway slaves who came through the Underground Railroad, housing 300 black men, women, and children along with 20 Indian warriors. After the British pulled out, the U.S. military surrounded this garrison, which it called "Fort Negro," and demanded surrender. The black and Indian soldiers inside raised a red flag along with Britain's Union Jack, which indicated they would fight to the death. Attempting to set the fort on fire, a U.S. Navy gunboat shot a red-hot cannon ball that hit the fort's gunpowder magazine. Of the 320 people inside the fort, 270 died instantly when the resulting explosion leveled it. Although the attacking soldiers assisted the wounded, they executed the black and Indian commanders immediately, and re-enslaved the survivors.<sup>9</sup>

Things may become tragic, lousy, or discouraging for a vanguard who leads on the cutting edge of an uprising, but Christ sends you with His promise to always be with you. Endure and overcome the worst circumstances as He strengthens you. May Jesus Christ, our all-powerful, all-knowing God, strengthen your inner core and give you a strategically holy path through the spiritual warfare you must face. May He equip and position you to be ready, capable, and agile to overcome spiritual conflict and fulfill His Commission. He will teach you skills for using His spiritual weapons and endow you with supernatural strength for His glory. Indeed, our Lord's salvation-gift shields you and His powerful authority supports you. Yet, His gentle goodness will expand your victory as His mobilizing vanguard (Psalm 18:32-35). Believe His promise and go through basic training with Him to begin completing your mission.

### **Learn the Fundamentals**

Back in the day, legendary football coach Vince Lombardi transformed the lowly Green Bay Packers into perennial champions by teaching fundamentals. To emphasize execution of the basics, Coach Lombardi began a season by holding up a pigskin to his pro athletes and saying, “This is a football...”

When telling this story to American and Jamaican college students, I ask them what came to their minds when I mentioned Coach Lombardi's football. Unlike the American counterparts, most Jamaicans visualized a soccer ball. Since cultural backgrounds often affect our perceptions of the basics, we must account for this as we review the basic facts about missions. As Christ's disciple, you deserve to know what the Bible teaches about your role in fulfilling His mission.

Throughout the centuries, people worldwide have encountered men and women who have dedicated themselves to fulfilling Christ's Commission among the nations. The world's reaction to these missionaries has been extremely varied. Some honor them as Christian icons. Others hate them, considering them to be pawns of imperialistic oppressors.

In the U.S., people have diverse perspectives about missions as well. Some still think of missionaries as white people penetrating remote jungle regions, protected from mosquitoes by funny-looking pith helmets. Others picture them as African-American ladies in church societies who wear white dresses, gloves, and hats to serve the less fortunate.

Since our backgrounds complicate our perceptions of missionaries, establishing the basic facts for all Christians, regardless of race, experience, or culture helps us succeed. This chapter explains the basics of Christ's mission and the necessary dynamics of true discipleship that fulfill it.

### **Discover Christ's Mission**

In Matthew 28:18-20, the risen Christ authorizes and sends His followers to complete a worldwide mission of making for Him disciples of all nations. We call Jesus' sending command, “The Great Commission:”

And Jesus spake to them, saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to obey whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

All of Christ's disciples fall under this mandate. Therefore, all of us should take on the identity of "missionaries" wherever we go. However, to make disciples of "all nations," some of us must be willing to step forward and "go" to take the Gospel's message and reality to people who live overseas. This often requires learning another language, adopting another culture, and living in a foreign land. Without such culture-crossing, language-learning, disciple-making pioneers, Christ's Commission cannot be fulfilled. Discover the significant identity and role Christ gave you as His vanguard. The basic fundamentals of Christ's mission can be described with words beginning with the letter "P":

**God's Purpose**

**Christ's Purchased Freedom**

**Christ's Process**

**Christ's Procedure**

**Christ's Provision**

**Christ's Promise**

### **Your Vital Role in God's Eternal Purpose**

The Bible teaches how Christ gave you a vital role in fulfilling His Great Commission. He authorized His disciples without racial or class discrimination and extended it to every people group in all nations because God's purpose is global. This command obligated all of His disciples equally because His mission is rooted in God's eternal purpose. God's assignment for our lives begins with glorifying Him, not us.

Actually, since God has always existed, His overarching eternal purpose for everything in His creation never had a starting point either. He sees all eternity in one glance. Consequently, His reason for doing things, His control over what happens, and His mission in the world never needed a planning session. Like God Himself, His purpose has existed forever in the past, controls what happens in the present, and will remain unhindered forever into the future. We call this reality "God's eternal purpose," because it emphasizes the fact that you have always been included.

We participate in God's eternal purpose as we fulfill Christ's Great Commission. In the Old Testament, the prophet Habakkuk summarizes God's eternal purpose in one verse: "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the seas." (Habakkuk 2:14) This verse reveals that God's eternal purpose has one goal in mind--to flood the earth with knowledge of His greatness and fame. Everything that God does and every aspect of His creation exists to achieve this end.

God reigns with deep commitment and great passion to fill the earth with the knowledge of His glory. He purposed that men, women, and children from every people, tribe, tongue, and nation would know Him fully. God sent Christ to reveal His infinite honor, victorious majesty, uncompromising righteousness, unconditional love, limitless power, and every other glorious manifestation of His nature and character. He reigns and His purpose is unstoppable.<sup>10</sup> For this same purpose, Christ also sent us to make disciples of all nations to glorify God. He passed onto us the mission that the Father gave Him. In other words, when we evangelize\* the world, we actively participate in fulfilling God's global eternal purpose by His enabling grace.

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\* The word "evangelize" means to proclaim the good news of salvation through faith in Christ.

### **God's Purpose Trumps Everything**

When I started in ministry, I ran a youth center for inner-city young people and established friendships by playing loud, hyped-up games of spades with them. The kids taught me how to take "books" by cutting with wild cards like aces, deuces, and one-eyed jacks. But we valued highly holding The Big Joker, because that card trumped them all.

We are creatures made in God's image with the power to make real choices that have lasting consequences. Yet, regardless of the decisions we make and the actions we take, God carries out His eternal purpose much like we did when holding *the Big Joker* in a game of spades. He trumps everything, even our ability to make real choices. When circumstances surprise us or when we cannot understand why things happened a certain way, we may rest assured that God has played His Big Joker. He remains in control. His purpose trumps everyone and everything in the universe to make the knowledge of His glory known worldwide. God is just being God.

### **Jesus' Blood Purchased Freedom to Lead His Global Forces**

Notice the way God completes His eternal purpose through Christ and His ambassadors. God's results are revealed in this song that all sing continuously in heaven about Jesus, the Lamb of God:

... Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of *every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. (Revelation 5:9; emphasis added.)

The phrase "every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation" means every people group, every language dialect, and every ethnic origin. In other words, Jesus' blood sets free people of every ethnic group in the world. He purchased this freedom from sin and its judgment when He died on the cross. Christ's payment satisfied God's justice to allow His mercy to flow freely to us by His grace.

Therefore, as our Redeemer, Jesus paid our slave debt to set us free with full rights as God's children and Christ's world ambassadors. When we serve as Christ's witnesses in the world, the knowledge of God's glory spreads globally to complete His eternal purpose. I challenge you to

exercise your rights and freedom to become a vital vanguard leader of His ethnically diverse but united people to bring glory to God worldwide.

### **Christ's Process Sends Us as Disciple-makers**

The salvation of people from every “kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” occurs as they hear the Gospel, believe in Jesus Christ, and call upon Him as their Risen God and Savior. Christ’s process for spreading His Gospel worldwide is to send empowered disciples to make obedient disciples from all people groups in the world.

Christ’s process involves sending you to the nations in the power of the Holy Spirit, just as the Father sent Him. I will discuss this sending process in more detail in Chapter 9. I already introduced Jesus’ Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20 where He sent disciple-makers to all nations. In the following verses, read the connection between the Father sending Jesus on a mission and Christ sending you as His disciple:

... Jesus stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: *as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.* And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained (John 20:20-22; emphasis added).

Christ sends you out like a farmer sends out laborers to plant, cultivate, pick, and gather crops in the field. Luke 10:2 gives us, as his disciples, the privilege and command to pray to Christ as the Lord of the Harvest and plead for Him to powerfully send out laborers to the harvest field. The harvest refers to people believing in Christ and becoming His disciples. You bring them to Him like laborers harvesting crops on a farm.

### **Christ's Procedure Starts Locally and Reaches the World**

Christ’s procedure for going to the nations begins locally and expands to “the uttermost parts of the earth.” Jesus showed in Acts 1:8 how the Holy Spirit empowers and authorizes you as His witness and starting at your own back door.

And you shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit has come upon you. And you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth.

“Jerusalem” was the disciples’ own location. Judea was their region. Samaria’s people had long been racially, culturally, and spiritually at odds with the disciples’ own Jewish race. Also, going to the ends of the earth required the Jewish disciples to include Gentiles. Back then, the many divides between the Gentiles and Jews were just as challenging as today’s black-and-white racial divides.

### **Christ's Provision Comes through Partnerships**

How does Jesus provide money to His sent disciples? I explain in Chapter 14 how Jesus establishes partnerships between those He sends out and those He gives grace to support them with finances and prayers.

### **Christ's Promised Presence Makes it Possible**

Jesus obligated Himself to always be present with us to make completing His Commission possible. His presence in and with you gives the highest potential, most privileged identity, and greatest advantage possible for fulfilling His mission anywhere in the world. I write this book because Christ's great promise is your right and privilege to know and claim. Since each universal missions fundamental involves discipleship in some way, let me introduce some basic essentials of true discipleship.

### **Discipleship Fundamentally Requires Obedience**

When I teach developmental basketball skills to young children, my first goal is to win their hearts. Through positive means, I work to instill within them the value of obedience to the coach. At the beginning of my first practice, which usually starts when they are in the second or third grade, I establish a rule that requires them to sprint every time I ask them to go somewhere on the court.

After setting this standard, I intentionally give them an opportunity to demonstrate obedience. If any player fails to sprint to the spot I designate, I send all of them back to where they were and tell them to start again. Once these young players learn to respect a coach's authority, they can benefit from the basketball training I have to offer. Soon, they begin to excel and enjoy the glorious opportunities that the game provides.

Likewise, discipleship begins when we honor the authority of Jesus Christ and His Word, the Bible. True faith causes, produces, and guarantees obedience to the everlasting God. Teaching all people to actively obey Christ characterizes the mission that He sent us to accomplish. Remember Christ's Great Commission, found in Matthew 28:18-20:

And Jesus spake to them, saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach (make disciples) all nations (people groups), baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe (obey) whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

We call these words of Christ a "commission" because He gave His disciples authority to complete the task. Yet, He gave it as a binding command—a mandate. Jesus gave this overriding mission to His disciples shortly before He returned to heaven, but it has remained in effect for disciples of every generation to obey. Therefore, He also expects us to obey His command to go



out under the authority of His Commission. He leaves us no other option. We must play an active role in making for Him disciples of all the “ethnic groups” in the world today.

Making disciples of all nations requires more than proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ. It also requires teaching new believers to obey all of His commands. To grow into this life of complete obedience to Christ, new believers must recognize and value the absolute authority claimed by Jesus Christ in Matthew 28:18. When this foundation has been laid, new believers will step out in faith to obey Christ, beginning with baptism and continuing in all facets of obedience.

Of course, teaching obedience to all of Christ’s commands requires teaching obedience to His Great Commission as well. Therefore, true discipleship always involves mobilization for world evangelism. How can we attempt to make disciples for Christ and not put them under His Great Commission? Loving Christ and respecting His authority requires us to teach obedience to His world mandate! Jesus said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). Therefore, when we neglect to teach obedience to the Great Commission, we fail to fully love Christ and those we would disciple.

Furthermore, justice requires teaching Christ’s mandate to all races. We must remain consistent and include all races when we teach that Christ’s love compels His disciples to fulfill His Commission.<sup>11</sup> We act unjustly when we neglect to remove any barriers that hinder a race from responding to Christ’s love this way.

### **True Discipleship’s Consecration**

Complete obedience to Christ requires unreserved consecration of all of our lives to Him. This consecration can only happen through the filling of the Holy Spirit. As I said previously, the Holy Spirit’s filling empowers God’s people as witnesses for Christ, locally and to the ends of the world. Christ prescribed this expanding witness of the Spirit’s empowerment in Acts 1:8:

And you shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit has come upon you. And you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth.

The Student Volunteer Movement in 1911 - at the height of its success in mobilizing white college students as missionaries – published an article by veteran missionary Samuel Zwemer entitled, “The Glory of the Impossible.” I summarize his challenge to college students here, with some commentary of my own, to describe the dynamics of the true discipleship that fulfills Christ’s Great Commission.<sup>12</sup>

The Holy Spirit’s filling gives the conviction that the will of Christ must be done, so believers stop at nothing to accomplish it. This conviction to obey Christ attempts the impossible regardless of the cost or sacrifice. This sacrifice’s only concern is to keep the fight of faith. This faith includes a willingness to separate from family and fortunes and endure hardships or loneliness to make a life - not a living. Martyrdom and opposition give fresh incentive to this willingness. Pioneer spirits build upon this incentive to venture out in faith. A

constantly refreshed vision to reach out from centers already occupied springs from this spirit of faith. Faith gives the hope and patience to plow virgin soil. Hope makes closed doors mere challenges. Going through these doors requires complete dependence on His promised grace, presence, and power. Dependence includes trusting Christ to provide laborers to join those serving in the harvest of discipleship. His provision includes sending out laborers with a passion for Him, for reaching their neighbors and for carrying His Gospel to the nations.

This love for Christ and other nations gives tenacity to these laborers to embed themselves overseas. Trusting God includes believing He will keep safe those who go with them, protecting them from the consequences of being mobilized by God's love for the world. Faith's tenacity encourages God's people to pray, support, and mobilize these new laborers to take the Gospel to the nations. Praying for laborers obeys Christ's command in Luke 10:2 and makes us partners with Christ in His worldwide spiritual harvest.

Our partnership with Christ is punctuated by His promise in the Great Commissions to always be with us. He remains with us by indwelling us through His Spirit. Our constant union with Him makes us fruitful. Our Heavenly Father purifies us and our works to increase our fruitfulness. Our love for Christ becomes demonstrated to the world through our obedience to Him, while the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit mobilize us for God's great glory.

### **Freedom Comes Through Discipleship**

William Carey, a missionary statesman from England, is regarded as the "father of Protestant missions." Some conventional teaching of his day held that Christ's Great Commission no longer applied to Christians. In 1792, Carey wrote an 87-page document to rebut such teaching and to exhort believers with their obligation.

His life and work revolutionized the perspectives of white Christians who responded by establishing missions agencies to mobilize Christians to obey Christ's mandate. His writing exhorted (white) Christians to make great personal sacrifices, travel long distances, brave the danger of being killed, learn new languages, and trust the Lord for life's necessities. Carey's most famous quote summarized his exhortations: "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God." This challenge has shaped, and continues to shape, the values of many missionaries.<sup>13</sup>

Carey taught that true discipleship means more than just baptism, church membership, and loving one's neighbor. A true disciple fulfills Christ's Great Commission by making disciples of all nations. The process of making disciples boils down to this: instilling love for Christ and teaching obedience to His commands.

This process includes the kind of relational love and hands-on transformative teaching that Christ modeled for His disciples. By coming in the flesh, Jesus learned self-sacrificial obedience to the Father and lived it daily with His disciples. He also observed their behavior, evaluated their obedience, and corrected their thinking. Jesus picked them up when they fell, pulled them into ministry, empowered them with His authority, and then left them to finish what He started.<sup>14</sup> So teaching believers to obey Christ means much more than helping them fill in the blanks of a

Bible study booklet. Christ disciplined his followers by preparing them to fulfill His last command, the Great Commission. So must we. Consider John 8:31-32:

Then Jesus said to the Jews which believed on Him, if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed: And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.

Jesus taught that freedom ultimately comes through discipleship. This discipleship process begins by believing Him. This beginning faith in Jesus grows into true discipleship as we continue to believe and act on His word. Initial faith in His teaching lays the foundation for knowing the truth. Continuing to believe and act on His word builds on this foundation and ultimately sets you free. So, being set free from spiritual bondage begins with believing Jesus, but full spiritual freedom cannot be realized apart from engaging in true discipleship. Do not settle for less.

### **Take Discipleship to Its Highest Level**

Legitimate discipleship, therefore, requires a process of preparing and mobilizing believers for world evangelization. We must expand the geographical scope of our worship of Christ by taking our love for Jesus and our neighbors to an international level. Let us praise Christ as Lord of the harvest and rejoice in His love for all nations. And if anyone doubts your potential for worldwide disciple-making, remember that Jesus Christ has authorized you and commanded you to do so. Believe Him and praise Him for giving this to you as your greatest right and responsibility.

Knowing Christ's mission in light of God's eternal purpose calls for direct action. Spend time with the Lord to consecrate yourself, your career, and your future to Him. Commit to obey His Great Commission and express your willingness to go wherever He wants and do whatever He wants. Seek His guidance on how to prepare to step up and lead as His vanguard. Pursue real discipleship that makes full obedience to His mission its priority.

Keep in mind that Christ commissions you without discrimination. He reigns, expecting your complete and effective participation in the task of declaring His glory, strength, rule, and coming judgment to all the nations. Full obedience to this mission has been called the Z-factor. It represents the ultimate measure of how your life counts for eternity by advancing Christ's cause. Praise Him who insists on your making your life count all the way to Z.<sup>15</sup>

After talking with African-American students about Christ's Commission, I have concluded that my generation of American Christians has neglected our disciple-making responsibility toward you. We have failed to take seriously the cause of mobilizing you at this highest level of discipleship. The shocking lack of African American full-time overseas missionaries indicates the degree to which we have failed to teach you obedience to the Great Commission. We certainly have not equipped, empowered, or mobilized people of African descent to step out in front and lead our united witness for Christ in the world. The cause of Christ has suffered accordingly.

If you consider yourself an obedient follower of Christ and are just now finding out about Christ's mandate for world evangelism, perhaps you will agree with my conclusion that someone neglected your discipleship. When you read words like "neglect" and "fail" and begin to think of how many African-American students you know who are oblivious to world missions, perhaps you will agree that something is wrong with the American church and our ministry systems. By failing in our responsibility to disciple you at the highest level, we continue to perpetuate injustice. By God's grace, I will do so no longer.

The next chapter deals with accepting your noble vanguard identity and with the urgency of your uprising. I will challenge you to embrace your identity in Christ and begin leading by empowerment on your campus immediately.

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## **Chapter 2**

### **Find Your Identity in Christ**

#### ***A Vanguard Prepares for Cross-Cultural Ministry***

More than 20 years ago, I spent a warm fall afternoon on Norfolk State University's campus to "behold the Green and Gold" Spartan Legion marching band. With two other white gentlemen, I watched in amazement as the band members practiced their high stepping halftime show on 10-yard lines someone had painted on the campus lawn.

My white guests were leaders of a national student ministry. I invited them to this campus to consider my proposal for placing staff members from their organization at NSU to start a missions-focused ministry there. Their national ministry had turned down my previous request for them to start a Norfolk State chapter of their ministry because they lacked a black staff member for this HBCU. As the Legion marched nearby, I presented a new vision to these men. Perhaps Christ would use a committed white campus leader to empower black NSU students to start a ministry there? Among these new NSU student-leaders, might Christ raise up future black staff members for a Norfolk State chapter? Unfortunately, my guests turned down my proposal and that was that. They stuck to their policy that only African Americans may head up black campus ministries. Unfortunately, their ministry lacked black leaders for ministry at NSU and most of the HBCUs. I learned that other national student ministries had the same race policy and limitation that prevented them from placing staff members on black colleges.

How many Christian college students passed through NSU's halls in the last 20 years without Christians challenging them with Christ's global mission? To document the critical need for missions mobilization on this campus, our ministry interns recently interviewed a random sample of 364 NSU students - an equal number of men and women. The students' ages averaged 20.7 years-old. These results show the vital importance of your vanguard leadership:

Ninety-one percent of the students interviewed considered themselves Christians, but 95 percent of them did not know about Christ's Great Commission.

Sixty percent of the NSU students interviewed identified themselves as Christians who attended church regularly. Of these active church members, less than 7 percent (15 out of 221 students) knew about the Great Commission.

Out of these students who faithfully attended church, only 17 percent knew how to receive eternal life through faith in Christ.

As a potential missions leader, discover the reasons for these low statistics and revolutionize student discipleship to make Christ's Commission well known. May Christ make you His vanguard to mobilizing many students across races and cultures as His change agent. To get you started, this chapter challenges you to find happiness, security, and a sense of belonging in your

union with Christ and in relationships with Christians of many cultural backgrounds. Prepare for cross-cultural ministry while on campus and learn to mobilize students of many races as His vanguard.

Pursue true discipleship to become equipped to mobilize students of many races or ethnic groups, even if you must become trained by a disciple-maker of another one. Could you envision a white, Asian, or Hispanic Christian coming on your campus to empower African Americans to establish missions-focused ministries until black vanguards take over? Would you come out of your comfort zone to willingly expand your cultural framework to prepare for future cross-cultural ministry overseas?

### **“Steppin’” at Your Campus**

Step up to bring about a freedom uprising from your college campus. Cast a vision of all races working together to mobilize Christian students for campus and world outreach. May your self-worth and sense of identity rest solely upon who you are in Christ Jesus. Follow Him and lead God’s people with freedom and without discrimination.

For those of you who are new to the faith, find your self-worth and significance as Jesus’ representative to the world. Since God unconditionally accepts you by His grace, you have nothing to prove about your worth to anyone. Jesus already proved your great worth when He died for you. Also, you have nothing to lose as you trust Him for the grace that will energize you to fulfill His mission. Take confident steps of faith as Christ’s global ambassador.

If you attend a Historically Black College or University, please step forward to help bring in student-led campus ministries that already mobilize thousands at other colleges across our nation and world. Not many HBCUs have these ministries on their campuses. Like NSU, I have found that few students on other HBCU campuses know about Christ’s Commission or about churches and international campus ministries that mobilize students for world missions careers.

As a vanguard of Christ’s Commission, see the awesome potential of HBCU students and connect them with these churches and campus ministries that intentionally equip and send out missionaries. Unity and mutual mobilization between blacks and whites (and all ethnic groups) begins with everyone seeking Christ to solve identity and self-image issues lurking behind the race problem.<sup>1</sup> Anchor your identity in who you are – in Jesus.

### **Unleash Extensive Campus Ministries**

Use your vanguard potential to shift the American missions paradigm past outdated segregation-based thinking and into a diverse but united movement for Christ’s glory. Enlist skilled and gifted disciple-makers, of all races, to equip African-American student leaders for ministry in all HBCUs, on all other campuses, and for missions worldwide. If you attend an HBCU and do not care about the ethnicity of ministry leaders on your campus, you have a special opportunity to begin a spiritual uprising from your own campus. Appeal to one of these national ministries for a strong mobilizing leader on your campus of any race. If necessary, invite disciple-making white staff members from these national ministries to develop and

empower future African-American campus leaders. This would be a radical mobilizing move because some ministry executives over the years have told me that they will not place white staff members on black campuses. Even with good African-American leaders on their teams, national ministries have had only enough to establish a few chapters on HBCU campuses. Yet hundreds of white campus staff members and volunteers work with thousands of international students of many races on American campuses.

Wherever you attend college, do not let anyone on either side of the older generation's black-white racial divide discourage you from launching a missions uprising. Skip the debate about race and take every vanguard opportunity to equip students for mobilization. May God activate your school as a vibrant resource of missionaries. Step out front and take the lead in declaring His glory to the nations.

Although national campus ministries seldom place white leaders on black campuses, they encourage many to serve inner-city children. These white college students need your leadership or none will think to challenge African-American children to fulfill the Great Commission overseas. Step up to the plate to ensure that well-meaning college students teach African-American children the beauty of accomplishing God's worldwide eternal purpose.

I admit that this chapter might come across like I, alone, know the right way to structure campus ministry and everyone else is wrong. Yet, I believe that the black vanguard is demobilized in the self-segregated systems that campus ministries choose and promote as celebrating diversity. Prior American Christian generations, who let past hurts demobilize them, invented these segregated ministry structures. I must take the risk of saying something contrary to popular beliefs to let you know that Christ's blood tore down the dividing walls of black and white campus ministries that box in the vanguard. I believe you can choose a more excellent way.

As I ministered on the NSU campus a few years ago and saw the continued loss of African-American missions potential that today's campus ministry structures perpetuate, I chose to break my silence. I write as my way of speaking up against the way campus ministries choose to organize along racial lines and demobilize the black vanguard.

To be honest, I wonder if Christians neglect to mobilize black students because most in my generation fail to recognize your missions potential. The scarce mobilization on HBCU campuses is a symptom of wider structural problems where campus ministries choose race-segregation as a strategy to encourage more student participation. For all practical purposes, African-American students get left out of missions-sending systems as a result. Unfortunately, African-American and white campus ministries' race-segregated structures make this demobilization a "black problem" that they usually believe blacks alone must solve and that whites may safely ignore.

You are about to change low expectations. May Christ elevate and empower you with the beauty and glory of obeying Him freely as His disciple. If Christians saw what I see in you, believed what the Bible teaches about you, recognized God's work in black history to prepare

you, and observed the Spirit's power when including you, believers would go to extreme measures to mobilize you as Christ's world ambassadors.

The vastness of your potential to make an eternal difference with your life also intensifies the travesties of past injustices that may still halt you. In the Part II of this book, I will break my silence and express regret that most white evangelical Christians who historically obeyed Christ's Great Commission overseas also segregated themselves from African Americans. They alienated themselves from many African-American theology professors in HBCUs by remaining segregated and silent during slavery, Jim Crow, and the Civil Rights Movement. Because of the continued injustice of neglect at HBCUs, we still fail to expect their students to fulfill Christ's Great Commission while mobilizing thousands of white students for our modern-day missions efforts.

So I challenge you to revolutionize how extensively the Body of Christ mobilizes students for inner-city ministry and world missions. Use your generation's influence and unprecedented ability to communicate with large numbers of students for this purpose. Also, seek opportunities to interact with international students on your campus. Obtain cross-cultural ministry experience as you learn how to translate their cultures and share Christ's love with them.

Again, if you do not care about the race of staff campus leaders, make that known. If you attend an HBCU, step up to bring these ministries to your campus. Wherever you study, prove that no racial hang-ups from past generations will prevent you from finishing the mobilizing task that Christ commands. He authorized you to make disciples. Go in His grace and power! This is what His vanguards would strategically do.

### **Bridge Race Divisions**

For the purpose of becoming a vanguard who mobilizes the masses across racial and cultural lines, I challenge you to bridge the race division that most campus ministries use to grow their ministries. Take advantage of new thinking about culture and learn how to minister *across* racial and ethnic lines while still in college. I am aware that this challenge contradicts how most college ministries operate. For decades, they have structured programs around the idea that students come to college locked into particular cultures based on race or ethnicity.

Therefore, many campus ministries divide and separate students across racial/ethnic lines for African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans. These ministries make exceptions for white Christians, whom they allow to minister "cross-culturally" with every ethnic college group except African Americans. Although whites have somehow managed to cross over and work with black children, many campus ministries prevent them still from assuming leadership roles among African-American college students, especially at HBCUs. (As a contradiction to this race discrimination, usually campus ministries lump together all international students with pronounced cultural differences into one program on each campus. In many cases, white students and volunteers serve in these international student ministries.) I have observed how race-segregating structures like these, based on past ideas about culture, provide



white Christians a reason to maintain status quo segregated structures, which student ministry leaders of separated Asian and Hispanic ministries endorse as well.

Become the generation that transforms the thinking held by older black and white Christians about African-American culture.\* The old perspective undermines the vision for black students to lead cross-culturally as vanguards of a culturally diverse Body of Christ. For example, I hear many black and white Christians in my generation still defend the past idea that all African-American students evenly share the same experiences, values, viewpoints, beliefs, and traditions. Often, they limit the concept of culture to only customs with rules of etiquette and traditions that many black students share.

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\*I borrow this challenge, to update ideas about culture, from Kevin Avruch of the United States Institute of Peace who says that antiquated views of culture hinder conflict resolution.<sup>2</sup>

This old view leaves no room for exceptions and contradictions within the black students' cultural frameworks. It holds that African-American students may possess only one culture, which defines them as black people and is evenly distributed among all black students. Most who structure ministries based on this view insist that black culture is a "thing" that requires all black students to relate and react the same way to people of other races. Embedded in their thinking is the assumption that black culture, as a concept, remains defiant and refuses to allow whites and people of other races to translate and understand it. With these antiquated ideas, white and black Christians quickly jump to the conclusion that other races will remain ineffective in ministry among African Americans.

I believe this outdated thinking demobilizes and demotivates because it undermines the Biblical vision for black-student vanguards leading a multicultural missions movement from their campuses and into the world. Would not this entrenched thinking about culture hinder more than just conflict resolution between black and white believers in Christ? It debilitates His Body like pouring cold water on the spiritual fire of the Holy Spirit's reconciling work. These past assumptions imply that black culture overpowers the Holy Spirit's ability to fill and mobilize anyone He chooses. On the contrary, the Holy Spirit brings Christ the most glory when people of diverse backgrounds unite supernaturally in a way that those without Christ do not expect nor understand. Jesus saves us to react and relate to one another as one diverse spiritual race through our union with Him.

Therefore, fan into flame the Holy Spirit's power to unify and mobilize Christian students by changing the view that culture is a "thing" that excuses racial division, isolation, and demobilization. For five centuries, this kind of segregationist thinking has opposed the Holy Spirit's reconciling work in America. Call on Jesus Christ to give you, and all believers, His authority like never before. Pray that the Lord of the Harvest will reconcile His diverse and hurting Body as a united, empowered witness to your campus and to the ends of the earth!

If Christians' prevailing ideas about black culture remain outdated and hinder reconciliation, how does a vanguard celebrate cultural diversity and prepare to mobilize cross-culturally? How will you mobilize and lead white Christians unless you invite them into your cultural framework,

especially those who probably believe past thinking that they are locked outside of black culture forever?

When they hear about Christian ministries that organize around the 1990 T-shirt slogan, “It’s a black thang, you (whites) can’t understand,” I think whites subconsciously respond, “Whew! That’s one race thing I don’t have to worry about!” If African-American Christians tell white believers that they can never relate to black culture, does this idea enable whites to change? Does not eliminating the possibility that whites can translate black culture give them a reason to continue what most have always done – segregate themselves and neglect African-American mobilization?

With vanguard skillfulness, navigate among black and white Christians who assume that black students have only one culture. Demonstrate that all black students do not necessarily share black culture to the same extent, and they also have more than one culture at the same time. As you lead, point out how black culture changes over time and how individual students can add to their cultural framework and influence others to do so as well. Remind ministry leaders whom you encounter that individual students think and react differently to cultural issues. Encourage these leaders to consider the complexity of individual cultural frameworks and avoid organizing ministries as though black culture stagnates all African-American students.<sup>3</sup>

Think about how cultural issues will become vastly more complex as you mobilize today’s college students. They will bring many different culture combinations that they have customized individually in complicated ways. You must deploy them, with all their cultural complexities, to go international and minister cross-culturally in harmony with other culturally complex missionaries.

Adopting an updated view of culture will help you mobilize the growing number of biracial students in America. One in 10 marriages in our country today is interracial or interethnic. This represents a 28 percent increase in the last decade. The percentages vary in different states, but between 5 and 10 percent of Virginia’s couples are in interracial or interethnic marriages. Also, interracial and interethnic couples make up 18 percent of unmarried couples who live together.<sup>4</sup> Apparently, these married and unmarried couples of different race and ethnic backgrounds translate other cultures well enough to establish relationships, live together, and have children. In fact, the number of children born to black/white and Asian/white couples doubled in the last 10 years.<sup>5</sup> These biracial future students will bring cultural advantages to the multiethnic missions force that you mobilize for Christ.

Therefore, in your college experiences, make every effort to heighten your own ability to process and understand other cultures without making them subordinate to your own. Learn to translate and understand them like learning to translate foreign languages<sup>6</sup> --and equip other students to do the same! I am definitely not saying to value and celebrate black culture less. Instead, I give this challenge: Add to black culture the ability to minister cross-culturally as the missionary vanguard. How else can you mobilize such a culture-complicated missions force?

I believe that black-identity formation issues still enable whites to continue the race-segregated status quo in missions. As you know, black pride, the struggle for racial equality, the

Civil Rights Movement, Black Power, Afro-centrism, forced integration, the Vietnam War, and television, among other things, intensified black identity formation in the uncertain times from 1960-1980. African Americans formed more of a group identity then and adopted strategies to achieve a better balance of power in society. Protesting and making demands to white-controlled institutions for rights and authority became two of these groups' strategies.

The racial divide between black and white Christians grew wider than ever during this era. Many Christian African Americans demanded that only blacks lead ministries to blacks. In the 1980s, I watched this discrimination enable white-led churches and ministries to continue status quo outreach strategies that forgot blacks. Some white-led national ministries hired black leaders to oversee separate-but-equal programs for African Americans. This new, racially segregated, power-related structure, which black Christian leaders enforced, undermined the potential for African Americans to take their rightful place in world missions after the Civil Rights Movement.

Somehow my Christian generation easily forgets that separate but equal is not equal. Revolutionize old demobilizing thinking that divides American student ministries and world missions into racially segregated tiers. African-American progress today is obvious in every part of American society except in racially divided world missions.

You have the structural challenge of mobilizing the entire Body of Christ. Mobilize members having healthy racial identities in Him who will send out laborers and go themselves without racial discrimination. God's purpose for missions requires that we either go together or we fail. Shamefully, when whites think of unity, we usually expect people of other racial identities and cultures to assimilate to the identity of the white race. Yet, while doing your own separate black thing might be easier at first, you will remain demobilized until true unity is also achieved in Christian whites' hearts and structures. Inventing racial-segregated missions structures just for mobilizing black Christians will demobilize you as well. Again, we either all go together or we all fail - even when we go separately. Mobilize all believers together, without racial discrimination, as a long-overdue and Biblical paradigm shift in American missions and in campus ministry.

Unfortunately, most campus ministries celebrate diversity by encouraging students to racially self-segregate into separate-but-equal homogeneous chapters. For 30 years, I have observed these ministries putting themselves in predicaments that end up neglecting African-American students. For instance, most will start ministries for black students only when they can place African-American leaders on campus to disciple them. This race-based policy makes starting new HBCU chapters difficult because most ministries hire their leaders from among graduates in existing chapters. Without many HBCU chapters in this contradictory structure, these ministries cannot develop the black leaders needed to start new chapters.

In any event, with your vanguard identity founded upon Christ, intervene to unleash these national campus ministries to mobilize African-American students without discrimination. If you have to choose between self-segregated ministries on your campus, join those who intentionally mobilize long-term missionaries, even if you must worship cross-culturally at your

own school. A vanguard must mobilize all Christians, without regard to race, to serve cross-culturally overseas. Why not serve cross-culturally on your own campus among international students, if your identity is established by who you are in Christ?

The next chapter's challenge centers on knowing the difference between real discipleship, which Christ intended, and inferior discipleship that violates His Great Commission. Making this discipleship distinction increases your potential to mobilize "the masses" effectively.

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## **Chapter 3**

### **Lead with True Discipleship**

*A Vanguard Knows the Significance of His Cause*

Since Jamaican reggae artist Bob Marley's international popularity increased after his death, you may know about his last studio album, *Uprising*. He finished producing it the year before he died. The album ends with his reflective *Redemption Song*.<sup>1</sup> Quoting Marcus Garvey, Marley called on people who had gained physical freedom from slavery to also free themselves from persistent mental slavery that still keeps them in bondage. He asked, "Won't you help me sing dese songs of freedom?" He concludes, "None but ourselves can free our minds." Marley's *Redemption Song* appears to confront the slave mentality that so-called Christians inflicted on people of African descent. Many Jamaicans resent how whites used the Bible to teach that such bondage was the cursed destiny of the black race and fulfilled God's purpose.

#### **Inferior Discipleship's Spiritual Slavery**

Beyond this persistent mental slavery, I believe there remains a type of spiritual slavery that prevents many African Americans from experiencing holistic freedom. If I was musically inclined, I might attempt a new redemption song, calling you to experience spiritual freedom and discover God's tremendous purpose for your life.

Garvey and Marley only scratched the surface of how slavery continues to affect what they called mental freedom. The inhumanity of slavery and the injustices of segregation, all perpetrated under the umbrella of Christian society, left many African Americans with a distorted perspective of what it meant to follow Jesus.

I explain in this book how the root of this inferior discipleship, designed by whites to suppress African Americans during physical slavery, continues to spiritually enslave. I believe it hinders most from developing the vision and seizing the opportunity to gladly obey Christ's Commission and make disciples worldwide. This vacuum of true discipleship stripped generations of African Americans of their rights to bring God glory as His witnesses. Just as slavery once bound minds and oppressed hearts. This wretched spiritual slavery still plagues the hearts of most African Americans to this day. I argue in this chapter that discipleship becomes inferior to what Christ intended when disciple-makers fail to teach obedience to Christ's global Great Commission.

As I present your global potential and vital role in championing true discipleship, I challenge you to rise up as Christ's vanguard against this injustice. I explain how black and white Christians are shackled together by this inferior discipleship because of past racial discrimination. I expose the big gap between the numbers of black and white full-time missionaries that this unbiblical discipleship thinking causes. To break this shackle, I offer my testimony that shows how principles of true discipleship mobilize so you can mobilize others with this privilege. I emphasize including children in your mobilization, recognizing their need

for role models in missions. Take the civil rights won by past generations and add the right to follow Christ with true discipleship that centers of fulfilling His global mission.

At the front of the masses, a vanguard leads as a free soldier at heart who willingly unleashes from all that hinders the impulse and determination to charge forward. With innovative leadership, sing a new song of redemption, not only to set your own heart free but also to free the hearts of others. Like students who led the recent political revolution in Egypt using Twitter and Facebook, I challenge you to lead a spiritual uprising. As Christ's vanguard of His forces, spearhead the spiritual warfare required to defeat the evil one and create a new freedom movement. Lift up your voice and sing a new song of spiritual redemption to set us all free. In your uprising, revolutionize the Christian systems that enslave African Americans through inferior discipleship. It is inferior because churches, ministries and missions organizations disregard Christ's last command - to go and make disciples of all nations - when teaching African Americans how to follow Christ.

I devote future chapters to the reasons why this inferior discipleship persists. My purpose is to emphasize your important role in mobilizing all the interdependent members in Christ's Body to effectively fulfill His mission. As when a human body misses a vital part, we remain disabled without you. In fact, I would argue that Christ's body in America is confined to a spiritual sick bed. I will explain in later chapters how we became demobilized by self-inflicted wounds that keep us spiritually bound by racial divisions. Christ calls and commands us to abide in Him with all believers as one spiritual race. Notice how I repeat this challenge throughout the book: With full rights and great potential in Christ as His spiritual vanguard, heal, unify, and muster us all as His one mighty missions force. This chapter challenges you to become free of any self-doubt that might still enslave your mind.

### **In This Together**

First, as members of Christ's body, consider how you and I suffer from this same kind of mental enslavement. Yet your determination is vital as we strive together for freedom. Let basketball illustrate our predicament. Suppose Jesus coaches a championship team and drafts us to play for Him. Imagine coming out of the locker room and heading straight to the bench, wearing a heavy chain that binds us together. This chain, one end fastened around my neck and the other shackled to your ankle, renders us unable to execute His game plan. Still, we muster the courage to approach Coach Jesus. With frustration on our faces and big chain in tow, we simultaneously ask the bench warmer's favorite question: "What do I need to do to get more playing time?"

Imagine Christ patiently revealing the obvious: Our only hope of getting into the game is to rely on Him to remove the chain that binds us. Surprisingly, since you and I are supposed to be teammates, He calls us to work together, as one, to solve our mutual problem. If we stick together in this painful struggle for each other's freedom, perhaps we will compete together once we succeed. In my parable, Christ might also express confidence in our chances of playing well together once freed and remind us that we possess all the potential in the world through Him.

With the whole arena waiting for our appearance on the floor, He would encourage us unite and “be there for each other” as we make the painful changes necessary to compete at the highest level.

I cannot speak for other teammates, but I hate the bench. I would be more than ready to struggle for change. Yet, I would remain dependent on your determination to go through these “changes” with me. Perhaps our hard-won *avant-garde* freedom, which would take our game to the highest level, also would inspire others. After all, that is what vanguards do. I do not expect we could bring about Utopia. Yet, our whole team might get the honor to complete together for Christ and His lasting liberation. In reality, I know for certain that Christ and His team win the world championship when the season ends. I would want to stay on the court, and not His bench, as long as possible. I could go hard, if you would go hard for Christ’s freedom with me. That is how things work when we compete on Christ’s unified team. Do you feel me on my parable’s challenge?

I borrowed the chain analogy from abolitionist and escaped slave Fredrick Douglass who said in 1863, “No man can put a chain about the ankle of his fellow man without at last finding the other end fastened about his own neck.”<sup>2</sup> However, I am not referring to physical slavery. The chain in my parable depicts demobilizing racial discrimination that still shackles us together spiritually and keeps us from effectively serving in Christ’s harvest. We remain benched on His championship team.

Perhaps you do not identify with past struggles for racial equality. Many black and white students in your generation do not – and they prefer to keep moving forward. Similarly, many white Christians from my generation hope that we have finally removed from our minds and ministries all hints of racial discrimination, including systemic barriers to justice and reconciliation. Unfortunately, despite these optimistic attitudes, gaps still exist. Justice-minded believers, both black and white, must identify and address modern deficits that keep lining up along racial lines.

### **Black-White Gap Overseas**

Nowhere in the American church is this black-white gap more obvious to me than in the number of Christians serving as full-time, cross-cultural missionaries overseas. In 2005, for instance, 822 North American protestant mission agencies sent almost 44,000 North American missionaries and 90,000 indigenous nationals to foreign missions fields.<sup>3</sup> How many of these thousands are African Americans? When I poll black college students on this question, they usually guess that 10,000 African Americans serve as overseas missionaries. In reality, only about 200-250 African-American missionaries serve abroad today.

The disparity between black and white missions mobilization warrants further scrutiny. Since mobilization directly results from Christ’s gracious thrust of laborers in response to prayer, the compelling love of His Spirit, effective discipleship in local churches, consecration for obedience, and victory in spiritual warfare, we must prayerfully investigate each of these spiritual dynamics and determine the demobilizing factors affecting African Americans as a

group. I may stand alone in making some conclusions, but silent neglect cannot remain an option.

My question concerns the quality of discipleship provided to Christian African-American students. For instance, opportunities arise in our Norfolk ministry for me to ask about Christ's Commission. With the exception of the few being discipled in national campus ministries, most Christian black students whom I ask about His Great Commission respond that no one ever told them about His global mandate. Did inferior discipleship demobilize them?

For instance, consider the race/ethnic-based limits on American missions discipleship systems today. Most Asians go to Asians, Hispanics go to Hispanics, and blacks go to blacks. On the other hand, white Americans reserve the privilege to go anywhere in the world and to any race or ethnic group they desire to reach. Is perpetuating this race/ethnic-segregated missions system how a vanguard celebrates diversity? Exceed the inferior discipleship's limited and widespread low expectations for Christ's Commission that are based on race or ethnic discrimination. Mobilize a unified missions force.

Reflecting on Asian-American missions expectations casts light on African-American discipleship limitations. Most Asian-Americans are first-generation believers whose parents follow other religions like Buddhism. In most Asian-American households, nonbelieving parents feel dishonored when their children commit to Christ. These non-Christian Asian parents consider it unthinkable for their students to become long-term Christian missionaries overseas.

While at a one-year urban missions internship in the U.S., an Asian-American young adult posted the following analysis in his blog about the lack of Asian-American urban missionaries:

For many, the pressures were too high to stay home and build capital. We're told: succeed in school, become doctor/lawyer/businessperson/engineer, become wealthy, start family, repeat. Missions—especially longer term urban missions—are seen as impractical and stupid; why move downward? Why bring dishonor to your family? When I ask myself where all the Asian-American missionaries went, the answer is clear: They never went anywhere. If they did, it was for a job. This is why my dad refuses to tell my grandparents where I am and what I'm doing. Yes, it's probably bad if they think I'm in school and that I'm too busy to come home and visit, but in all honesty, they just wouldn't understand.<sup>4</sup>

Imagine how this Asian-American's grandparents might react if he wanted to go overseas as a long-term missionary, instead of this one-year home missions internship? Amazingly, Asians in overseas countries send out hundreds of thousands of missionaries who travel around the world on full-time assignments. Yet, like African Americans, Asian Americans do not mobilize this way. Apparently, those who lead Asian-Americans to Christ in the U.S. do not teach them to fulfill Christ's Commission as full-time global missionaries. As a result, most Asian-Americans target only non-Christian Asian-Americans as their mission. Also, most do not envision benefiting white American missionaries in fulfilling Christ's Commission, after always being on the receiving end of white missionary help. In addition, most Asians going out from



other countries do not minister cross-culturally. For instance, most Korean missionaries minister only among Koreans who live in other countries. The same is true with other Asian ethnic groups as well. (I made these conclusions from my phone interview with an Asian-American missions mobilizer.)

In stark contrast, Hispanic-Americans see God's providence in making the U.S. the center of their global movement of Hispanic missionaries. With the rapidly increasing Hispanic-American population expected to make widespread social and political changes in the U.S. during the next 50 years, Hispanic-American Christian leaders prepare for a great missionary mobilization of this ethnic group from our country. Almost 15 years ago, Hispanic missionary Jason Carlisle sounded like my father when he made this assessment of Hispanic-American potential for world missions:

"The Latin population has a tremendous role to play in God's redemptive plan," he said. "It is no historic accident that has brought such a large concentration of Hispanics to the United States. It's part of God preparing to take the gospel to all the nations of the earth. "There are many places in the world where Hispanics will be received by people who would not receive Anglos," he said. "God has put Hispanics in a position where they can be sent to countries and to people groups that would not be responsive to Anglos."<sup>5</sup>

At an urban discipleship conference a few years ago, a Hispanic-American ministry leader impressed me with her zeal, vision, and sense of destiny in mobilizing other Hispanics for world missions. With Carlisle's same missional perspective on the rapidly growing Hispanic-American population, her scope of missions seemed broader than his, to include sending missionaries worldwide. Carlisle's vision appears limited to reaching only Hispanics and not the ethnic groups of all nations.

To put this vision of Hispanic global impact into perspective, consider that the Hispanic-American's vision is a part of a larger missions context. Thousands of Latin-American missionaries have been mobilizing over the last few decades as well. A Hispanic leader described this mobilization in Latin America as a "church missionary awakening."<sup>6</sup> More than a decade ago, Latin-American missions leaders began searching for a new missions model to mobilize missionaries from Third World countries. They wanted to replace the expensive American missions system. The 1993 book, *Mission Handbook*, published this statement from these leaders:

The North American missionary enterprise has become very expensive, and for the paradigms and possibilities of the Third World, impossible. Following this reasoning, if we simply copy the typical model of the missionary agency developed in the U.S., we will fall into a bottomless pit. This approach will not work since that model presupposes and requires heavy financial resources, both to be sent to the field and to pay for the administration of the missionary machinery.<sup>7</sup>

Any efforts to mobilize across many ethnic groups and social classes should interest you as Christ's vanguard. Like Latin-American leaders, seek new, alternative missions models that empower the disadvantaged. Overcome economic hurdles in present missions models that prevent people of low-incomes from being involved. Seek these new missions structures as a vanguard leader here in the U.S.

When presenting missions history in the next few chapters, I reveal how most missions agencies chose to send only African Americans from the middle class. In general, these white-controlled agencies rejected, overlooked, or ignored potential African-American missionaries from low-income backgrounds. Instead, most low-income blacks received inferior discipleship that designated them as the missions field instead of a rich source of potential missionaries.

As fervent Hispanic-American vanguards mobilize, should not African-American vanguards be concerned by the lack of missions awareness, vision, and sense of destiny among black students? The African-American leaders who addressed the same urban discipleship conference that I just mentioned called on black Christians to make disciples among black Americans. In contrast, the Hispanic leader made the entire world her focus. Even Asian-Americans send more missionaries than African Americans on long-term missionary assignments, despite their smaller population, fewer believers, recent start, and problems with family honor. I find no one reporting the exact number of Asian-American missionaries, mostly because of the many ethnics subgroups involved. However, an Asian-American missions-mobilizer estimated that about 1,000 serve overseas as full-time missionaries – compared to 200-250 African Americans.

### **Inferior Discipleship**

Since Biblical discipleship requires followers of Christ to obey His Great Commission among all nations, the small number of African Americans serving in foreign missions indicates a disturbing legacy of inferior discipleship. In fact, attempts to make disciples for Christ, without impelling them to embrace Christ's Commission as His vital purpose for their lives, would be no discipleship at all. Since African Americans have the lowest percentage of missionaries out of the larger ethnic groups in America, inferior discipleship that fails to mobilize one particular race of people is nothing less than unjust racial discrimination. Failure to teach Christ's Commission disobeys Him and is the root of spiritual slavery that binds us.

Discipleship becomes inferior to what Christ intended when the disciple-maker makes the following errors:

Fails to teach obedience to Christ's global Great Commission.

Limits the people targeted to one's own culture, nationality, race, or ethnic group.

Regards the targeted ethnic group as a "missions field" instead of as an important source of future church and missions leaders.

Fails to model partnerships with missionaries through prayer and financial support.

Creates dependency, so those being discipled do not see themselves as having mutually benefiting roles in missions with paternalistic disciple-makers.

Throughout this book, I will point out how and why these discipleship errors persist and how they demobilize African Americans for world missions.

### **Segregated American Missions Consequences**

Inferior discipleship results in a segregated American missions force – with serious consequences. Although thousands of white American missionaries serve on the missions field, mere numbers do not reflect the realities of how a white-only witness has undermined the credibility of the Gospel. False teachers out to deceive men on the streets, at home and abroad, see clearly the discrepancies between our teachings and actions. Often they defame Christ as an irrelevant white-man's god. Have we resigned ourselves to accept this reaction to our status quo efforts? We must no longer ignore the detrimental effect on the advancement of the Gospel that segregated American missions create. Having interacted closely with white American missionaries and African Americans all my life, I feel qualified to conclude that, as long as the opportunity for missions remains blocked to one race, it will remain spiritually blocked to both. This occurs because black and white Christians share a united legacy of racial discrimination and division in our church and missions structures.

Amazingly, most Christians seem oblivious to the problems created by segregated American missions forces. Loving each other in the midst of our diversity is critical to our witness and required by Christ. Although we may have high levels of motivation for Christ's cause, we sit incapacitated in His global spiritual harvest, and the world's population continues to explode without a credible witness from America. As the Apostle Paul warned, it is quite possible to preach the gospel and still get benched by Jesus (1 Corinthians 9:27). We ought to rise up together and compete like champions for Christ. Yet until stark racial divisions in missions are challenged and changed, we will remain in denial, sitting together on Christ's bench.

Because sins of omission (failing to do what God has commanded us to do) offend Him just as much as sins of commission (blatantly doing what He has commanded us not to do), I believe that this present and longstanding failure to send African Americans as full-time missionaries has removed us all from close fellowship with God. For decades, American Christians have tried to evangelize the world while trying to ignore sins of omission at home. Christ requires us to love our neighbors and to make disciples of all people groups. By neglecting the former, we render ourselves ineffective in fulfilling the latter. Churches, missions-sending agencies, and individual believers who fail to love and mobilize Christians without racial discrimination stand before God in a state of disobedience.

As a vanguard who mobilizes the masses without racial discrimination, think about the ramifications of inferior discipleship. If American churches governed by leaders of non-white ethnic groups fail to require obedience to Christ's Commission, they have achieved the wrong kind of equality with white-governed churches. If God blessed them with resources to mobilize and send out long-term missionaries, will they not be held accountable for ignoring Christ's mandate and expending these resources elsewhere? Will they not also share with white church leaders the guilt of disobeying our Lord Jesus by failing to mobilize students like you?

### **The Right to Know Young**

Your spiritual rights include having Christ's Great Commission impressed upon you from your youth. As I explain in later chapters, this right has been violated because of past race barriers and by present black and white church structures and cultures. For instance, once during a Sunday worship service where we sent out a Jamaican missionary, I asked the congregation why we seldom hear anyone challenging black children to obey Christ's command to make disciples of all nations. The biracial son of my friend and ministry colleague confronted his parents about this neglect shortly after they drove home that afternoon. He wanted to know why no one had ever challenged him to give his life to serve Christ overseas. Many people had already encouraged this talented middle-school athlete to pursue his dream of playing basketball at the highest level. Yet none in his church family had personally challenged him with his high calling in Christ's worldwide mission.

### **My Testimony**

My childhood experience could not have been more different. Before I gratefully share my testimony, let me acknowledge that God blessed me with a spiritually privileged missions background. My discipleship experiences would be more advanced than most believers of any race. Yet, I write them to challenge you as a vanguard to make privileged disciples. Learn how to bless your own children and the disciples whom you mobilize. Make them the most missions-privileged generation in the world.

I established a strong conviction to obey Christ's call to the nations because of multiple influences scattered throughout various stages of my development. My missionary grandmother and other relatives, my church's teaching and giving practices, my Christian school's missions conferences, and the many missionaries who visited our home all helped to increase my awareness of and allegiance to Christ's Great Commission. I pass on this testimony so you may notice how this rich tapestry of mobilizing experiences remains missing in black religious traditions.

During the World War I, my grandparents met in Africa as pioneering missionaries. They married and raised three children. My mother was born in Africa (like her older brother and sister). Shortly after she turned 3 years-old, my grandfather died as the family returned to the U.S. from Africa. His appendix burst before he could arrive by freighter in Brooklyn for medical care. After his burial, Grandmother returned to Africa with my mother, where they served

during World War II. When mom reached the seventh grade and after the war ended, they came to the U.S. and Grandmother enrolled her in a boarding school for children of missionaries. Grandmother continued serving in Africa, only visiting the U.S. after every four-year “missionary term.” She continued her missions work in Tanzania until retiring in her late 60s.

After graduating, mom attended Bible college in South Carolina, where she met and eventually married my father. They planned and prepared to minister in Africa, but when those plans changed, Dad shifted focus. He was determined to prepare African Americans for international ministry by providing formal, college-level Bible training that race segregation prevented in the South. His efforts ultimately failed for lack of funding, but even when Dad established a church in Virginia Beach, world missions and equipping African Americans for ministry remained high priorities.

Instead of inferior discipleship, which neglects to challenge believers to fulfill Christ’s Commission, my father and our church made world missions a high priority. I grew up with the conviction that obeying the Great Commission was worth any sacrifice, including leaving my extended family and laying down my life for the Gospel. Throughout my youth, I received many challenges to obey Christ’s Commission. In contrast to inferior discipleship, which fails to teach that all Christians fall under His mandate whether they can go abroad or not, I received countless invitations in my home, church, or Christian school to offer my life in missionary service, to pray for missionaries, and to financially support them.

I remember making financial commitments to support missionaries at the end of our church’s annual missions conferences. Watching my father make these commitments and learning to fulfill my own (by allocating some of my grass-mowing income) strengthened my connection to missionaries. By giving and praying to support their ministries, I soon came to embrace these missionaries as “our” missionaries. Inferior discipleship does not teach this kind of financial stewardship where Christians intentionally live simple lifestyles to increase one’s investment in missions. This loss prevents making a spiritual connection with the missionaries, their work, and the people whom they serve. Also, inferior discipleship fails to challenge disciples to seek God’s will about serving overseas. During my childhood, for instance, every annual missions conference included formal invitations to answer the call to obey the Great Commission as a full-time missionary. I took these invitations seriously.

During these childhood experiences, missionaries expanded my vision and appreciation for world missions by teaching Christ’s Great Commission in our Sunday school classes and summer camps. They explained how missions operated. Most importantly, their slide shows introduced us to individuals living overseas who represented distinct groups from around the world. We heard how some of these unique people had come to Christ and were progressing in discipleship. Our missionaries expressed love for Christ’s disciples from distant lands, motivating us to love them and pray for them as well. Inferior discipleship misses all of these opportunities to share this burden for people in other lands.

These missionaries ranked among my greatest childhood role models and built into me the convictions of true, world-focused discipleship. Their willingness to leave their families for the

sake of the Gospel impacted me more than any words they could have uttered. Their self-sacrificial, countercultural love for Christ revealed itself in their undying commitment to His Commission. Their infectious love for the lost around the world planted seeds of love in my own heart. Those seeds still bear fruit. I grew up seeing church leaders lay hands on missionaries, pray for them, and then send them to the ends of the earth. Email, Skype, and Facebook simply did not exist, so communication took time. Church members waited weeks to receive thin airmailed letters with specific prayer requests from their missionaries. Most meetings included a time of intercession for these requests, but Wednesday night prayer meetings made them a special point of emphasis. One of my parents always made sure to lead us children in praying for missionaries before bedtime. We prayed for our grandmother, our other missionary relatives, and those whom we supported.

All of these experiences built into me the commitment to love and obey Christ in true discipleship that valued His Commission. I learned how missionaries separate from extended family. I learned how to love the lost and become a faithful prayer partner who intercedes for them.

I read about these heroes of the faith. My parents provided some of these books, and I checked-out others from the church library. I listened intently in missionary chapel at summer camp and to the missionary story in our summer vacation Bible schools. However, my greatest source of missions inspiration came when missionaries visited our home. My father often invited them to give reports at our church and many came home to eat with us after the service. Some even spent the night. My parents would talk about world events and missions issues with these honored guests for hours. I sat silently among them drinking it all in. I could not learn enough about world evangelization.

One missionary recruited me often to go with him to New Guinea. Whenever he mailed prayer letters to our home, he always sent an extra one addressed only to me. From the time I was 9 years old until I completed high school, he challenged me to serve the Lord with him in this remote and intimidating land.

By the fifth grade, I knew for certain that God wanted me to serve as a missionary. I did not know where He would send me, but I knew it would be challenging. After earning my MBA at Old Dominion University, God called me to become a missionary to the inner city. I knew my income would never approach the earning power of my business-school classmates. I also knew the inner city could be dangerous. Yet from my childhood, God had prepared me for this decision. Without hesitation, I said yes.

The Biblical principle of financial partnership became one of the most important discipleship lessons during my childhood. Partnering with specific missionaries through my prayer and financial support built a foundation for giving and seeking financial support during my adulthood ministry. As a child, I caught the vision of Christ's mission and cheerfully sacrificed to support my overseas missionary partners. In a future chapter, I will provide more details about this missionary partnership dynamic. I explain here how teaching children to generously give to Christ for His missions is such a vital part of their real discipleship.

## **Replace Missing Veteran Missionary Role Models**

With the words, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also,” Christ taught that our affections are undeniably tied to how we spend our money. A 2007 marketing study showed that African-American teenagers spend an average of \$90 per month, mostly on technological devices and clothing. The same study revealed that other teens in the United States spent an average of 20 percent less each month, which is still a lot of money to me.<sup>8</sup> The data reveals the importance of teaching all children to prayerfully budget each month and partner with missionaries to make Christ’s global purpose a heartfelt priority. As a college student, you may become an important, mobilizing role model. Demonstrate your heart for missions by investing your education and money in Christ’s missions.

Who challenges you to financially support missions? Who exhorts you to pray for specific missionaries? Do you know any African Americans serving on the missions field? Have any invited you to join them? Most African-American role models, like the entertainers and athletes whom I have heard speak, only challenge young people to work hard in school. They exalt the pursuit of a good education as the key to enjoying a successful life. Almost none cast a vision for education as preparation to obey Christ’s Commission among those who have never heard the Gospel. Who teaches you to love others by crossing cultural, national, and linguistic barriers with Jesus’ offer of salvation?

My guess is that many of you can list few fellow African Americans who are answers to those questions. Through God’s Word, step up as a vanguard role model to children and teenagers of the next generation. The Bible provides role models of men and women who stepped forward as vanguards to complete God’s mission. Do you remember reading about Caleb in the Book of Numbers? He represented the tribe of Judah, as one of 12 spies whom Moses sent to investigate the Promised Land. He saw the same giants as the other 11 men, but only he and Joshua expressed courageous faith by encouraging Moses to lead the Israelites into the land that God had promised. Caleb said, “Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it.” The other 10 spies gave evil reports and caused the people of Israel to rebel and perish. Without elder African-American missionary “Calebs” to inspire love, faith, and courage in the Body of Christ, we limp along, severely hindered in our ability to obey Christ’s Commission among the nations.

Caleb’s greatest glory came after the rest of his generation died in the wilderness. God allowed only Caleb and Joshua to survive. Because of their courageous faith, God chose them to lead the next generation into the Promised Land. At 85 years old, Caleb asked Joshua to give him Hebron as his inheritance. This section of the land contained the stronghold of the giants who caused such fear 40 years earlier. In his old age, Caleb conquered the city’s giants, demonstrating God’s glorious power to fulfill His promise of victory and peace. (Joshua 14:6-15).

In the American church, we lack African-American foreign missionary warriors who have braved spiritual warfare like Caleb. The scarcity of veteran foreign missionaries who have lived

during the Civil Rights era creates a generational void where there should be an enduring legacy of courageous faith. The world will never know how their love and statesmanship could have impacted the world for Christ, and you will never know how their example may have influenced you to follow in their footsteps.

You deserve the kind of thrust you could have received from your own “Calebs,” but too few from this present generation can give that to you. So, you must respond to the purposes and promises of God on your own. Will yours be the first generation of African Americans to wholeheartedly embrace the Great Commission by going to the ends of the earth in significant numbers? If so, Caleb’s legacy of courageous faith will begin with you. Become the role model who leaves this legacy to the next generation. How many vanguards will lead someday and mobilize the masses because of your faithful, obedient example?

### **Equality is Only the Start**

During America’s antebellum period, many slaves founded their case for freedom upon the Declaration of Independence’s assertion that all men are created equal by God who gave them inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Christ grants you the inalienable right, privilege, and responsibility of fulfilling His Great Commission as well. Rather than affirm you in this calling and prepare you for the struggle of fulfilling it, we, your Christian leaders have failed. We have allowed the snares of the past to hinder us from impacting the future. Yet, you are not bound by our failures. The greatest quest for justice and equality ever conceived, hinges on your mobilization for the Gospel.

For God affirms your equality with all people and grants you inalienable civil rights for the greater goal of saturating the earth with the knowledge of His glory (Habakkuk 2:14). Receiving civil rights is only the starting points for fulfilling this eternal purpose. God requires you to not only embrace the Gospel, but also make disciples among the nations through the Gospel. Jesus assigned this crucial mission to his disciples, shortly before ascending back to heaven. This mission compels you to passionately follow Christ’s example of self-sacrificial love. Only then will you experience true spiritual freedom.

Meditate on this important command in Philippians 2:5-6:

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men ... He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of a cross.

Despite His equality with God, Christ exercised true spiritual freedom by obediently laying down His own life, rights, and happiness to reconcile us with His Father. Similarly, Christ commands you to develop His mindset and follow His example. God’s Word calls upon you to willingly surrender hard-won civil rights in order to bring His salvation and justice to other people groups around the world. Rise above the mindset that contradicts Christ’s command to



follow His example of self-sacrifice. Without doubt, many previous generations of African Americans suffered greatly so you might fully experience rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. When you sacrifice these precious freedoms to exercise true spiritual freedom in Christ, you testify to the surpassing value of knowing and loving Him. For example, by voluntarily giving up home comforts, respect, the right to govern, or the opportunity to pursue the American dream in order to proclaim Christ's glory among the nations, you reveal His worth in the greatest way possible.

You who love and desire to follow the Lord as true disciples deserve to know how God endowed you with the highest conceivable right to sacrificially change the world for His glory. You deserve to know that this is your time to shine as bright lights throughout the entire world. The legacy of African-American suffering, often at the hands of white Christians, creates a platform of credibility for you and your contemporaries to lift up your voices and exert unprecedented influence overseas. I will explain how white missionaries may bring a gospel associated with injustice and oppression. You bring a gospel associated with faith-filled perseverance and empathy for all who are oppressed. Christ commands and calls you to take your rightful place in world missions—capitalize on hard-won freedoms to spread the knowledge of God's glory around the world.

Keep in mind that Jesus is highly exalted and your greatest possession. Surrender everything else and gain Him, His glory, and omnipotence.

### **Break the Spiritual Shackles**

In Matthew 5:23-24, Jesus made it clear that His disciples must pursue reconciliation with offended brothers before offering anything to God in worship. Shortly before Jesus taught about reconciliation with offended brothers, he declared His disciples were the light of the world. We must not miss the connection. American Christians must not ignore this principle and must keep attempting to reveal Christ's glory among the nations. Let our missions efforts remain unoffered to God until white Christians reconcile with disciples of African descent and mobilize them to exercise their full rights under His Great Commission.

When we offer Christ and the world a united witness through justice in discipleship, we obey Christ and shine all the brighter. We cannot neglect our neighbors and accurately represent Christ among the nations. If this unified mobilization cannot happen because of how present churches and missions agencies remain structurally divided, you must forge a better path and lead us. May Christ empower you as vanguards of a spiritual revolution to replace disobedient missions systems with a reconciled witness that more accurately reveals His love for the world.

With all the authority given by Christ to pray for laborers (Luke 10:2), pray for God to thrust African Americans as full-time missionaries into His worldwide harvest, and ask Him to start with you. Let us encourage existing churches, wherever African Americans worship, so they might see the Great Commission as the most critical aspect of discipleship and send missionaries of African descent on long-term assignments overseas. Let us establish missional churches in our inner-city communities, designed to empower families of low-income backgrounds. By

equipping them with stability, Biblical training, discipleship skills, and opportunity to obey Christ at home and abroad, such churches will help redefine missions mobilization paradigms.

God fulfills His eternal purpose with or without us. If we want in on this high calling, we must go make disciples together, demonstrating His love and forgiveness. If, after five centuries of failure, we obey willingly, would not God pave the way? Would not He respond to the justice of our cause? Do we not have Christ's authority and promise all the more? Together we do, but I believe we must go together or not at all.

Recognizing the consequences of African Americans' absence in the world as missionaries gives the impetus to end any kind of racial discrimination in our sending systems.

I challenge you to take up the spiritual weapons provided by Christ's Spirit who indwells you. Lead the spiritual uprising that is your destiny. Keep the perspective that weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but divinely powerful for the tearing down of strongholds (2 Corinthians 10:4). Lead us forward as a just cause. Bring it on.

Break the stronghold chain that shackles and holds us down with the heavy links of past injustices. Recognize them in our Christian status quo, but rise up to win spiritual freedom by invoking Christ's highest authority. Find a pioneering spirit and confidence in His superior justice. Step out to sacrificially lead as Christ's spiritual vanguards and defenders of His true freedoms.

Create a movement by mustering others for His cause, pulling them into His battle alongside you through true discipleship that honors His Word. Champion the cause that true, unlimited discipleship sees the potential and honors the right of all believers to fulfill Christ's Great Commission. Inferior discipleship fails to teach obedience to Christ's global Great Commission. True discipleship aims at an unlimited target that includes going to and making disciples of every ethnic group through cross-cultural missions. Inferior discipleship limits the range of the people being targeted to those in one's own culture, nationality, race, or ethnic group.

Rise up as Christ's vanguard against this injustice that shackles the Body of Christ with demobilizing thinking from past race discrimination. Mobilize privileged disciples who close the racial gaps in America's missions forces. Become faithful role models for the next generations. Begin by teaching children and teens to partner with missionaries and invest in Christ's Commission as their partners. Build upon civil rights won in the past by adding the right to spiritual freedom to fulfill God's global and eternal purpose through legitimate discipleship of all nations.

### **Come to Jamaica**

God blessed a partnership between Urban Discovery Ministries (UDM) and the Buff Bay Baptist Church to establish the GLOBE Center in Jamaica. We labored for almost two decades to pioneer this practical means of mobilizing people of African descent for world missions. UDM owns no facilities in the U.S., but invested about \$225,000 to build the GLOBE Center for this church. I praise the Lord for His faithfulness and gracious provision. UDM exists to help

establish inner-city churches that fulfill Christ's Great Commission. Our vision is to see effective, sustaining, reproducing churches in inner cities across the nation.<sup>9</sup>

GLOBE stands for George Liele Objective for Black Enterprise. Born a slave in Virginia, George Liele started two churches in Georgia after receiving his freedom. When colonists tried to re-enslave him during the Revolutionary War, he became an indentured servant with the British and escaped to Jamaica.<sup>10</sup> Upon earning his freedom, Liele started the Island's first Baptist church. Many historians regard Liele as the first American-born missionary. Buff Bay Baptist Church descended from His work in Jamaica.

As a ministry of Buff Bay Baptist Church, GLOBE equips American and Jamaican short-term missions teams to pursue Liele's missionary objective of fulfilling Christ's Great Commission. The GLOBE Center is but the starting point to mobilize people of African descent to go anywhere the Lord leads them in the world.

On behalf of Urban Discovery Ministries and Buff Bay Baptist Church partnership, I invite you to join a short-term missions team to study missions at the GLOBE Center in Jamaica. We want you to discover your wonderful potential to fulfill Christ's Commission overseas and on a long-term basis. Come to Jamaica and discuss this book's call for your vanguard leadership in more detail.

Often with just their presence, African Americans connect with unchurched Jamaicans right away. I have brought diverse teams of college students with me for the last couple of years. I teach missions and personal evangelism to the African-American, white-American, and Jamaican-Christian team members. They go out into the towns and villages to establish relationships with unchurched Jamaicans and share the Gospel on their own. I am a witness to how well African-American students connect with the unchurched there. You may create witnessing opportunities for white and Jamaican students to join you in reaching future community leaders whom most traditional missions teams ignore. To quote Marley, "Won't you help to sing dese songs of freedom?"

As a vanguard, begin deploying Christian students as Christ's freedom forces. The next chapter challenges you to celebrate in Christ your freedom, calling, and identity to pioneer new structures based upon real, missions-focused discipleship. Maximize the freedom to respond to Christ's love that compels His special college forces to deploy across racial and cultural lines.

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## **Chapter 4**

### **Celebrate Your Generation's Freedoms**

#### *A Vanguard Champions the Cause*

As Norfolk's African-American population spread west from the downtown black-business district in the early 1920s, whites established a geographical color line at Corprew Avenue in the Brambleton neighborhood. This one-street buffer zone became known as "the dead line" to Norfolk locals. White public opinion determined that the neighborhoods east of Corprew would remain "for whites only." Mobs violently chased off two black families who bought houses on this street. In 1923, a Norfolk City Council member participated with an armed mob of 80-100 men who ordered a black family to move immediately from Corprew Avenue.<sup>1</sup>

They denied Norfolk's blacks their liberty, justice, and rights that Dubois said "makes life worth living." He labeled these segregated places "The Valley of the Shadow of Death" for black people. Ironically, today, Norfolk State University stands proudly on Corprew Avenue in this neighborhood where white tyranny had enforced segregation. A couple of years ago, I prayed for grace to bridge color and generational lines as I walked across this street almost every week. At the invitation of some NSU students, I crossed onto their campus and started a student-led discipleship ministry.

One would expect African-American students to celebrate the freedom that NSU's presence on Corprew Avenue verifies. Yet, in regard to the color line that still exists in missions, the following Dubois prediction of a coming "Awakening" remains unrealized:

But back of this still broods silently the deep religious feeling of the real Negro heart, the stirring, unguided might of powerful human souls who have lost the guiding star of the past and seek in the great night a new religious ideal. Someday, the Awakening will come when the pent-up vigor of ten million souls shall sweep irresistibly toward the Goal, out of the Valley of the Shadow of Death, where all that makes life worth living--Liberty, Justice, and Right--is marked "For Whites Only."<sup>2</sup>

I believe that deep religious feeling still broods silently in the unsatisfied hearts of Christian students whom I know on this campus and others. This kind of spiritual awakening resists the hypocrisy of putting on a front to survive under unjust systems as accommodationists.\* Although arriving there years after the Civil Rights Movement, something stirs the unguided might of their powerful human souls to seek a new religious ideal. Apparently "the Awakening" predicted by Dubois has yet to come, when pent-up vigor will sweep millions of African Americans irresistibly toward "the Goal" of ultimate freedom.

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\*An African-American who adapts to the ideals or attitudes of whites. Merriam-Webster, An Encyclopedia Britannica Company, <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/accommodationist>>, 5 November 2012.

I believe that Dubois saw only the symptoms of a deeper problem that keeps African-American hearts still yearning for what makes life worth living. For the greatest right of any human soul is the liberty to respond obediently to the love that the Holy Spirit embeds in the heart. Indeed, the Spirit of Jesus Christ compels African-American believers with His love to declare His great majesty and salvation to the nations. Christ's love creates the pent-up vigor that your vanguard leadership will draw upon to sweep students toward the goal of making disciples for Him from all nations without race-discrimination.

Yet, in regard to African-American Christians, Jesus' Great Commission might as well be marked "for whites only"! For you, global missions fields remain your segregated "Death Valleys" with geographical color lines and more. Instead of rising like a mighty army, black and white American Christians wait in a stalemate, like segregated spiritual mobs stuck in the past on dead dividing lines. What Dubois concluded years before the Civil Rights Movement still holds true in America for black/white missions mobilization today: "They both act as reciprocal cause and effect. Both must change or neither can improve to any great extent ... only by a union of intelligence and sympathy across the color-line in this critical period of the Republic shall justice and right triumph."<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, I observe students your age wanting more than the American dream, which many of your parents relentlessly pursue with their liberty and rights. More students express their desires to make eternal differences with their lives. Take the great opportunity, for justice's sake, to introduce them to "the Awakening" truth that Jesus Christ is our Commissioner. Celebrate your generation's freedom. So many will discover their worldwide ministry potential through obedience to His mandate.

What a blessing to inform other African-American students of their great calling as ministers of the Gospel. How will the Holy Spirit empower students when William Carey's missions challenge to all Christians also grips them? Will not a great sense of destiny inspire them to know that Christ is now overriding past discrimination against their ancestors to give them their day as missions leaders? How much more effective will their discipleship become when African-American students discover that following Christ obligates them to make for Him disciples from all nations? What glory will they receive when Christ accomplishes in and through them the eternal purpose of God? What transformations will occur as the Father purifies them for fruitfulness? Would not African-American students obeying Christ's Commission bless us all? Is it not your and my privilege to obediently pray for Christ to send them as laborers into His harvest and to act justly by supporting their obedience?

Begin enlisting fellow students to line up with you and deploy for action. This section of the book challenges you to muster with them right away – while still in school. I call on you to celebrate your freedom in Christ to obey His compelling love regardless of unbiblical status quo opinions or racial divides. Champion the Bible's authority and keep struggling for freedom from survival mentalities and hurts of past generations. Gain a winning mentality to run with perseverance the course that Jesus lays out for you as His disciple-maker of all nations:

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:1-2).

### **Champion the Bible's Authority**

Proclaim clear Scriptural teaching that the whole Bible is God's inspired and trustworthy Word, regardless of any opinions. As 2 Timothy 3:16 says:

All Scripture is God-breathed, given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished for all good works.

Approach the Bible with the logic that God is love and communicates with mankind. He knows everything and our need for salvation from sin and its punishment. In His love, He used men to write down His revelation to meet our need without error in the Bible. As this verse says, all Scripture is God-breathed to the very words and grammar. The Holy Spirit preserved the Bible and does a special work in our hearts so that we may receive God's communication. This process makes the Bible authoritative and completely trustworthy. We believe and obey the Bible because it is God's Word and true.<sup>4</sup>

The Bible came through both a supernatural and human process. The Holy Spirit supernaturally breathed the words through men who wrote it down (2 Peter 1: 20, 21). Yet He used normal human language with both literal and figurative meanings. Therefore, the Bible is interpreted literally and in the normal use of words unless it gives us reason to interpret it figuratively. That way, the Bible remains the authority instead of people's opinions.

Over the centuries since Christ came, theologians have been making themselves the authority by taking either the supernatural or human qualities of the Bible from one extreme to the other. Some regard the Bible as only a supernatural book with hidden meanings behind its words. These leaders took it upon themselves to make up their own hidden meanings as the authority for what they wanted people to believe. Evolution Theory brought in the other extreme – as liberals considered the Bible merely a human book. They made science and reason the authority for what they believed. They created a process of Bible study that assumed it also evolved in history and with errors.

This liberal viewpoint discredited the Bible and left its mark. It gave rise to several other false presuppositions about the Bible such as: the Bible only contains seeds of truth, only gives God's will but is not completely His Word, or only becomes God's Word when mixed with one's faith or experiences. These presuppositions make the reader the authority and thereby mishandle the Bible.<sup>5</sup>

Some African-American leaders reject the authority of the Bible and its literal interpretation because of the way white people used it to oppress our ancestors. That would be like me telling basketball players to never pass the ball after they make a sloppy pass and turn the ball over. Instead, I would have them go back and correctly learn the fundamentals - I wouldn't throw out the essentials.

Be assured that a Bible-believing movement gains momentum among African-American Christians who accept its authority as the inspired Word of God. God's love compels many to believe and obey the Bible despite past white oppression. This movement awaits your leadership. Take this respect for God's Word to the next level. Proclaim Christ's mandate to make disciples worldwide as commanded in God's Word. When liberalism swept across our nation, its theologians predicted that those who believed in the Bible's authority as God's Word would fade from the scene like dinosaurs. Liberals put so much faith in evolution that they believed it proved that religion would evolve and forever forsake the true Gospel and the Bible. Their theories gained momentum as fundamentalists made mistakes, suffered humiliating defeats, and almost went extinct in the early 20th century.

Yet, in reality, the opposite is happening. Faith in the Bible as God's inspired Word is growing among African Americans, and the Gospel proves true as God's power for salvation worldwide. Liberals underestimated the Holy Spirit's interventional ability to illuminate His word and transform lives even if white fundamentalists failed to defend it well. Liberalism's empty claims have been exposed. Those who founded their churches and denominations upon its unbelief now reap spiritual deadness. In contrast, many Christians take strong stands as legitimate Bible-believing scientists and now declare God's glory through His creation. Scientific discoveries confront evolutionists and disprove their bogus presuppositions.\*

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\* See, for example, the Institute for Creation Research at <http://www.icr.org/>

I believe God let fundamentalists endure humiliating defeats in the last century for your sake. In my opinion, God refused to allow fundamentalists to continue proclaiming His Word as true while practicing racist segregation that discredited Christ's Gospel. He brought about your civil rights and then broke the racial bar in America's Bible-believing institutions before He exalted His Word here in the past few decades.

Now Christ mobilizes people of African descent to join His forces, which brings the same transformation to America. He will supernaturally empower our missions ventures once He sanctifies its racially divided structures before the world. The Lord of the Harvest "thrusts forth" your vanguard leadership in His perfect timing as the world's population explodes.

As I have already advised you, take the opportunity to obtain formal Bible training at colleges or seminaries that respect the authority of God's Word. My father championed this cause for African Americans. You live at a great time to study science and proclaim the glory of God. Be assured that there are credible scientists who believe in the Bible's account of a literal creation.

If you accept the authority of the Bible as God's trustworthy Word, then justice requires that Christian leaders see your potential and mobilize you for world missions. They must be consistent when saying that God's love compels Christ's disciples to fulfill His global purpose. Since His love compels you, God's people must also stand behind you to remain consistent in our motives for missions. God's love must compel African-American Christians or He is defeating His own purpose with racial discrimination.<sup>6</sup> Certainly, God's Word teaches that you have a vital role in fulfilling His purpose of declaring His glory to the nations once you make His mission the aim of your life as Christ's disciple.

Jesus said, "... as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21). He did not make a new mission in His Great Commission. Christ dispatched us as His envoy to carry out the abiding mission that He had already received from the Father. God gave us the inspired Word without error to reveal our salvation from sin and our global assignment as ambassadors for Christ.

To begin your discipleship, accept as true what Jesus said in Matthew 28:18-20. Jesus said that the Father gave Him all authority in heaven and earth – believe Him. Also, He said that as you go make disciples of all nations, He will be with you always – believe Him. As Christ's disciple, live out this faith through constant dedication to Him. You will know Him as the Truth, and He will set you free.

### **Unleash from a Survival Mentality**

For their part, many African Americans' powerful potential in world missions remains lost in their struggles. African-American struggles for survival, freedom, racial equality, educational opportunities, financial security, achievement of the American dream, and determination to never go back into poverty squashed William Carey's challenge to sacrificially obey Christ's Commission.

I have seen upwardly mobile African Americans teach their children to get a good education, get out of poverty, flee impoverished communities, and pursue the American dream with their families. Usually, African Americans who overcome these struggles stick with the black middle class rather than sacrificially obeying Christ's Commission. I have also observed that, without generational wealth, many African Americans remain bound by survival mentalities that prevent their missions mobilization.

### **Reject Prosperity Theology's Selfishness**

Christian African Americans' growing acceptance of prosperity theology's selfish materialism brings a demobilizing effect. African Americans claiming wealth, health, and security from Christ's death remain unaware of, or uncommitted to, His command to sacrificially take up their crosses to serve worldwide. Jesus taught His disciples to prepare them to follow His example and suffer like Him for love's sake. To believe in Christ requires adopting His principle of complete self-surrender to God. At best, African Americans pursuing prosperity



limit missions to short-term trips that do not require self-sacrifice nor cost them the American dream. Would not Christ also call some of them to sacrificial long-term missions?

I observe that most African Americans remain unaware of the transforming empowerment provided when one obeys Christ's Commission. This includes not knowing how their lack of awareness and loss of participation come from Christian racial discrimination against them. If you haven't been raised or disciplined to sacrificially love the world's lost under Christ's mandate, prosperity theology may tempt you to replicate neglect with people overseas – the way whites treated our people at home.

I argue from experience that the power of a reconciled witness for Christ is priceless. In my opinion, one should invest everything to possess this treasure. I value serving with empowered African-American missionaries. I value the freedom to serve side by side in a united witness for Christ without people "trippin'" about racial issues. Having experienced the power of a reconciled witness at home and abroad, I conclude that both African-American and white Christians miss out on this great blessing!

### **Keep Struggling to be Free**

With the Emancipation Proclamation, slaves who had run away to the Union forces here in Norfolk expected it to declare their freedom. The fact that Abraham Lincoln's proclamation exempted Norfolk and excluded them caused confusion. They had trouble understanding this exemption, since Union forces holding our city under martial law could have immediately freed slaves who took refuge here.<sup>7</sup> Yet President Lincoln's proclamation did not include them. I will leave the debate to others regarding the issues and politics surrounding this confusing proclamation.

Break through confusing issues from the past. Prevent them from clouding your thinking during your quest for spiritual freedom. Do not let past hurts or politics prevent you from enjoying complete freedom as Christ's ambassador. Receive God's healing from these issues to make your quest for spiritual freedom possible.

Hurt, sorrow, suffering, and past struggles to survive may wound the soul and affect your sense of freedom. We have what Scripture calls "the inner man" that may remain hurt and in bondage after the flesh heals and receives freedom. It includes the soul, spirit, mind, will, understanding, determination, conscience, emotions, and passions.

As you know, the Bible combines all of these aspects of the inner man into one seat of life, which God calls the heart. When pain damages the heart's emotions, we may lose the capacity to understand and fulfill God's purpose. His healing becomes necessary before we can obey Him fully. Those whom God heals become His instruments of healing for others on the same spiritual journey.

Sometimes, good intentions by well-meaning church folks can make things worse. Some may encourage holding onto past hurts when drastic change is needed to heal. This applies to spiritual healing like it does to physical recovery. I wrote about a woman whom God had

strengthened after she suffered a stroke.<sup>8</sup> Yet I did not say how her sister worried that church friends would kill her afterward with kind gifts of soul food.

Most people now know how soul food came about in the past and the health risks associated with some varieties prevalent in many African-American diets, especially in her generation. Although her doctor drastically restricted her food options to prevent a second stroke, her church kept bringing hams and her favorite vegetables cooked with ham hocks. She missed this cooking so much that she overindulged when her friends dropped off forbidden meals. Their kindness made her feel better but prevented her healing and recovery. Do not let well-meaning Christians encourage you to hold onto bitterness from past injustices.

You have arrived at the best age to declare your independence from any hurts you might have inherited, regardless of who wants you to hold onto them. As in poker, you cannot choose the cards life deals you, but you can discard and refuse to play those that would keep your heart enslaved to hurt and fear. Also, remember that one of your greatest testimonies for Christ comes from your willingness to forgive and not hold resentment.<sup>9</sup>

I witnessed my father struggling most of his life with issues from his childhood. Growing up in poverty, his father (my grandfather) abandoned his family and then returned to die when my dad was 16 years old. Also, my grandmother suffered from mental illness. Until his later years, Dad refused to talk about his childhood. By the time I graduated from college, I figured out that he struggled to be free from his past hurts and become close to me. There came a time in my life, about your age, when I chose to free myself from the impact of hurts being passed down from his past.

### **Open Your Heart to Gladly Obey**

In Psalm 119:32, David declared his freedom by writing: “I will run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shalt enlarge my heart.” David determined to widen and freely make room in his heart to obey God’s commands. The word he used for “enlarge” means to dilate, like when the pupils in one’s eyes open wide. David desired an open heart, freed from bondage, so he could love, appreciate, and obey. He wanted to understand God’s greatness and goodness as the One worthy to be obeyed. David sought to comprehend the pure beauty of reasonable, pleasant, and loving obedience arising from joy. His freedom came from surrendering mind, will, soul, and passions to the ways of God.

The meaning of the original word for heart in this verse also includes the concept of receiving a new and clear understanding of God’s commands. For instance, the same word translated “heart” in 1 Kings 4:29 describes the wisdom and understanding of Solomon, whom God had given a heart as large as the sand on the seashore. David expressed his determination to understand God’s commands so he could run hard on the path they created for him.

With love inspiring him, with a heart undistracted by fear and sorrow, with understanding so he did not have to stop and debate the issues, David was determined to run hard on the course these commands marked out. His declaration in this verse expressed his trust and confidence in the Lord’s Word, which gave him the path to follow.

## **Gain a Winning Attitude to Train for Success**

David's desire to know God's way to run revealed his optimistic, winning attitude. My daughter, Joanna, set her private school's cross-country record while still in the 7th grade. She started running with the varsity team during middle school, having already competed in long distance races with a local track club. Before her first cross-country meet, I asked if she had walked the course. She said that a coach had told the team not to worry about knowing the course, because someone would always be running in front of them during the race. Wanting her to develop a more optimistic mentality, I asked her how she planned to find her way when she took the lead.

Joanna gave me another special memory when she ran cross country as a freshman in public high school. Competing in dual meets, she finished each in a disappointing second place. A faster girl was content to run closely behind her during the races and then beat Joanna at the finish line. Each loss motivated Joanna to train harder. We later learned of her opponent's overconfidence. She had become distracted during many practices by friends on the field hockey team and stopped training hard.

The night before the district meet, Joanna came to me and asked for prayer and advice to find a new way to win the next day. Knowing that she could not outrun her opponent at the end, we planned for Joanna to break free from her with an early "kick" somewhere in the middle of the race. During the meet, the runners disappeared from my view on that part of the course. She must have looked crazy to the others when she took off in a full sprint so early. Yet when Joanna reappeared down the stretch, she ran in the lead and all alone. She had pulled so far ahead that her opponent lost sight of her and gave up. The difference in their training paid off and enabled Joanna to free herself, upset a superior runner, and win the district championship.

In the same way, as a disciple of Christ you deserve to know that His Great Commission sets a glorious new path for you to run. He intends for you to train yourself in godliness and stay focused on this cause. His winning game plan includes you breaking free early from demobilizing issues to go hard in the course that He graciously lays out for you.

Again, prevent anyone from discouraging you to follow obedience's path. Since most African-American Christians do not participate in world missions, they obviously fail to obey His command to make disciples of all nations. If that describes you, then you must be on the wrong spiritual road.

Perhaps demobilizing hurts from the past keep your heart closed to Christ's command. You may be sitting out this race because you do not clearly understand that His Great Commission sends you. If you journey in this life distracted, playing around, moving slowly, going in the wrong direction, or unwilling to make sacrifices to obey Him, you disqualify yourself and lose your reward. If you run swiftly with perseverance to obey Christ's Commission, get prepared for negative feedback. You may appear crazy to those who sit out the race or lag behind when you go hard for Christ's command.

## Heed God's Warning to Step Up When Free

As a warning to all of Christ's followers, Scripture recorded how the fourth generation of Abraham's descendants received their freedom, but disqualified themselves from fulfilling God's purpose (1 Corinthians 10: 6, 11). Even after their deliverance from Egypt, they failed to put their trust in the Lord and perished in the desert. They feared the people of Canaan and the possibility of death or a return to slavery. They wanted to return to Egypt because they remained enslaved by survival mentalities. Israel failed to take the next courageous steps of faith to obey the Lord. Read how intensely committed God is to completing His eternal purpose of filling the earth with His glory and the consequences of not obeying Him when He gives freedom:

And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word. But as truly as I live, *all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord*. Because all those men which have seen my *glory*, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; *surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it*: But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land where into he went; and his seed shall possess it. (Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwelt in the valley.) Tomorrow turn you, and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea (Numbers 14: 20-25; italics added for emphasis).

The entrenched Israelites reasoned like a defeated people instead of thinking like delivered conquerors, which displeased the Lord. He swore an oath that they would never enter His rest in the land that He had promised Abraham and his descendants. His delivered people fell like animal carcasses in the desert. They even provoked Moses, whom God had prepared for 80 years to lead them, to disqualify himself from fulfilling his greatest assignment.

Notice that the Lord fulfilled His overarching purpose by mobilizing the next generation of Abraham's descendants. Yet, after their unbelieving parents died in the wilderness, this generation's success in the new land exposed them to demobilizing temptations. They failed to complete their mission, distracted by disobedience, greed, immorality, envy of other nations, spiritual apathy, moral compromise, and idolatry. The Apostle Paul expressed similar concern about himself. He explained bringing his body under subjection lest he also become a castaway after having preached to others (1 Corinthians 9:27).

Anyone who received salvation through the precious blood of Christ and can witness His blood redeeming people worldwide has, in fact, seen the glory of the Lord as He fulfills His eternal purpose. Israel's horrible failure and death in the wilderness remain a solemn warning to make your life count for eternity by faithfully obeying Christ's Great Commission!

Throughout black history, Christian African Americans identified with Israel's struggle against oppression. Indeed, the "Black Experience" parallels Israel's suffering and deliverance. Will you obey and go forward, or will your present generation follow Israel's example into a

spiritual crisis of disqualification now that God has brought you out of your type of Egypt? Set yourself free to muster for Christ.

Use opportunities He now provides you to fulfill God's global purpose. For instance, dedicate your educational progress to Christ and His mission. You are a steward of the college opportunities that He provides you. God entrusted you with academic privilege to spread the knowledge of His great glory throughout the world. Will you use your classroom achievements for His glory or for selfish and temporary ambitions? At the end of your life, what will you look back on? Be prepared to give an account to Christ for the education that He gave you. Your diploma can open doors for your international witness for Christ so that your education makes a global, eternal difference. Even your ability to read and write English is a God-given privilege that may be used for His glory. For instance, ministries and governments worldwide seek young adults to teach English as a second language.

The glory of fulfilling Christ's mission is the same as Israel's glory from obediently conquering the promised land. The African-American absence from world evangelism means that you remain, as a race of people, in the wilderness while the Lord expects you to courageously take what He promised Abraham. This is your day of decision.

Declare yourself free and run in such a way that you win the prize. Let the Lord of the harvest open your heart to His Great Commission. Become the vanguard change agent who mobilizes many to obey His compelling love. Champion the Bible's authority and proclaim freedom from survival mentalities and past hurts.

Next, I challenge you to seek God's calling and assignment through discipleship so you may deploy other students with this process. I share God's work in my heart during a college summer-break that inspires me still. Amazingly, as I sat on a wooden board at a camp for African-American children in rural North Carolina, He called me to challenge you to seek His will.

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## **Chapter 5**

### **Find Calling through Discipleship**

#### *A Vanguard Knows the Assignment*

What plans did you make for summer break? You may need to make money, but also invest time during your college career to seek your calling and assignments from Christ for His Great Commission.

Please go back with me to a summer Bible camp in rural North Carolina where I began seeking Christ's assignment for my life. I sat on a painted wooden board that served as the back row of an outdoor classroom. With only a roof on poles, this camp-style chapel looked more like a homemade picnic shelter. Yet, it fit in perfectly with several nearby cabins, a shower-house, and an outhouse made of two-by-fours and plywood. The staff held most meetings in a new cinderblock multipurpose building that I helped paint. On the hazy summer mornings, however, the other counselors and I led the children outdoors for Bible lessons under the rustic shelter's roof.

The dozen or so backless benches before me held local African-American children who sat respectfully in rows while listening to the morning's lesson. Except for a camp board member who arrived on weekends to volunteer maintenance help, I was the only white person among about 60 African Americans at the camp.

I assumed that the children came from impoverished conditions because none took showers as I did. They all bathed at the same time in the shower-house using their own washcloth, soap, and a basin of cold water. At first, I figured they all chose to avoid the unmercifully cold well-water that I endured in the unheated shower. Then I noticed them coming over to the camp director's trailer after dark from a house next door. With his permission, they filled large plastic containers with water from his garden hose and took them home. The children moved about stealthily at night to hide their poverty and avoid the embarrassment of not having running water at their house. At least for this family, bathing themselves from a basin of cold water was a part of their everyday experiences.

What the camp lacked in refined facilities, the director and his volunteer staff team made up for with organized fun. They offered homemade box games and obstacle courses under a grove of trees that provide shade for the games but no sunlight for growing grass. Playing on the hard dirt made it possible to compete on a basketball court located in a gap between the trees. The staff also supervised exciting minibike rides each day. Additionally, everyone went on regular afternoon field trips to a community swimming pool. They all piled into a retired school bus that the camp director drove himself, since he was the only one who knew how to stop it using the emergency brake.

God used these cross-cultural experiences in this rural setting to revive and change me. At age 21, I had no idea that He was in the process of placing me in urban ministry in Norfolk. Needing prerequisites to get into an MBA program, I took summer-school business courses after I graduated with a chemistry degree. My summer schedule left me several open weeks and I

volunteered to work in this rural camp. The camp's Bible teacher took us through daily lessons from I John as his means of paying for his own children's camp fees, which he could not afford. His lessons might have gone over the children's heads, but they hit home with me.

Sitting on this wooden board each morning, I hungered for God's Word and desired to be close to Him. God used the morning lessons and evening messages to transform my heart and put me on a path to the Great Commission. On that particular day in the morning Bible lesson, my heart opened and I sincerely promised God I would go wherever He wanted me to go and do whatever He wanted me to do. Since missionary heritage made me spiritually privileged, I prayed that God would graciously call me to pioneer where others did not want to go.

Suddenly, I felt a rush of energy and emotion causing me to almost explode with an uncontrollable gush of tears. Quickly covering my face with my hands to hide my embarrassing, uncharacteristic display of emotion, it was now my turn to move stealthily and avoid being seen. I ran from the outdoor chapel, through the grove of trees, and past the cabins and shower-house to find a secluded place to cry openly behind the wooden outhouse. There I wept with no concern for pulling myself together. I wept because I mourned the loss of my father's partnership with me in this calling.

You see, committing myself to follow Christ unconditionally took me even further back to my early teens. I had watched my dad and an African-American missionary minister to black and white teens at another rural summer camp. They played with the kids and then sat down and led them to Christ, like I do now. While watching them bring young people to Christ on one particular day, I invoked a request from the Bible's account of Elijah passing his mantle and ministry to Elisha. I pled to God for twice the spirit of both men for my own life's ministry (2 Kings 2:9). In effect, I asked Him for four times the spiritual power that I had seen displayed by my spiritual leaders.

Later, as I prayed on the wooden chapel bench in my early twenties, the Lord answered my requests from both camps. I knew that Christ's calling and a great mantle, my own father's in fact, had somehow fallen upon me. For some inexplicable reason, I wept uncontrollably for my father and our losses. His own childhood hurts had made him vulnerable to letting circumstances surrounding his pastorate get to him. As a result, he walked away from any involvement in church or ministry for 20 years. He refocused his energies instead on sailing and studying secular psychology with people who used science as an excuse to reject Christ. Ironically, I studied science in college and became impressed with God's Word. Dad studied the Bible in college but became impressed with the intelligence of some scientists.

I never told my father about my intense sense of calling on the day that I wept for us. He tried to discourage my interest in missions, warning me I would get hurt like him. Almost 30 years later, when I left his bedside on the night before he died unexpectedly, I had the same emotions and wept for our spiritual losses again. Later, my mother gave me his personal files and a diary that documented his calling and vision for mobilizing African Americans for Christ's Commission, which fell intact, like an Elijah-mantle, to me.

Although I found myself ministering among African Americans over and over again in my teens and young adult life, black and white Christians remained quite segregated. No one, including me, conceived of the possibility that God had assigned Kim and me to serve in inner-city missions. Yet, I knew my sense of calling might put me in harm's way somehow, but I was determined to seek God's will - no matter what happened.

Not all missionaries face physical danger, but I weighed the formidable risks of death and suffering when making this decision. As I said before, a missionary to violent New Guinea tribes had been recruiting me to go there since my elementary school days. Offering myself to Christ to obey His Commission anywhere, I had expected God to bring Kim and me to New Guinea, exposing us to great harm and difficulties. Also, I prayed then, "If you send us to New Guinea, I don't know how Kim will handle the snot, but I know you can make a way (for her to cope with it)." Although I never researched the facts, this prayer referred to the missionary's report that women there greeted his wife by rubbing snot into her hair—I kid you not.

My commitment included my willingness to die in New Guinea or to live under the worst circumstances imaginable. As things turned out, New Guinea was only a test of my discipleship and faith, which prepared me to serve where some might have feared to go. Local danger here still seems mild to me when compared to laying down my life in the New Guinea bush.

Now it's your turn to make the call about your future. Wholeheartedly offer yourself to Christ for His mission. Just as you came to Christ by faith, now declare your obedience to His Commission. By faith commit to go wherever Christ wants you to go, and do whatever He wants to ask you to do. You will never regret making such a high level of commitment. He will call you to a personalized assignment in His timing, but I challenge you to call on Him now. Declare your absolute allegiance to Him and His cause, keeping in mind that a call to serve is a call to prepare.

This chapter passes on to you insights about how to seek God's will and assignment opportunities for your life in missions. I offer Bible teaching and other dynamics that I imbibed\* from my privileged missionary background. My purpose is to motivate you to make Christ's Commission the first priority of your career planning. In some way, He will place you in the vanguard's position of global influence for His Gospel's sake. I begin by challenging you to pursue your own discipleship training as the first step toward knowing God's calling on your life. I explain what this calling means and about Christ's role in sending you out with specific assignments.

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\*From Dubois quote: Much that the white boy imbibes from his earliest social atmosphere forms the puzzling problems of the black boy's mature years. America is not another word for Opportunity to all her sons. W.E.B. Dubois, Farah J. Griffin, *The Souls of Black Folk*, (New York: Barnes and Noble Classics, 2003), 104.

## **Resolve to Learn Mobilizing Discipleship**

I not only encourage you to serve on a missions trip or home project. I challenge you to pursue a discipleship path during the school year that strategically aims at Christ's Commission. To make disciples for Christ, you must first become His true disciple yourself, obviously. For



instance, prayerfully seek church and campus ministries structurally designed to mobilize members for world missions through discipleship. Joining this mobilizing discipleship is crucial at your age, because decisions made now may set the course you follow for decades to come.

To determine a church or campus ministry's commitment to mobilizing missionaries, count them. For instance, committed churches usually maintain displays to introduce the missionaries whom they send and/or support. Respectfully ask about who they have sent out and support in missions, and how many are African Americans. Make finding a church or ministry and a disciple-making leader, with good track records in discipleship and missions, your first career search priority at this point in your life.

For example, the Tabernacle Church of Norfolk's leaders took me through true discipleship steps, beginning in my senior college year. Devoted to fulfilling Christ's Commission, they guided Kim and me as we progressed toward becoming urban missionaries. They immersed us in missions through conferences, staff meetings, visiting missionaries, church library books, small group prayer, Sunday School classes, and preached messages to us.

This church gave my first ministry assignment, at age 23, that read: "Evangelize and disciple Granby High School students." I already knew how to lead students to Christ, but had yet to receive training in discipleship. I began praying for someone to disciple me. Two days later, the late Al Vail, a veteran disciple-maker at Tabernacle Church, arrived at our door and for two years invested in Kim, two other couples, and me. His personal challenges between meetings and the daily prayers that he offered for us blessed us the most.

### **Discover Isaiah's Calling**

Jesus Christ's reign gives Him supremacy in our lives and makes His world mandate a glorious calling. Isaiah, in his Old Testament vision, saw Jesus as the Lord of Hosts sitting on a high throne and lifted up. In Isaiah 6, he recorded seeing the seraphim shake heaven by crying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is filled with His glory!"

Jesus, the Lord of Hosts, reigns over the armies of heaven, the armies of Satan, and over every authority on earth. As Jesus' throne room filled with smoke, Isaiah saw our Holy King and confessed his sinfulness. After being cleansed and forgiven, Isaiah heard the question that white missions leaders have been quoting to white students for years: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" (Isaiah 6:1-8).

As long as I can remember, my Christian leaders challenged me to consecrate myself and respond to Christ's Commission with Isaiah's words, "Here am I; send me." Many Christians consider this personal encounter with Jesus Christ where one receives a unique, individualized assignment as the "missionary call."

I did, in fact, receive this lasting sense of missionary calling in the fifth grade. Then, during my teenage years, when I rebelled, like Jonah\* heading in the opposite direction, the Lord disciplined me. Graciously, He kept me in line with my still unknown call of duty.

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\*The Old Testament prophet who refused to obey God's command to go to an enemy city and call its people to repentance. The Lord sent a great fish to swallow Jonah, among other events, to make him to obey (Jonah chapters 1-3).

Kim and I pursued this calling aggressively after we married, deciding we would head overseas somewhere until God stopped us or made His calling known. We began serving in our present ministry in Norfolk while we prepared for a summer internship in Haiti. Once here, I immediately knew that this inner-city ministry was God's missions assignment for us. This certainty gave me endurance during the rejection and hardship that came my way at the beginning. Knowing our calling as a couple gave me the determination to risk my life several times, even when I feared the dangerous environment that crack's arrival created in our city.

The question of whether a Christian should seek a special missionary call from God for missionary service should concern the African-American student. Let me repeat the calling phenomena that occurred in my white context. For 250 years, leaders committed to fulfilling Christ's Commission have challenged (mostly) white students to grapple with the question of God's missionary call on our lives. These leaders challenged many to determine whether we have been personally called by God to serve overseas. Again, here are the specifics of the challenges, which they have been giving:

Every Christian disciple is commissioned by Christ, individually through local churches, to obey the Great Commission by praying, giving, and going. Going may mean reaching a nearby neighbor or coworker, but compelled by love for Christ, all must be personally involved in fulfilling His mandate in some way.

As Christ's disciples willing to go, Christians regularly offer themselves to God for missionary service overseas. Christians actively seek His will for their individual assignments in missions.

Just because a need for missionaries exists somewhere, do not assume the existence of this need automatically means that God has called you there. Missions conference speakers used to say, "A need is not a missionary call." Each missionary receives a unique calling from God to a missionary career, to a certain field, or to a particular assignment.

During the same timeframe, most African Americans remained unaware of the possibility of a personal missionary call.

### **What Usually Goes Down in a Missionary Call?**

Going to the missions field with a missionary call requires more than getting an experience or feeling. Knowing the nature of the process might give insights on why the disparity exists between white and black callings.

As His first priority, the Master increases the usefulness of the instruments being called to missionary service. In His love for us, Jesus accomplishes His spiritual harvest in the world through us. He reigns and overrides our failures to accomplish His purposes.

Ultimately, Christ is most concerned about who we become in our complete and continuous union with Him. Through abiding in Him, we remain in His self-sacrificing love so obedience to His Commission becomes our joy. With love, He requires His followers to first learn how to sacrificially and unconditionally love like Him before they minister for Him.

Though personal, Christ's love works in broader ways that impact individual missionary assignments. As Head of the Church worldwide, He works strategically in and judges each local body of believers. He provides spiritually gifted leaders who govern and equip churches to provide guidance for individual ministry assignments.

Local churches, for example, may confirm, postpone, or end the missionaries' callings. Those whose calling they confirm, they commission as representatives. Churches become partners in the calling by supporting missionaries with finances and prayers.

Christians sensing a missionary call usually apply to independent or church-based missions boards/agencies. Some go out under their church's supervision. With missions agencies, human resource departments evaluate the applicants' potentials for serving overseas. After missions agencies accept them, the called ones become missionary candidates who raise their financial and prayer support from local churches and individuals. When missionaries raise a certain support level, churches usually commission them and the missionaries set their departure dates.

In many cases, God provides financial support and access to a particular country, region, or people group to confirm a missionary's calling. Obtaining visas from countries is important to the calling process. The openness of a country to receiving missionaries factors into the calling. When service in particular countries becomes extremely dangerous, usually mission boards take their missionaries off these fields. Those knowing their calling offer persistent prayers for open doors.

Some Christians limit the scope of callings strategically themselves. For example, they focus their missionary service on pioneering works among people groups who remain unreached by the Gospel.

Most consider their calling a lifetime assignment, unless God changes it in a variety of possible ways. Changes may come from a country closing its doors, new opportunities arising, family responsibilities, health limitations, and missions agency retirement policies.

### **Christ's Role in the Call**

Jesus gives His disciples special privileges that impact the missionary calling process as well. He commands them to participate in the calling of others by praying to Him as Lord of the Harvest. To exercise this privilege, disciples urge Jesus, through fervent prayer, to powerfully thrust more laborers into the ready spiritual harvest.

Christ prepares His disciples to rejoice in the privileges of spiritual warfare, persecution, and suffering for His sake, which affects assignments. Often, He gives vision without details

because He first calls them to the privilege of putting their complete trust in Him. To accomplish His mission, Jesus' disciples serve as privileged partners with Him, in Him, through Him, and for Him. His enabling grace makes any accomplishments possible, so Christ has supremacy in their lives and churches, which plays out in the missionary call.

Our Lord's love does not remove consequences to enable sin. Jesus gives us the freedom to choose whether we will obey His Commission for love's sake. Our response, therefore, may directly affect our missionary calling. Christ maintains high standards for disciples whom He displays as salt and light to reflect His character and glory in the world. His disciples purify and discipline themselves with His Word, lest they become disqualified for service. Christ has a spiritual bench and can sit His disciples down. He may replace the disobedient with those willing to obey.

Jesus exercises His prerogative of judging pride that betrays His selfless love. He may allow selfish people to believe they are accomplishing His will, when, in harsh reality, He rejects their service and does not call them at all. Service for Christ requires complete consecration and pursuit of His holiness. Christ requires blameless reputations of His leadership. He requires committed, self-sacrificing love for Him, for other believers, and for the lost. Without Christ's character, servant attitude, and love, missionary efforts fail the calling from God.

As a result of their union with Christ, the Father purifies Christ's disciples so they become more fruitful. The Holy Spirit works in disciples' lives as well. He guides, teaches, purifies, and empowers disciples for service as He opens and closes doors for the Gospel.

### **Why Don't African Americans Get Called?**

The best and scriptural way of recognizing one's call comes by seeing it as God's guidance in a fluid preparation process rather than a special revelation, experience, or feeling.

Understanding the Godhead's work in preparing disciples for missions explains the disparity between white and black callings to foreign missions. I believe a combination of factors explains the disproportional differences between the calling of white and black Christians into full-time missions.

Dismiss immediately one untrue scenario that says Christ never wanted African-American missionaries serving overseas and therefore called none to missionary service. African Americans, according to this premise, would not be obligated to obey the Great Commission.

This scenario violates Christ's Commission to all His disciples and contradicts black experiences. In 1782, and 10 years before Englishman William Carey, the father of modern missions, wrote his mobilizing exposition, the Lord "thrust out" an African American as the first American missionary. Virginia-born, former slave, and church planter George Liele became an indentured servant to the British to earn his passage to Jamaica. He left churches that he started in Savanna, Ga., to escape Southerners who attempted to re-enslave freed African Americans. Upon earning His freedom in Jamaica, Liele and a few other former slaves established the first Baptist church on the island, enduring much hardship as its pastor.<sup>1</sup>

Liele's ministry in Jamaica raises the question of why African Americans do not heed Christ's Great Commission. If God has been calling African Americans to personal missionary service overseas, are they failing to obey Him as true disciples?

Some missionary leaders argue that a special call is not necessary before disciples obey Christ's worldwide mandate. In this reasoning, missionary statesmen and women should not need to challenge students to discern whether they have special, individualized missionary callings, if leaders disciple the students correctly. These leaders expect Christ's disciples to obey without needing a sense of personal assignment or destiny from God.

If true, Christians remaining absent with no long-term personal involvement in international missions would either be poorly taught or disobedient to Christ. African Americans, as a whole, would be out of God's will or missing God's Word if only a few hundred participate in world missions. Discipleship of African Americans would be considered inadequate, misguided, or failing, according to this reasoning. The solution to the lack of African-American missionaries would be better discipleship that includes obedience to the Great Commission overseas.

But the need for better discipleship brings me back to challenging you to prayerfully and aggressively pursue obedience to the Great Commission overseas. You deserve to know how to seek your missionary call as a discipleship process rather than just having an experience or feeling. All Christian African-American students deserve to know why so few introduce them to this process, which may bring up the unresolved divides and barriers that Christians from my generation still do not want to confront.

### **Old Barriers Still in the Systems**

As I discussed in the last chapter, you deserve to know that God has been calling you to missions but white racism, segregation, oppression, racial prejudice, discrimination, and neglect have presented barriers to black participation. In my opinion, the absence of African-American missionaries exposes one of the greatest injustices that whites have ever inflicted upon African Americans—teaching them a form of Christianity that does not empower them to carry the Gospel worldwide. Be confident despite this past and know that God will provide for your sacrificial work overseas.

Neglect in white-led sending agencies remains a systemic problem. I assure you that white people do not sit around with Jim Crow-malice thinking of ways to prevent your participation. The neglect is ingrained into our missions mobilization systems, produced by inherited status quo thinking, perceptions, and ways of doing things.

For example, I told a white administrator at one mission agency, which happens to send missionaries to Africa, that I had visited Harlem. His response revealed this systemic neglect that I am talking about. He said, "Harlem? You went to Harlem? I do everything I can to stay away from Harlem!" Speaking for myself, if we seriously sought African Americans to activate for missions, Harlem residents could be a great resource to target. The systemic problem resides in the perspective of this administrator who did not see Harlem as a potential source of missionaries.

A white leader in a church missions program helped me see this systemic barrier when he asked, “Can you give me one theological reason why we should spend one more dollar on inner-city ministry in America when millions of people in the world have not heard the Gospel once?”

My one reason, which remains outside traditional missions thinking, is that inner cities are home to a great untapped number of potential missionary leaders. I testify how the God of all comfort prepares people in harsh inner-city backgrounds to comfort others with the comfort they have received from Him.

By the Holy Spirit’s power, they may witness for Christ anywhere, but they especially touch those whose lives and families structures have been shaped by poverty, who have been rejected as outcasts, and who are oppressed and struggle for freedom. They confront well the false teachers who take advantage of past white missionary colonialism or paternalism and try to discredit the Gospel.

If you come from an inner-city background, thank God for your missionary advantage. Our Lord equipped you to share the good news of peace and hope that you found there. He prepared you to lead us all in effective ministry to the “least of these” in the world. But first, become truly free in your own heart to respond to God’s compelling love.

Prepare your heart for Christ’s intensity. When Jesus calls disciples to obey, He wants His special forces to bring it hot with commitment. Unless you come willing to die for His cause, you are unworthy of His Commission. When mobilizing disciples, Jesus “don’t play.”

### **Jesus Throws Out Laborers into His Harvest**

Jesus used a serious Greek verb in Luke 10:2 that the KJV translates as “send forth” to describe how He gets laborers into His harvest:

“... pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into His harvest.”

This verb, “send forth,” means to cast out by a strategic force that cannot be resisted. Also used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, it revealed God’s intensity as He promised to violently drive out the nations before Israel (Exodus 23:30). This phrase reveals Christ’s commanding forcefulness as He cast out demons and threw money changers out of the temple. Jesus’ intense passion as Lord of the Harvest to mobilize His disciples is also revealed in this verb, “send forth.”

Correctly translated, Christ’s mobilizing command in Luke 10:2 challenges us to pray for laborers and be prepared to make a radical commitment. Jesus literally commands you, as His disciple, to fervently beg Him, the Lord of the Harvest, to forcefully throw out laborers into His spiritual harvest. His command assumes He will thrust you out first, and with such intense action, that you must go—so pray for others to go with you into this ripe spiritual harvest.

### **Christ Breaks Those He Uses**

In love, often tough love, He may intervene to change your life's course so you fulfill His specific assignments. Ignoring or remaining unaware of His Commission might leave you bucking against the highest conceivable purpose and power in the universe. Other scriptures document Christ's strong sending-work, and I can vouch for His intense thrust in my own life.

Humble yourself, therefore, under God's mighty hand and pursue His holiness. Scripture and modern testimonies document well the fact that God first breaks those whom He chooses to use. Beware of trying to "kick against the pricks" like Saul of Tarsus in Acts 9:5. He became the great missionary, Apostle Paul, after Christ encountered and broke him.

If, perhaps, you read this challenge after already being broken by Christ, be assured He put His hands on you for His glory. Return, rejoice, and obey. God obviously is training you to be fruitful for your great future in Christ's harvest.

Jesus told a parable in Matthew 21:28-32 about two sons whose father sent them to work in his vineyard. One refused, saying, "I will not," but later changed his mind and went. The second son respectfully volunteered but failed to go. The first represented traitors and harlots who believed John the Baptist and followed the righteous way. The disobedient son represented self-righteous Pharisees whom Christ rebuked with this parable.

Respect God's willingness to fiercely discipline His own to set apart a courageous and obedient people for His glory. In the Old Testament, God revealed to Daniel a prophecy about a Syrian King named Antiochus IV Epiphanes who would severely persecute Israel around 168 B.C. Antiochus desecrated the temple in Jerusalem and then killed tens of thousands of Jews when they revolted. He represents the Antichrist, whom the prophecy reveals is still yet to come at the "time of the end."<sup>2</sup> God used this harsh persecution to cleanse Israel and separate the courageous from the cowardly among His people. This purging is described in Daniel 11:32-35:

... the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits. And they that understand shall instruct many, yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days ... and some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white...

Be among the courageous today and know your Christ. Become strong and do exploits as He purges your life through discipline. Know Christ as your God and understand His Commission to become His strong, holy, disciple maker. When refined by His discipline, accomplish international exploits to spread God's fame, regardless of persecution and spiritual attacks. Lead His brave and obedient disciples when God strengthens you to go forward.

Take hold of the challenge to seek God's will and assignments in obedience to Christ, the Lord of the Harvest. Make seeking His direction the first priority of your career planning as a vanguard leader. Would not a vanguard seek to know where he or she is commissioned to go in order to strategically lead the way? Would not a vanguard pursue training to equip others? Invest time during your summer break to serve in missions and seek His assignments. Invest in your own discipleship training during the school year.

These challenges flow into the next chapter's encouragement to rise up with a pioneering spirit when obeying Christ's calling on your life. Like the Freedom Riders, inspire and motivate for action many types of people through your stand for justice, regardless of your background or the opposition that you may face.

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## **Chapter 6**

### **Pioneer in Spirit**

#### *A Vanguard Perseveres With a Pioneering Spirit*

##### **Discover New Confidence**

This chapter challenges you to live out a new pioneering spirit. Exerting confidence in Christ's presence will embolden you for your spiritual revolution. Through the Holy Spirit's wisdom and power, you can tackle new problems as they come without already knowing their solutions. Overcome obstacles that prevent the mobilization of African Americans for world missions. Make new discoveries, venture into new territories, explore virgin frontiers, brave dangers, and endure hardships to revolutionize our missionary forces so the oppressed in the most distant lands may know that Jesus saves without discrimination.

Find in Christ the confidence and bravery that comes with an innovative pioneering spirit. A background of rejection and poverty did not stop Jesus from arising as a vanguard pioneer. He fulfilled God's mission and purpose under threatening conditions, and they must not stop you either. For instance, the Bible's Christmas story reveals Jesus' background when He demonstrated God's unconditional love for us. We read how the Father sent His Son to give peace and safety from sin and judgment in a background of rejection, political opposition, hatred, and danger.\* The Christ-child faced an imposing, threatening environment, but His deprived background could not prevent Him from coming to accomplish this mission.

One outcome is that God graciously accepts you because you received Jesus Christ by faith. Christ, in turn, promised to be with and empower you to fulfill His same mission in the same kinds of hostilities regardless of your background.

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\* "...for Herod will seek the young child to destroy Him." Matthew 2:13

##### **Confidently Mobilize**

Work on heightening your confidence when challenged to serve Christ as long-term missionaries. Believe in your potential in Christ and step up to this challenge. Respond with the same poised bravery documented in newsreels of African-American students pioneering in passive resistance or militant confrontation during the Civil Rights Movement. I grew up seeing this same confident determination in white missionaries.

Watch the PBS documentary, "The Freedom Riders,"<sup>1</sup> and consider how they confidently mobilized for a social revolution that parallels your spiritual one. With pioneering spirits, they attempted the impossible. Students stepped up first and then called for support and other riders. Optimistic in their cause of justice, they took ownership of their rights to go through barriers and expected to be miracles of God. Although young, they won justice without depending on the establishment and felt urgency to finish their task. They pioneered justice that transformed our nation while they were college students. Like the documentary asks: Will you get on that bus?

Grow in this grace of confidence by asking for the Holy Spirit's empowerment to become a great pioneer for the Gospel. For our Lord Jesus commanded you, as His disciple, to pioneer

worldwide with Him and for Him. He expects you to make disciples while you are going. Through His Spirit, Christ indwells you to fulfill His Commission through you. He promises never to leave you, expecting you to become a pioneering witness of Him to the uttermost parts of the world. Put your confidence in Christ, in your union with Him, in His promised presence, and in the power of His Spirit who indwells you.

It is known that African-American students build confidence to pioneer in white contexts by finding other black students and hanging out with them.<sup>2</sup> This may become a problem for your generation because so few African Americans fulfill Christ's Commission overseas. You may be the only African American in your mission agency or in the field where you will serve. Yet God will use that kind of vanguard leadership to break through barriers for other African Americans at home while you fulfill His Commission abroad.

### **Lead like the Freedom Riders**

The Freedom Riders of 1961 demonstrated commitment and courage in their activism that you must wield to revolutionize world missions as Christ's pioneering vanguard. Before boarding the buses, they wrote their wills and prepared to die to win freedom for the oppressed. With passion, they made the plight of others their cause. For the civil rights of unknown countrymen, they put aside their own right to pursue happiness when they left college before exams in order to protest. They corrected the injustices that had been destroying the integrity of our entire nation in the eyes of the world.

The Freedom Riders surrendered their ambitions of achieving the American Dream. As you know, many left college even though they were the first in their families to attend. They had no personal financial incentives or obligations. The Freedom Riders owed no favors to political parties. Their decision to go first and put themselves in the middle of the conflict made them completely free and unstoppable vanguards of non-violent resistance.

By grace, replicate the free resolve and courage that forced the older generation to respect and join them. Their courageous sacrifice made the President of the United States take action. The PBS documentary made the point that even Martin Luther King Jr. found himself pulled into their activism and mobilized by their initiatives.

Transfer Freedom Rider tenacity to your spiritual cause as Christ's ambassador. For their just social/political cause, the Freedom Riders mobilized students of both races from across the nation. They moved our federal government and our president into action before the scrutiny of nations around the world. They first mobilized themselves and then called for support and other riders to join them.

The Freedom Riders attempted the impossible, determined to perform with avant-garde innovation. They entered those fateful buses optimistic and confident in their just cause.

Ask God for their determination to lead for His glory in the world. Take on Freedom Rider optimistic expectations by faith. They took ownership of their rights to go through doors that unjust systems had closed. Expecting a miracle, each accepted the value of suffering and death as the means to revolutionize. They always, always felt the urgency to finish the task. Diverse

and unified, they did not need to debate racial issues with those tied down by their pursuits for power, fame, or greed. Please watch the PBS documentary and apply their heroic decisions of self-sacrifice to your decision-making about leading in Christ's spiritual cause.

As Freedom Riders mobilized in the social/political realm, I challenge you to step up and lead in the spiritual realm. Activate your Christian generation, and all of us, for the even greater cause of proclaiming God's glory to the nations. Go first, mobilizing yourself and then others. Attempt the impossible and be determined to accomplish it by God's grace. Take ownership of your right to go through closed doors when God has declared them open. Accept death and suffering with an urgency to finish the task of world evangelization. Owe no man anything but love.

With pioneering spirits, make the plight of others your own. Be diverse, unified, and free. Exercise the liberty of spiritual justice – and while you go to the ends of the earth, make more reproducing disciples of Jesus.

Surrender everything to Christ and you will never regret this decision to lead this cause. Spreading the freedom to glorify God is priceless. With confidence, get on the Lord Jesus' spiritual bus and set us all free.

### **Win Spiritual Freedom's Opportunities**

Unlock the following opportunities so we may all:

- Embrace God's global purpose of world evangelization.
- Reach our communities as part of Christ's larger, worldwide mission.
- Make personal sacrifices for what is eternally valuable.
- Trust God to meet needs and take steps of faith to go together.
- Experience how to commission, pray, and support missionaries.
- Understand the ramifications that missions has on one's family.
- Discover advantages that your race and background give for missions.
- Receive power from the Holy Spirit to fulfill Acts 1:8.
- Value education to advance the Gospel instead of trying to flee poverty.
- Make choices to pursue world evangelization over the American dream.
- Experience partnerships with those who support us.
- Model and teach Christ's mandate and process to children.
- Extensively mobilize in love as a united witness of a credible Gospel.

### **Muster the Spiritual Angel of Death**

When a young Marine returned from his tour in Iraq, he shared with me a perspective from over there. He said that an Iraqi civilian told him that they call Marines "angels of death." In other words, when a Marine showed up to fight the enemy, God must have decided that it was time for the foe to die. The enemies are left, I assume, to make the fight costly so our nation decides that the warfare is not worth the sacrifice. Perhaps our enemies hope that political

division here or wars on other fronts will keep the Marines away. We know that the mission of our military expanded to include combating terrorism by winning the hearts of the people in other nations. Yet obviously there are certain lines that our country will not allow our enemies to cross without making them face our military's deadly force.

As you know, we fight in a spiritual warfare against spiritual enemies as soldiers of Jesus Christ. I believe that Satan's main tactic is preventive in nature. He creates distraction to divert God's people from the battle. To war against Christ's Commission, the evil one only has to prevent us from showing up.

I believe that a primary reason so many factors add up to keep African Americans off of the missions field is Satan's fear of a worldwide united witness of the Body of Christ that includes you. I believe he specifically targets African-American men for spiritual attack for the same reasons they should be targeted for empowerment and mobilization by Christians for missions. Include black men in the mix and the Church's body will become whole and more deadly in spiritual warfare. As the Holy Spirit empowers this unity, we will war as one spiritual angel of death against the forces of evil. Our unity means God is about to destroy the works of darkness.

Step up and lead us in fulfilling Christ's sacred mission as our spiritual vanguard, having received the Holy Spirit's grace to pioneer. Some of the worst enemies of His Gospel used this concept to attempt political and social revolutions. Yet in its purest meaning, Christ's Apostles and missionaries throughout the centuries have served as true spiritual vanguards to mobilize laborers for His harvest of souls. Unify and transform us for missions by leading the fiercest charge into spiritual world warfare as vanguards of a spiritual revolution.

### **Lead from the Front and Call More to Follow**

Always remember that the primary role of the spiritual vanguard is to create motion. Pioneering missionaries advance ahead of others, often at great personal risk, praying for and calling on others to follow. With faith in Christ's promises, create opportunities for service while mobilizing more laborers to share in the same risks and sacrifices that you endure. As a vanguard, you must mobilize others into battle to fulfill your own calling. Learn and embrace the eternal value of making sacrifices to pioneer like Jim Elliot. I re-emphasize what he wrote in his diary: He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.

I challenge you to accept this high call as Christ's spiritual vanguard to fulfill His purposes for your life. Vanguard leadership remains God's method of Christian missions mobilization. The Apostle Paul certainly took his stand as Christ's vanguard. Christ mobilized His people through Paul, and still mobilizes through Paul's epistles, to fulfill His Great Commission worldwide.

Paul, as I said, used military terminology to describe Christ's Gospel mission and the spiritual warfare it attracts. Called to suffer much for Jesus and His Gospel's sake, Paul understood his high calling and willingly put himself at the center of Christ's spiritual revolution. Paul advanced God's army for Christ's mission from the front line. He mobilized at the forefront and endured extreme hardships. He pioneered as an elite soldier of Christ with the highest

conviction, and he made the ultimate sacrifice. He defended the faith, as did those who followed him into spiritual battle. When Christ mobilized his disciples to the mass action of fulfilling the eternal purpose of God, He placed the Paul on the cutting edge of the Great Commission. Paul pioneered by planting churches and pulling them into motion after him.

For 200 years, white believers controlled the resources and power to lead the modern missions movement. Now, as the world's population explodes, I conclude that our white vanguards must lead better. I regretfully conclude that some have failed in missions with prideful feelings of racial superiority. We left many of our best freedom fighters behind in the past, incorrectly assuming that we could advance without our African-American fellow missionary soldiers.

I remain confident that our Lord has prepared African Americans as our present-day spiritual vanguards. We depend upon you to mobilize us—and all races must mobilize together or fail to mobilize at all. My father saw your advantages for missions over a half century ago. Free at last, you are entrusted by God with the high calling of leading us all into the battle. Place yourself at the center of this revolutionary movement and you will never regret the suffering it will require. Fail to muster, and you will prove right those who doubt you and His Word. Liberate us through your leadership. We must obey Christ's mission together, but you must take the initiative to lead! This highest entitlement empowers African Americans who spiritually arm themselves as vanguards of world missions. You may now lead all of God's people into spiritual battle for Christ's glory and through His powerful Gospel.

### **Bring an Uprising Not a Reformation**

Although an international Christian coalition that exists to mobilize people for world evangelism calls for a reformation,<sup>3</sup> I challenge you lead with much greater spiritual activism than that. I believe reform falls short of the radical changes in church structures, prejudices, and missions systems required to mobilize African Americans. In your spiritual leadership, choose between spearheading a new spiritual reformation or a spiritual uprising's revolution.

In the 16th Century, for example, Martin Luther arose like a potential spiritual vanguard of faith in the Protestant Reformation. While rejecting the Pope's authority, Luther's writings inadvertently inspired an uprising among peasants wanting basic rights. Luther abandoned these peasants instead, saying that baptism only freed the soul, not the body or property.<sup>4</sup> With other reformers, the Protestant church leader preserved the class structures and prejudices from the Medieval Roman Catholic system. These prejudices and power struggles laid the ground work for white church leaders to eventually allow the cruelest form of slave trading by Britain.<sup>5</sup> Also, Christian reformers' prejudices laid the groundwork for cruel spiritual slavery as well. The links in the chain that still spiritually shackles American Christians include white feelings of racial superiority, race and class segregation, the resulting racial divides, rejection of the Bible and the Gospel as oppressive white doctrine, and finally, the persistent demobilization of African Americans for world missions.

As I explained before, just as the Reformers in the 16th Century left intact structures that abandoned the lower class to social peasantry, the prejudice in these structures did worse. Through the resulting African slave trade, these structures abandoned people of African descent to the status of spiritual peasantry without true discipleship and the Great Commission's rights. White Christians came to the New World to obtain religious freedom from this spiritual oppression. White Christians arose through the social and spiritual freedoms afforded by the Revolutionary War to become Christ's ambassadors to the world. In contrast, African Americans came here socially and spiritually exploited. Until your generation, African Americans had not obtained the social equality and spiritual freedom to be Christ's world ambassadors.

Why would we want to reform missions under the same demobilizing prejudice and power issues which the first Protestant reformation left intact and passed down to us to all? Why would we think working within our present Christian structures will suddenly mobilize African Americans for missions if they have failed to do so for the past 200 years of our modern missions movement? You possess more opportunity, in my opinion, to mobilize African Americans through spiritual revolution not reformation. Reformation may come with this spiritual revolution. But five centuries without progress suggest that true reformation will not come without it.

Do we have time to reform status quo church and ministry missions systems? Christ's impending Second Coming and the world's exploding population compel us to quickly set in motion a unified witness from America. To create this motion requires mobilizing together people of African descent, Hispanics, Asians, whites, and whomever else from every race, nation, and socioeconomic class in the world.

We can wait no longer to reform the structures demobilizing African Americans so they may take their rightful place in the mix. Rapid change, which characterizes a revolution, must occur to change missions structures through your vanguard leadership. In my opinion, the level of activism necessary to change centuries of racialized and power-based Christian structures requires a more decisive move than just working within existing systems.

How Christians bring about change has been inconsistently debated since the Great Reformation. Should Christians work from within a system, or leave and replace it? In the 16th century, Martin Luther, for example, inconsistently defied the authority of the Roman Catholic Church with the aid of the ruling class in Germany. Is this not similar to American colonialists rebelling against British authority? They refused to submit to the King of England to obtain their God-given equality and rights as stated in our Declaration of Independence.

In my marketing management class, I learned about pioneering among structural limitations when my professor gave a real-life assignment. Dividing the class into groups, he required each to develop a marketing strategy for a self-storage company in Virginia Beach. Since the city prohibited residents from parking boats at their homes, our group quickly jumped to the conclusion that the storage company should target the many boat owners in the area. When I called the business owner to test our concept, he told me gruffly that all of his storage units had

small doors and no boats could fit through them. Unfortunately, the owner had failed to research and design his strategic marketing plan before building his units and now suffered for it. His structural limitation made the business flounder in an area with a great demand for storage. Our group tried to develop other creative ideas, but they did not impress our professor. He gave me a “B” in the class, a low grade in graduate school. One of my classmates boasted that he had received an “A.” When I asked about his recommendation to the self-storage company, he responded with unbridled optimism that he had proposed targeting boat owners who needed to store their boats. Neither his group nor the professor bothered to check out the structural limitations that made their proposal ineffective in the real world. I wonder what the grumpy self-storage owner said when he received this useless recommendation from our teacher.

Will God lead you to pioneer new structures and strategically design your mobilization? Or will you creatively consult existing ministries that are demobilized by structural limitations? Perhaps you may lead a combination of both. Either way, do not let unbridled classroom optimism sway you before investigating if existing structures limit your real-world uprising. Regardless of whether God keeps you in the system or gives the wisdom to replace it, I challenge you to become a spiritual activist, rather than just a social activist. Again, the debate goes on today about whether Christian social activists should work within unjust systems or go outside these systems to effect change. I transfer the issue of how to bring about change from social activism to the realm of spiritual activism. In spiritual activism we “know no man after the flesh” but as new creations in Christ who appoints us to the status of being His ambassadors to all nations. Always keep in mind that you are free to pioneer new structures.

### **Mobilize in the Campus and Communities**

I believe you must quickly move beyond existing American Christian racialized power structures to mobilize your revolution at the grassroots levels in your campus or communities. As vanguards of Christ’s mission, avoid becoming codependent and enabling to the present unfruitful Christian structures. Choose those that break Christian missions systems’ racial and class discrimination. Position yourself outside of the present power struggles between white and black Christians. Start smaller grassroots churches and ministries designed for mobilization of laborers without discrimination. Refocus on the potential of unchurched, future believers for spiritual revolution, if necessary, to move outside of the structural boxes that would demobilize you. Will you win the spiritual rights of true discipleship by stepping forward to obey Christ’s Great Commission?

In the next chapter, I will explain the secret to empowering others with the same missions privileges that will cause a true uprising of faith. I will challenge you to arise with a transforming ambition for raising up leaders at home and abroad. Empower them with authority to govern churches and build facilities as you leave on your quest to deploy others to do the same and worldwide.

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## **Chapter 7**

### **Lead by Empowering**

#### *A Vanguard Makes Mobilizing the Ambition*

Pioneer by empowering others instead of seeking to gain power and titles of your own. Many view leadership as pursuing personal ambition and acquiring titles rather than mobilizing others as Christ's vanguard. Consider this example. An elementary school teacher who is a Urban Discovery Ministries' Board member accepted Christ as a high school student in our outreach. I enjoyed visiting with her father during her teen years and probably impressed him somehow. Before he passed away and whenever we talked, he asked me if I had acquired my "own" church yet. Meant as a compliment from his understanding of how some pastors operate, he assumed I desired my own large church in a big building. Although I tried to explain that my missionary role focused on empowering other leaders to govern ministries, her father could not comprehend my objective. Whenever I replied that I had not come into possession of a church, he thought it necessary to console and encourage me. Her father assured me each time that I would eventually receive a large, prestigious church. In contrast, my leadership objectives focus on pioneering missionary structures that empower others to lead.

This chapter elevates the vanguard leader's role of mobilizing missionaries through empowerment instead of hungering for status, buildings, or titles. The missionary objective of leading through empowerment exists well outside of widespread leadership structures. Would President Barack Obama ever announce that his mission in Afghanistan is so crucial that he is leaving office to move, with his family, to serve there? What if he left his presidential authority to other leaders so he could equip new leaders in Afghanistan to govern well? Would coach Doc Rivers leave the NBA to train children in China to play like his son? Could you picture your college president resigning her or his position to work in your campus ministry? Would you give up the chance to hold a paid church leadership position in the United States to go overseas and equip leaders to govern churches there?

All of these situations would require sacrificing hard-earned rights, status, and the power, which African Americans have long been denied. Almost the whole world would advise black leaders to remain in offices gained. Most black church structures recommend remaining in their positions of power to bring change rather than serve as missionaries who empower others to lead. How can you mobilize as a vanguard leader from the front of a movement if you pursue titles and governing positions at home? How will you pull others into the missions field behind you if you remain stationary in the States?

Yet, the past struggle to govern at home will demobilize you for missions until you surrender this right to hold titled positions at home. Will you, instead, leave the right to rule behind to other capable leaders and go overseas under Christ's authority? Will you sacrificially empower leaders in other countries to govern their own ministries?

Vanguards revolutionize ministry ambitions by empowering others rather than trying to selfishly hoard the authority to govern. Christ's Commission, in effect, asks Christian leaders to



voluntarily surrender their privileges to govern in their churches. Missionaries, for the Gospel's sake, leave the power of church government to others at home. They travel overseas to equip and empower leaders in other countries to govern their churches there. Church systems based on ambition to govern at home, with the power and more certain income it brings, demobilize African Americans from service in world missions.

We call Christ's last command the Great Commission for a reason. A commission means someone gives power and authority to another to complete a task. Our Lord's Commission is great because He first received from the Father all authority in heaven and earth. He delegates power to you to complete His mission of making disciples of all nations. Also, he backs your authority to accomplish this task with His presence.

### **Make Empowerment Your Ambition**

This is a true saying: If a man desires the office of a bishop, he desires a good work (1 Timothy 3:1). But reject the assumption that wielding power in such an office must be the aim and ceiling for your ambition. Christ's authority given by His Commission provides greater power and privilege. You may win future bishops for Him worldwide, empower them through discipleship, and appoint them as servant-leaders. I challenge you to make becoming a spiritually powerful global bishop-maker your highest ambition.

It is well-known that generations of African-American leaders struggled against white discrimination to win or preserve the right to govern in politics and churches. With some exceptions, white Christians denied African Americans the authority to lead in white-controlled churches and denominations. This discrimination instigated the racial divide between white and black churches and missions agencies. This divide created systemic demobilizing issues for African Americans. Be careful to recognize demobilizing structures that are founded on ambitions to govern churches at home, which may detour you from fulfilling Christ's Commission.

In contrast to the ambition to govern, Ephesians 4:11 makes no mention of race, authority, or power when describing Christ-given leadership in the Church:

And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.

He gives gifted men, without race-preferences, to equip believers for works of service. Understanding this passage provides crucial insights into how local churches should also mobilize missions leaders. It also attracts much controversy. Verse 11 either mobilizes or demobilizes leaders for world missions depending on how it is applied. As probably anticipated, I conclude that many African-American churches demobilize young leaders by interpreting this Bible verse to make governing and titles their primary ambitions.

Generally speaking, Christians debate between two interpretations of Ephesians 4:11 along the lines of these two questions:

1. Does this verse describe four kinds of gifted leaders and their roles for equipping believers, or
2. Does this verse present a hierarchy of offices, having titles, in which gifted leaders govern churches and denominations to equip believers?

Without jumping very far into this debate, I will discuss first how this second interpretation of Ephesians 4:11 creates church structures that can demobilize black church leaders so they do not purposefully fulfill Christ's Great Commission.

Let me first affirm the importance of African-American leadership for governing churches and in missions. I am calling for more African-American Christian leaders to step up – to the point of becoming vanguards of Christ's mission. Yet, I am also addressing the reasons why black church structures fail to send leaders to the missions field.

### **Reasons Traditional Church Structures Demobilize**

I believe that white Christians started a demobilizing problem for African Americans by racially discriminating against black Christian leaders throughout our country's history. African Americans achieved the right to govern in the separate "black church." White politicians, white church leaders, and white missionaries historically denied people of African descent the right to govern anywhere else.

Much of the black-white racial divide that remains today in ministries resulted from the lack of opportunity for African Americans to govern in churches controlled by whites after slavery ended. Whereas in Ephesians 4:11 Jesus gives gifted biblical leadership to the Church without regard to race, white and black churches maintain the racial discrimination that whites originally implemented and enforced.

African-Americans and African churches answered white Christian discrimination with black Christian discrimination. "Black Power" thinking increased this divide. African Americans and African church leaders replaced white leaders with black leaders in their churches, colleges, missions societies, and ministries – wherever black Christians were being governed.

The right to govern became one of the greatest causes of the African-American struggle for equality. Black Power's influence on many African-American church leaders during this struggle, in effect, undermined Ephesians 4:11's teaching that recognized Christ-given gifted leaders without regard to race.

So now our racially discriminating Christian churches and missions organizations come from separated white-governed systems and black-governed systems. We call these two-tiered divided systems "the white church" and "the black church." As you know, this division contradicts the Bible's teaching that we all are baptized into one spiritual body by one Spirit. Our racially divided systems worry about governance power, but obviously remain spiritually powerless to evangelize the world effectively.

Consider now the African American side of the racial divide. When applying Ephesians 4:11, the black struggle for the right to govern somehow creates structures that conflict with Christ's mandate to surrender that right and go to all nations. Christ's Commission, I repeat for emphasis, requires some leaders to leave church governance to other gifted ones and go overseas to equip Christ-given leaders in other countries.

Missions, done Biblically, empower leaders in other countries with the authority to govern their own churches. Missionaries make disciples under Christ's authority and through the power of His presence, but they give away to others the right to govern churches.

African-American students deserve to know that black churches generally use Ephesians 4:11 to create a hierarchy of church offices. Like whites, many racially discriminate when appointing leaders for these offices. In addition, ambition to govern in these offices demobilizes many for the Great Commission. Many African-American Christian leaders focus on filling leadership offices for the purpose of ruling their churches. These offices usually come with salaries and prestige.

Popular church or denominational offices today include apostles, bishops, pastors, ministers, elders, deacons, armor bearers, prophets, evangelists, missionaries, and teachers. I listed them in the usual hierarchical order of authority that churches might utilize, depending on their denominations' policies. Never mind that some appoint leaders to all of these offices instead of the four possibilities of Ephesians 4:11.

As a vanguard of Christ's Commission, you should be concerned that many African-American churches make filling these offices their priority rather than mobilizing leaders for world missions. The loss of missions leadership comes about, in my opinion, when potential leaders aim only to rule, and perhaps to become employed, in these offices.

With their focus on home ministries, Christ-given leaders back up in these churches' systems with nowhere left to lead. Often, then, potential leaders establish new churches to govern, instead of aiming to serve overseas. In turn, they lose Christ's mandate for the world in their struggle to govern locally. They establish many churches in the U.S., but African-American church-planting missionaries remain absent overseas.

Reject the prosperity theology embraced by more African-American church leaders today. Preaching prosperity theology usually fuels more rapid church growth among people seeking financial blessings by giving their tithes. This teaching creates opportunities for prospective church leaders to move up the hierarchy of offices with increased authority and financial bases.

Emphasizing selfish materialism and holding leaders at home allows prosperity theology to move African Americans in the opposite direction of Christ's mandate to sacrificially disciple all nations. Leaders teaching prosperity theology financially benefit and increase their abilities to govern. They receive financial and political benefits by preaching prosperity theology while filling paid church offices.

Regardless of how Ephesians 4:11 is used, 4:12 clearly gives the purpose of Christ-given leadership:

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ

Either as leadership roles or offices, whichever interpretation one chooses for this verse, Christ gives them the responsibility to build up the Body of Christ by equipping members for works of service. So Christ gives gifted leaders to equip and mobilize saints – not to rule over them.

Each one of these kinds of leaders equips believers under the premise that all members are sent on Christ's global mission. How would an apostle not send, when the word, apostle, means "a sent one?" How can prophets proclaim the word and will of Christ without proclaiming His Commission? How could evangelists build up the Body to do the work of evangelism without invoking Christ's Great Commission? How could a pastor shepherd and teach disciples to follow Christ in obedience without exhorting them to obey His last great command? How could these gifted leaders equip the Body of Christ for works of service without mobilizing laborers to make disciples of the nations?

Leadership issues become complicated on your campus because some students already have clergy status at traditional churches. Resist the temptation to focus on titles and authoritarian hierarchies in your student-led campus ministries, which can easily undermine your mobilizing impact on campus. I heard about a campus ministry at a historical black university that self-destructed this way.

### **Value Unchurched Unbelievers**

Millions of potential laborers for Christ exist who have not been disoriented by present church and ministry structures because they come with little or no church backgrounds. Although the "unchurched" do not know Christ yet, have never experienced discipleship, or have no knowledge of His Great Commission, their advantage comes from their disconnection from demobilizing structures. Ironically, the unbelieving unchurched possess potential as missionaries because they remain free from the structures that would demobilize them after their conversions. Those whom the church systems overlook may become the soldiers for your spiritual revolution once they accept Christ through your witness.

No one represents the unchurched or speaks on their behalf. So no one makes them stop and debate racial and power issues. Set new believers into motion through intense discipleship and new churches outside of existing systems.

I challenge you to establish new churches and ministries with built-in structures that start mobilizing people from the time of their conversions. Disciple and equip them with transformative leadership that sends them as vanguards of Christ's Commission so they choose structures for their lives and ministries that make discipleship of all nations their priority. Then your revolution will come. The uprising starts with transforming and empowering one disciple at a time, but God's plan of evangelism grows exponentially in mobilizing structures.

## **Value the Potential in People from Low-Income Backgrounds**

In your vanguard leadership, make mobilizing families from low-income backgrounds a high priority. Since the beginning of modern missions more than 250 years ago, black and white Christians put pressure on the black middle class to perform like messiahs to uplift the black lower class and save Africa. This limited uplift ideology enabled whites to maintain segregated *status quo* missions structures. Uplift gave them reasons to conclude that few African Americans are qualified for missionary service. They could also blame blacks for their absence in missions by expecting them to mobilize separately.

Since most white people do not notice much difference between the black middle and “lower” classes, they often do not recognize how class structures impact black mobilization. For example, whites might expect black middle-class missionaries to relate well with black people of lower socio-economic classes only because they have the same skin color. Also, they fail to notice if middle-class African Americans have negative attitudes about people with low incomes of other races, like international immigrants or whites.

Broadly speaking, most black and white Christians do not see potential in the black lower class to serve as missionaries. This perspective means that African Americans with low income backgrounds are not being effectively disciplined because almost no one challenges them to fulfill Christ’s global mission. In addition, since whites tend to negatively stereotype blacks as a group, most see little missions potential in middle-class African Americans as well.

Find ways to empower people from low-income backgrounds with Bible and discipleship training without requiring them to acquire middle-class status and values. I will go out on a limb to say that Lecrae was feeling this need in his song, *Beautiful Feet*:

... but then he gets saved and wanna preach Christ they make him change his whole culture and whole way of life/ he gotta get him a bachelor’s wear a suit and tie/ go to seminary/ by then all of his boys will die/ Jesus came to invade culture outta Nazareth and used a couple fisherman who people saw as hazardous/ the feet are beautiful if only they’d go/ if ain’t nobody in ‘hood preaching how will they know?/ Eric is better used taught trues in his context/ somebody please plant a church in his projects.<sup>1</sup>

Your vanguard leadership role of mobilizing missionaries through empowerment will require a life of faith and sacrifice. Yet, Jesus does not measure vanguard greatness by how highly a leader rises in office or the size of his church building. Instead, your vanguard’s honor will come when the masses mobilize, the uprising spreads, and the leaders you pulled up magnify Christ’s great fame worldwide. Fulfill your missionary objective through empowerment and you will never regret moving beyond traditional leadership structures. May your leadership legacy bring you high, eternal status with God for empowering those who spread the Gospel of salvation to thousands around the globe. The next chapter challenges you to take aim at the right targets and mobilize this missions force strategically.

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## **Chapter 8**

### **Bring It Strategically**

#### *A Vanguard Aims in the Right Direction*

Dedicate yourself to prepare for vanguard leadership's responsibility. For example, this chapter challenges you to step up *strategically* when you step up to obey Christ's Commission. Make declaring God's glory to the nations your target. Align everything in your life with the mission of aiming your plans at this one purpose. Set your life on the path that obeys Christ's mandate and run hard for Him until the job is done. In this chapter, I challenge you to make the following strategic commitments to our Lord: Resolve to really know Jesus, to fellowship with Him in prayer, to pray about your future spouse, to pray in many ways, and to make His character your own.

#### **Resolve to Really Know the Great Commissioner**

The world's greatest need is to know that Jesus reigns.<sup>1</sup> To make Him known, you must know Him for yourself and let Him reign in your own heart, life, and plans. Consider my testimony about introducing a college student to Christ to better understand what I mean.

I planned to attend a big high school boys basketball game last season with many of our friends. Then, a parent of a girl I knew from AAU basketball emailed to invite me to her game. I sensed that God wanted me to go to her game, perhaps to share the Gospel with this parent somehow. When I sat in the bleachers next to her parents, they basically ignored me. So I spent the first half of the game sitting alone and praying, "Lord, I know that I am here for a reason, but what is it? I will sit here available for whatever you want me to do."

During half-time, I went to the foyer and talked with a coach. A college student, whom I had known since he was in middle school, began talking to me. He informed me of his recent transfer to Norfolk State University. Also, he shared with me how he had recently made a commitment at church to follow Christ at his church. This college student said, "Coach Mike, I need someone to teach me the Bible. I can't understand what it's saying." I knew immediately why the Lord had guided me to this game. With others, I had been praying for an opportunity to start a ministry on his campus. I offered to teach him, and we arranged to meet at the NSU library. After I explained John 3:16 in detail, he put His faith in Christ. A few months later, while giving his testimony at a college retreat, he pegged our library discussion as the moment he came to know Christ for sure.

This college student invited friends to study the Bible with us in his dormitory. I enjoyed the honor of explaining their wonderful potential in fulfilling His world mandate.

I realized from the start of our meeting that he genuinely desired to follow Christ, but no one had clearly explained the Gospel to him. He went up to the front of the church during an "invitation," but did not know how to begin a relationship with Jesus.

Many students know that Jesus died for our sins. However, they do not fully understand the meaning of His sacrifice. Here is a short explanation: We come into this world spiritually dead

and separated from God because of sin and its consequences. God is holy and must punish sin. Yet, in love, the Father sent Jesus to make it possible to give you spiritual life and bring you into a lasting relationship with Him.

As a vanguard leader, you must believe that Jesus is God who came in the flesh to pay the punishment of death for your sins. He died in your place to satisfy God's holiness. In justice, God enforces the consequence that the punishment for sin is death. Jesus bore our sin on His body to pay that punishment. Being of infinite worth, Christ's death satisfied God's justice so that His mercy could be freely given to us.

When Jesus completed this work, the Father raised Him from the dead. He exalts Jesus and gives eternal life as a free gift to everyone who believes in Him. True belief means accepting that Jesus is God, turning from sin, and giving Him control of one's life. To receive the gift of eternal life, one must believe that Jesus is one's Savior who died on the cross, and rose again, as a substitute to pay the punishment for one's sins. Trusting in Him and His work on the cross is God's only way to receive forgiveness and eternal life. This means trusting in Christ's payment for sin of death on the cross and not on one's performance of religious deeds or rituals to become a true child of God. He offers forgiveness and acceptance by grace, which is a free blessing from God that cannot be earned and is not deserved.

If this way of believing in Jesus to receive forgiveness, a new relationship with God, and eternal life is new to you, I encourage you to put your trust in Him as you consider this summary: Jesus gave His life for you. Now He wants you to believe that He is your risen God, Savior, and King--and to give your life to Him. My father explained John 3:16\* to me and invited me to express in a prayer my committed faith in Jesus Christ and to thank Him for dying on the cross as a substitute for me. I encourage you to make the same personal commitment to give Him control of your life.

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\*I explain this verse in detail on YouTube at: [John 3:16 Diagram Part 1 and Part 2](#)

When you opened your heart and received Him, Christ indwelt you through the Holy Spirit and made, and still makes, your spirit alive as His new creation. Your union with Christ comes with a new status of being righteous before God, and the Holy Spirit works in you to cleanse and set you apart from sin. As I said before, when you became a new creation in Christ and His ambassador, your new relationship with Him gave you the possibility of receiving many privileges through God's grace. Foremost among them is the freedom to follow Christ as His obedient disciple. Under His Great Commission, you received the right to declare God's glory to the nations. Through His indwelling Spirit and your glad obedience, you may effectively declare to the world that Jesus reigns. As His vanguard, know and proclaim Jesus as Savior, King, and Great Commissioner.

**Resolve to Get a Prayer Life**



Find a disciple-maker to show you how to fellowship with God in prayer like Jesus demonstrated out loud before His followers in John 17. Getting a prayer life is a vital part of discipleship.

During my childhood, God used family members to impress upon me the desire and need to pray. I remember my father leading prayer meetings at church and camp, my mother's prayers at bedtime, and my pioneer missionary grandmother rising before dawn to pray. They instilled in me the importance of prayer. When I entered the ministry, I resolved to pray like them. After my grandmother lost consciousness in her 90s, I read to her from the Psalms. Although unresponsive to all else, she leaned toward me as I read, like she knew the scriptures and could respond spiritually somehow. Following her example, I rise each day before dawn to spend time with the Lord and begin by praying through a psalm.

### **Pray About a Spouse**

Speaking of my grandmother, if you need to marry, make sure that your spouse brings to your union the same fire for Christ's Commission that burns in your heart. My grandmother went to Africa engaged to a man who decided not to stay. She broke off the engagement, but met my grandfather in Africa where they married and served together. Your spouse's commitment will determine your involvement level in missions.

If you must marry, then marry up spiritually—meaning, ask God for a spouse who brings even hotter passion than you for Christ and His Commission. Go on a short-term missions trip and see how well you serve and complement each other in overseas ministry. Find someone who will pray hard with you for guidance. Seek someone, like my grandmother, who rises early to intercede for the world, so you can step up and lead together as one.

Make obeying Christ's Commission your standard for choosing a spouse before you become emotionally attached. Before you fall in love, strategically design a mobilizing relationship to land on. Pray now about issues related to finding a missions-minded spouse prior to meeting someone interesting.

### **Pray in Many Ways**

Leaders at the Tabernacle Church taught me to pray in different ways and venues when I was your age. I learned that prayer is fellowship with God and how to pray using Scripture. They showed me different kinds of prayer like worship, praise, confession, conversation, and concerts of prayer. We prayed in Sunday school, worship services, conferences, small groups, personal devotions, half-days of prayer, evangelistic crusades, and with fasting. Different groups met regularly to pray for missionaries during early morning, afternoon and evening meetings.

Church-planting trained me to listen in prayer. I learned to meditate on Scripture, wait on God's guidance, and ask Him to show me what to pray. I began seeking His direction before setting my schedule, compiling a "do list," organizing ministries, leading small groups, teaching, preaching, evangelizing, discipling, counseling, and fundraising. Spiritual warfare made listening in prayer a critical part of ministry. Being under stress from this warfare taught me

prayer's principle of self-surrender. Expressing complete dependence upon God's grace, I came to appreciate the great privilege of invoking Jesus' name. Prayer walking in neighborhoods also became an important strategy in our church planting.

Early on, spiritual warfare's intensity convinced me that victory requires the prayer of many, more than mine alone. You will find the fiercest spiritual attacks coming at you to prevent discipleship and any effort to move out and fulfill Christ's Commission. Leading at the front puts you at the tip of this spiritual warfare spear, but your discipleship of others increases the number of prayer warriors in the mix. As you equip an army of prayer warriors, pray for and seek a strong team of prayer partners to intercede for you.

Faithful prayer warriors who intercede for us are our best ministry resources. Some wait for my weekly emailed prayer requests. Some greet me by asking me specific details from them. I can tell when people are praying. When one of my daughters needed a heart procedure, I sent word to Jamaican churches because I knew how hard they would pray. On the day of this procedure, one of our prayer partners in Norfolk spent the day praying silently in the waiting room, explaining that the Lord had led her to do so. I keep on the lookout for more praying saints like her who will call down heaven for us.

Always remember to enlist and empower prayer warriors. Mobilize them to stand with you in spiritual battle and with those who will follow you to foreign lands. These warriors serve Christ through prayer as your partners. They share in your vanguard ministry and its reward by engaging in spiritual warfare with you. Communicate often with them to encourage their faithful service.

Find a prayer warrior who mobilizes others as a disciple-maker to equip you as a prayer soldier yourself. Learn how to organize your personal prayer each day by "journaling" to write out prayers and maintain a daily prayer list. Also, learn how to constantly stay connected with Christ so your union with Him results in fruitful obedience through prayer as described in John 15.

When my discipleship started and while I was a college student, a missionary spoke at our church missions retreat on prayer. I asked him to explain how to pray so much when I could not think of requests to ask. He challenged me to start sharing the Gospel with people and predicted that I would find myself pleading with God for their souls. I began connecting with a neighbor in our apartment complex, which led to bringing him to church. I discovered quickly that the missionary was right. Obeying Christ's Commission will heighten your burden for people who need Christ. Prayer becomes vital to completing the task.

In addition, as a vanguard of an international movement, make [www.operationworld.org/today1](http://www.operationworld.org/today1) your Internet homepage. Use its Operation World daily guide as a reminder to pray for the nations when you go online.

Pass on this strategy to other students as well, praying hard for more Christian disciples to fulfill Christ's missions. As I said, Jesus entrusted you with the privilege to ask Him to thrust out laborers for His great spiritual harvest (Luke 10:2). Mobilize Christ's forces through your

fervent prayers. While you pray for God's people, ask Christ to powerfully send out African Americans around the world.

### **Resolve to Pursue Christ's Character**

To win spiritual warfare and make God's glory known, our Lord Jesus must fight for you, with you and through you. With His presence, victory is guaranteed. Without it, defeat is certain. Christ's presence, which He promised to disciples who obey His Commission, becomes absolutely vital to your success. But do not take Him for granted. Since, as a vanguard you lead the charge into spiritual warfare, make sure you qualify with the moral purity of a true disciple to claim this promise. Some make the deadly mistake of thinking their titles or how hard they offer praise will move God to fight for them. Your character becomes critical when mobilizing with Christ to lead into spiritual warfare.

In Psalms 15 and 24, David asks the Lord the same basic question: Who qualifies to remain in His presence? The Ark represented to Israel the assurance that the Lord's presence stayed with them. Remember how the Lord told Joshua to have priests carry the Ark of the Covenant with Israel's army while marching around Jericho? The Ark demonstrated God's presence with the nation's soldiers in battle.

Most likely, these psalms related in some way to when David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem with great celebration. The priests who carried the Ark, although free men, put themselves under strict purification regulations and procedures required to demonstrate God's great holiness.

David adds character standards to the outward cleansing requirements. Two generations before, the Lord refused to go out with Israel's army, which suffered a horrible defeat as a result. As priests, Eli's two sons had been disrespectful to God's holiness by exploiting worshippers who brought sacrifices to Him. When these priests carried the Ark into battle, the enemy killed them, captured the Ark, and carried it off (I Samuel 2:12-17; 3:13-14; 4:1-22).

So David declares in Psalms 15 and 24 that those who would abide in the Lord's presence must walk upright with clean hands, work righteously, and speak truth with pure hearts. Notice how His priests must live pure lifestyles to dwell in God's presence. Their walk, work, and speech must be blameless of both kinds of disqualifications—sins of commission and sins of omission. He gives other requirements that include personal integrity, just treatment of neighbors and the poor, and keeping one's word.

Christians who compromise their integrity or condone immorality disqualify themselves as both disciples and disciple makers. Regardless of titles, to fail to pursue God's holiness is to abandon the assigned task of teaching all nations to obey Christ. Our freedom cannot be misunderstood as a license to sin. Praise God for the many students in your generation who live godly lives and are determined to honor Him with purity.

Developing Christ-like character is not the same as trying to earn His favor or other people's respect. True godly character comes from knowing Christ and staying in fellowship with Him. I cannot stress enough that knowing Him intimately, maintaining a strong prayer life,

and pursuing godly character are important for all believers, whether they fulfill Christ's Commission in their backyard or overseas. Since a vanguard mobilizes God's people to pray, give, and go strategically on Christ's mission, invest time in meeting with your Commissioner to know Him well in order to make Him well-known. In Jesus' Commission, He promised to be with you. With consistent prayer, resolve to do all things through Christ who strengthens you. In the next chapter, I explain how our confidence in His strength applies specifically to the financial support that He gives through His people to sustain His mission (Philippians 4:13).

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## **Chapter 9**

### **Manage Money for Mission**

*A Vanguard Optimizes Financial Resources*

Strategically aim your financial ambitions at the objective of fulfilling Christ's Commission. Exercise your privilege and freedom as Christ's vanguard to pursue a standard of living that best mobilizes you and others. The Apostle Paul referred to this freedom when he declared, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). I struggled with seeking Christ's kingdom until I committed myself totally to completing His mission assignment.

In the seventh grade, I declared my determination to use my strength, smarts, hard work, thrift, and privilege to economically uplift myself from somewhere below the working class to the status of the upper class. Until I rededicated my life to Christ at the rural summer camp in North Carolina, I made this upward mobility objective my first priority. My college-educated parents had chosen a ministry path that put me somewhere below working-class status. I decided in the seventh grade that enough was enough.

As a child, I knew where I stood economically among my friends and classmates. I wore hand-me-down clothes given to me by families in our church. Other boys at school would ask me why my clothes looked worn. These clothes became a greater problem to me when our family moved to a more affluent neighborhood. By the grace of God, a grateful and generous couple sold their house to my parents as I entered the sixth grade. Located in a suburban middle class neighborhood, these friends intentionally offered their home at a below-market price. After moving, I began attending elementary school with middle- and upper-class students and became even more frustrated with my lower status. Living in this neighborhood brought with it the privilege of getting a good paper route. I went to work on my objective of becoming rich. My resolve increased as family members responded to my ambition with skepticism.

In gratitude, I report that my parents put a roof over my head, fed me quite well, and gave me use of the family car. Yet, from age 12 on, I worked and saved to pay for everything else on my own. I threw papers and washed dishes to earn money to pay for my clothes, gas, and car. I paid for my own dates, sports, and college education. My parents made too much money for me to qualify for college financial aid, but not enough to help pay my tuition.

I washed dishes and did maintenance work at a country club throughout college. This put my upper-class-status goal always before me as I worked overtime below my fellow working-class employees. When they gave me a hard time about my low position, I promised they would someday work for me. They expressed skepticism until I clocked out for the last time during my junior year to begin my college chemistry co-op position with a fertilizer company.

On the first day at my new job, my supervisor gave me a white hardhat that set me apart from the plant's working-class laborers who wore yellow ones. At that moment, I achieved management status. This progress increased my ambition to earn my M.B.A., run a chemical plant, and become its CEO. I strategically planned to join the upper class and the country club. I added an M.B.A. to my chemistry degree in the early 1980s as M.B.A. salaries went off the

charts. My family and friends congratulated me for seizing the opportunity and fulfilling my promise to rise to the upper class. Then, many of them thought that I had gone crazy when I returned from a black camp in North Carolina with a totally different career objective.

Instead of pursuing the American Dream, I strategically chose to place Kim and myself somewhere below the working class. I began trusting Christ to meet our financial needs and our church commissioned us as inner-city missionaries. By becoming faith missionaries, we strategically relied on the generosity of church people again. I had come full circle. Like my parents, I chose a ministry path that required setting my standard of living below what the job market might say I was worth. My spiritually privileged background prepared me for this change of focus. Yet, most missionaries must choose this same strategic option.

I praise God for this freedom and privilege to strategically set my standard of living. The Lord of the harvest gave faithful financial partners who joined us in fulfilling Christ's mission in the inner city by supporting Kim and me. God supplied all of our needs and blessed us in many others ways as well.

The purpose of this chapter is to challenge you to strategically choose a standard of living that will propel your vanguard career. Also, I explain the Biblical principle of how God uses partnerships between missionaries, churches, and individuals to support His work. I present a theory on why partnerships between missionaries and black churches are difficult to establish. In addition, I give practical advice to help prepare you financially for vanguard missions leadership.

### **Bank on Jesus' Reign**

As you accept the challenge to choose a standard of living based on Biblical principles, the award winning movie Moneyball might help you understand funding issues in missions. Think like the general manager of the Oakland A's, portrayed by Brad Pitt in the movie. He radically changed Major League Baseball's traditional scouting system to find a way to win on a budget one-fourth the size of the New York Yankees' payroll. If you saw the movie, you know that Oakland's general manager hired a Harvard-trained economist to use statistical formulas to reduce costs. The economist's formulas enabled the manager to sign unlikely players who could get on base and win.

I wish we had a mathematical solution to compensate for the lack of financial support for African-American full-time missionaries by black- and white-governed churches. What you can bank on is that Jesus' reign is unstoppable and He is intensely zealous for mobilizing His missions forces.<sup>1</sup> He obligated Himself to meet your needs. Obviously, His word is "money." In His last recorded teaching before the cross, Jesus claimed the glory of a conqueror--for all time and eternity. Receive peace and victory to go forth through His presence and promises (John 16:33). In your vanguard leadership, transform traditional missions funding systems that may demobilize African Americans. Let nothing discourage you from your quest.

Several of my African-American colleagues in the ministry express frustration because black churches decline their requests for financial support. Black congregations that give to overseas missions remain so few in number that they usually keep a full slate of missionaries.

But African Americans have unprecedented resources to invest in Christ's Commission. Since 1980, black-led churches collected a reported \$490 billion in offerings.<sup>2</sup> Some researchers estimate the buying power of African Americans has reached \$1 trillion.<sup>3</sup> More research is needed about where black churches spend their money. Nevertheless, I will say that very few, obviously, invest in supporting long-term African-American international missionaries.

My theory about this lack of black church support for missions focuses on cultural sensitivity. In the past, privileged white Christians enjoyed economic freedom to choose "faith missions" as an option to receive financial support. In faith missions, they prayerfully made their missionary needs known and received funds from white churches and individuals. I conclude that most African-American church members cannot relate to this economic privilege and missions support strategy. They cannot culturally connect with the Biblical principle of missionaries seeking financial support from churches or individuals. Presenting one's need for missionary support, or giving financial support to missionaries, seems to cut across African-American middle class and working class convictions. Most hold that respectable blacks must work hard and sustain their own financial independence--especially independence from philanthropists. These uplift values bundle together, in many middle-class and working-class African Americans, as a sense of dignity that comes with financial self-sufficiency.

When college-educated missionaries seek financial support from black Christians, I think African Americans equate their requests with charity. This misconception contradicts African-American Christians' traditional perceptions of missions. In their cultural framework, black missionaries provide charity for the local needy. They would not seek "charity" for themselves in the form of missionary salaries and ministry expenses. To seek this perceived "charity" for one's personal missionary support would offend the cultural sensitivities of both the potential missionaries and the church people being asked to give it. Many working-class white Christians struggle with the same ambivalent feelings about raising support. Yet, whites have a 250-year background of missionaries presenting financial needs and receiving personal support for international missions. Raising financial support might look like begging to African Americans, but many white churches regard the same kind of requests as honorable missionary statesmanship.

Ask God for ways to intervene and solve this cultural predicament. With a small amount of their resources fulfilling Christ's Great Commission, African-American Christians must be quite immobilized. Prosperity preachers may make giving for missions more difficult by promoting self-interested giving. May God use you to proclaim truth and champion His missions-giving principles.

### **Champion Missions-Giving Principles**

Praise Jesus Christ for His promise to be with us. We know how Jesus' commitment to us includes providing our physical needs. Fulfilling Christ's mission will always be connected to your reliance on Him to provide money (Philippians 4:13,19). Missionaries, and those who financially support them, rely on God's grace to provide all they need to perform every good

work. Above all, champion the universal Biblical Principle of Partnership shown in Philippians 4:14-17:

Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church *communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving*, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. *Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.* (Emphasis added.)

The word “communicate” means to share and fellowship together with a partner as partakers of the same thing. The Apostle Paul commends the Philippian believers for their vital partnership in his ministry through their financial giving. This Biblical example of financial partnership shows how those who financially support the missionary also share in his or her work and reward. You bless those who support you because Christ puts to their account the same reward He gives you. You provide African Americans the great privilege to partner with you and invest in Christ’s mission.

Since society calls on African Americans to represent their race, you might use this phenomenon to explain partnerships in missions. Missionaries represent their partners at home as they serve overseas. Also, a vanguard mobilizes those who cannot physically go overseas by enlisting them as financial and prayer partners with the missionaries who go abroad. Your missionary financial support-need may provide the means to teach believers how to invest in Christ’s mission.

Additionally, missionaries represent the people whom they serve abroad on the missions field. They endeavor to connect them with partners back home. How will Americans mobilize to pray for individuals in other countries unless the missionaries report back asking for prayer? How will American believers know how to give and go unless missionaries convey the needs on the field? As a vanguard, you call on potential missionaries at home to join you on the missions field.

Therefore, your vanguard success becomes heightened by your need to establish financial partnerships in the States with those who give, pray, and go. Champion the following missions principles to show others how Jesus gave all believers the responsibility of sending and financially supporting missionaries:

Christ commanded that those who preach the Gospel become financially supported through the Gospel (1 Corinthians 9:14).

Those who support missionaries become their partners and share in their reward (Philippians 4:13-19).



Through the Apostle Paul's example and instructions, Scripture teaches us to give the Gospel free of charge to unbelievers (1 Corinthians 9:17-18; 3 John 7,8).

Discipleship teaches financial stewardship that includes supporting missionaries (Romans 10:15; 15:24).

Christians choose their standard of living to adopt simple lifestyles and invest in eternal treasures (Matthew 6:19-20; Colossians 3:1-5).

The Apostle Paul carefully raised money from local churches and taught financial stewardship (2 Corinthians 8,9; Romans 15:25-28).

For a time, the Apostle Paul made tents to support himself while on a mission (Acts 18:3).

Giving reflects the heart (Matthew 6:21).

Missionaries minister to those who send them as much as they minister to people overseas (Romans 1:11-13; 15:24).

As you change other missions structures to send out African Americans, teach these principles to recruit partners for them. Until now, only a few African-American-led churches have financially supported missionaries who serve overseas. More white-led evangelical churches support missionaries, but apparently do not understand the critical importance of sending out African Americans. Set the example by supporting missionaries yourself and champion this revolutionizing cause of establishing financial partnership for Christ and His Commission.

My missionary grandmother not only pioneered in Africa, she helped teach churches in the States how to support missions through faith-promise giving\* when she traveled here on furlough. May God empower you the same way to pioneer at home and abroad as you mobilize many laborers and their financial partners.

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\*Church members made annual "faith promises" to give a certain amount in extra missions offerings as God provided during the year. The amount privately promised was considered over and above regular church-supporting offerings. Usually, churches received the faith promises on cards collected at the end of a missions conference. Faith promises provided the basis for setting missions budgets and making commitments to missionaries for the year.

### **Manage Your Personal Finances Well**

Build a strong foundation for missions by managing your personal finances well. Choose a simple lifestyle so you may support other missionaries and remain free to go out yourself. Gain and protect your financial freedom by staying out of debt. Every financial advisor agrees with

this challenge to avoid debt. The Bible equates personal debt with slavery: “The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender” (Proverbs 22:7). African Americans should be especially sensitive to this warning. Dubois reported extensively on how racist whites in the South intentionally used “the slavery of debt” to control African Americans after the Civil War.<sup>4</sup> For freedom and for the Gospel’s sake, choose a lower standard of living while you retire student loans as quickly as possible. Pay off credit cards each month. If you find yourself paying interest on credit cards, cut them up. Avoid debt from big purchases that would hinder your progress while you strategically aim to fulfill Christ’s mission. Then you will be free to pursue Christ’s mission.

Learn financial stewardship before you leave college. Stewardship refers to the Biblical principle that all we have belongs to the Lord and we are His stewards over the money He gives. The Lord provides the health and strength to work and you should prayerfully budget and put aside offerings to worship Him in gratitude. By giving a portion back to Him, you declare His ownership over everything in your life. In college, I set a budget of giving 10 percent of my low dishwasher wages to Christ through my church offerings. Needing to pay tuition and other bills, usually I saved almost all my money and stayed broke after paying my bills. Giving faithfully during that time tested me. Yet, I gained valuable wisdom about financial stewardship that guided me when I entered the ministry several years later.

I pass on to you a financial insight for married couples that my mother-in-law shared with Kim and me, which blessed us greatly. When we married, she advised us to start out with a frugal lifestyle and lower standard of living. She encouraged us to live on just one of our incomes and save the other. Kim’s mother explained that we could always go up to a higher standard of living, but it is harder to go back to less. We followed her advice by living on hand-me-downs, mismatched used furniture, and pre-owned cars. As a result, we saved a larger down-payment for our house purchase. That made our mortgage payments low until we paid them off completely. Also, we could afford for Kim to stay home with our young children because we lived on just one income.

### **Usual Ways to Be Sent Out**

Usually, American missionaries, trusting God to meet their needs, go out to other countries while being supported in one of four ways: as “faith” missionaries raising support and going out through a sending agency, as missionaries sent and supported by church denominations’ missions boards, as missionaries sent and supported by particular churches, or as professionals gainfully employed in a foreign country.

An increasing number go out as faith missionaries who receive financial and prayer support from churches and individual financial partners. They are described as faith missionaries because they trust God to provide financial partners to support them. (Of course, all missionaries should go out by faith.)

### **Sending Agencies**

Usually, faith missionaries choose and apply to missions agencies. These agencies, in turn, evaluate the applicants and decide whether they are ready to serve in the field. Those accepted become missionary candidates who raise support and receive training as they prepare to move overseas.

The missions agencies receive donations and keep accounting records as tax-deductible organizations. They supervise and care for the candidates until they are commissioned as missionaries and move to the field. Once in the field, the missions agencies have different ways of providing support and accountability. Missionaries return to the States at certain intervals on what is often called a “furlough.” They spend time with relatives, meet family needs, minister to their financial partners, raise support, and recruit more missionaries, among other things. Some churches, or church networks, send missionaries and provide support and oversight like a missions agency. One of the best benefits of raising support is the vital prayer support that financial partners can provide.

Be prepared for the possibility of being the only African American around, or one of a few in a missions agency. You might work with second- or third-generation missions leaders who grew up overseas without knowing any African Americans. The media probably shapes their perceptions because they grew up outside of the States as missionary kids. Be prepared to offer grace to educate and introduce truth if they jump to stereotypical conclusions.

As a vanguard, handle these kinds of issues well for the sake of mobilizing others behind you. Pastor Drew told me how he broke through racial barriers by ensuring that he honored Christ with his reaction to racist comments. He took many opportunities to educate and responded respectfully. He kept the focus of the problem on the offenders’ insensitivity and not on his attitude or the way he rebuked them. He used God’s Word and pointed to Christ’s character when correcting, rebuking, and instructing for justice (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Also, an African-American pastor, who broke through racial divides with his ministry, told me how he would choose to “turn a deaf ear” to some insensitive comments and ideas in his relentless pursuit of mobilization objectives for subsequent generations. When leading as Christ’s persistent vanguard, his correction and breakthroughs demonstrated love and a commitment to racial reconciliation.

Just as important, find a missions agency that demonstrates long-range commitment to racial reconciliation and mobilization of African-American missionaries. Most missions agencies express the desire now to do so. Observe if an agency is organized and budgets resources to send African Americans. If offered token roles in the mission, keep looking for a sending agency with a greater vision of spiritual revolution in missions. Choose a sending agency whose priority is to create a movement to mobilize many people of African descent.

### **Other Options**

Another option is to go out under a church or through a denomination’s missions board whose related churches collectively support missionaries. In this process, you may not need to raise financial support.

Instead of these ways to go overseas, you may seek employment in a foreign country as a financial support option. Some countries hire Americans to teach English as a second language. Sports and music ministries also create opportunities overseas. Finding employment provides advantages where countries prohibit missionaries. Other countries, like Jamaica, for example, restrict Americans from holding jobs within their borders.

Since these four options have yet to extensively mobilize African Americans, perhaps Christ will give you the wisdom to create a new strategy. Our vision at UDM is to see churches established across America that mobilize and support people from our inner cities to fulfill the Great Commission at home and abroad.

### **Sell Out Young with No Regrets**

Trust Christ and completely sell out to Him. Give Him your life and obey His Commission. I guarantee that you will never regret it. Again, spreading the knowledge of God's glory through your obedience is priceless and worth giving Him everything. The missionary who recruited me for New Guinea called me out during his sermon from the pulpit one Sunday. He challenged me as a college student to sell out for Christ and promised that I would never regret the decision. His promise proved true, and I have no regrets. I am extremely grateful.

So I pass on this guarantee to you, and add that you will appreciate stepping out as Christ's vanguard at an early age. You can accomplish a lot in your early 20s that you will not have the energy to complete in your 30s and afterward. Everything I challenge you to become as an overseas pioneer missionary, I had the privilege of doing here in the inner city at your age. I look back with tremendous gratitude to Christ for thrusting me out while I was young.

In my early 20s, I became determined to serve in the inner city, no matter what. I concluded that inner-city ministry was, indeed, my personal assignment from Christ and His calling and grace was enough. If no one supported me, I would have taught in a downtown public school and gone anyway. Either way, I knew that I would give my life to fulfill Christ's Commission in the inner city.

The Lord then moved the Tabernacle Church to bring me on full-time but required me to raise half of my salary from outside the church. The pastor tried to prepare me for the disappointment of the fundraising challenge facing me. He told me of his doubt that anyone else would back me. He assumed no one would support me because I am white and because our ministry was sponsored by a church.

Two days later, someone outside of the church anonymously donated the entire amount I needed to raise that year. The next year, this pastor sent me out again to raise support under the same cloud of doubt as before. I went through the phone book calling on churches and learned a lot about prevailing racial attitudes. Yet God provided faithfully through those whom I had least expected to help me. That was more than three decades ago, and I remain forever grateful to God, the Tabernacle Church family, and the other partners who helped me step out and lead against all odds.

The Lord also blessed me over the years to pioneer alongside other vanguard leaders. We went “first over the wall” to set His people into motion on several fronts. On one such vanguard move, we partnered with Buff Bay Baptist Church in Jamaica to establish the GLOBE Center and mobilize people of African descent for world missions. This partnership still makes fulfilling Christ’s Commission a vital part of our church-planting discipleship here in the States.

Implement the Bible principles for establishing financial partnerships and begin your vanguard leadership while you are young. Strategically choose a standard of living that will propel your vanguard career and prepare you financially for vanguard missions leadership. Champion these mobilizing financial principles as an important part of your mobilization objectives.

In the next section’s six chapters, I break my silence about the history of this inferior discipleship to address why African Americans do not extensively participate in missions. Knowing this background will equip you to take on the serious responsibility of strategically mustering the divided masses as one unified missions force. Then, you will set us all finally free from spiritual bondage that fights against our souls and attempts to undermine the Holy Spirit’s powerful witness through us.

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## Part II: Breaking Silence

### Chapter 10

#### Balance Two Historical Viewpoints

##### *A Vanguard Understands the Background*

In one of his books, W. E. B. Dubois offers to bring white readers on a journey through Georgia's impoverished "Black Belt" after the Civil War.<sup>1</sup> Loving history, I decided to go along with him, if only through my imagination. Perhaps I would discover what he intended for white people to know. Obviously, Dubois wanted us to discover something in his writings. Intrigued by his book's title, *The Souls of Black Folk*, I wondered what kind of insights he might reveal, so I took up his offer. Traveling this train with Dubois, by way of the thoughtful words that he wrote generations ago, suited me fine. I appreciated his contributions to the historical context of my ministry. He created a platform for my challenges to you as we "get ready" for Christ's train "a-coming" where "you don't need no ticket to get on board."

Always the tactful host in his book, Dubois warned that if I dare go with him, I must ride willingly in the train's racially segregated Jim Crow rail car. He made sure I knew that he hated being treated like a second-class citizen, but he had no other choice of rail cars.

As if to alleviate any fear or hesitation, Dubois assured that whites travel comfortably and often in these segregated seats. He emphasized that no one would object to my passage in a Jim Crow car because the races mixed there. He said, in fact, that four white men sat there already. To reiterate his point about my safety in the Jim Crow car, Dubois showed a young white girl and her nurse who rode among us. In other words, I could feel confident that no African American meant harm, since a white woman and young girl felt comfortable among them.

Normally, I would want to be careful when coming around racist white people. I know from my own experiences that many racist whites hated other whites who "mingled" with African Americans or who helped them stand up for their rights.

Actually, I already knew about race-mixing in Jim Crow train cars. My mother told me about her experience riding in a segregated rail car when Grandmother brought her back from Africa. They arrived in New York on a freighter and traveled by train to South Carolina. Mom recalled how their rail car carried white and black passengers until it stopped at Washington, D.C. From there to South Carolina, the train company enforced segregation. Grandmother and Mom continued south in the 1945 version of a Jim Crow car.

Somewhat like the little white girl in Dubois's Jim Crow rail car, at age 12 my mother rode in one with my widowed grandmother. Impoverished for the Gospel's sake, they lacked the luxury of taking a nurse along like the little girl on Dubois's train. Also, overcrowding took all the seats in my grandmother's case and forced her to sit on her suitcase the entire way.

Picture a widowed mother sitting on her suitcase with her daughter in a crowded Jim Crow rail car. She mingled with African Americans as she traveled into the segregated South to leave behind this youngest child at a boarding school. She did all of this in order to return to Africa

alone and serve black people as a single missionary. What was in the souls of white missionary folk who chose to pioneer like her?

Dubois pointed out that my grandmother, mother, and I were still privileged passengers under Jim Crow. Like all white people back then, we could choose to ride in any seat available without racial discrimination. Whites could choose, of course, to ride in the whites-only rail car and sit anywhere in it. We could choose the Jim Crow car as well and sit on our suitcases if necessary.

My privileged background of free choices, which Dubois revealed using segregated train seats, exposed the hurt that Jim Crow caused African Americans and him. Frustration compelled Dubois to invite white men into his soul, and he laid bare the souls of other black folk along the way. In the South, these African Americans traveled in Jim Crow rail cars but suffered its oppression in everyday life. Analyzing Dubois as I read, I saw a black man whose heart agitated him to seek freedom. He detailed demeaning injustices that southern whites aimed at his manhood, rights, and dignity.

I flattered myself as I read Dubois's history. He wrote to northern white people and invited them onto his thundering train to witness the injustices he exposed. Perhaps he would have wanted me on that train with him as well, feeling and caring about Jim Crow-inflicted pain and suffering. His history lessons showed me, at the least, how privileged I was to have choices. I could decide whether, and to what extent, I go or I avoid. I could choose to see or to look away, to learn from or to ignore, to speak up or to remain silent, to mix or to segregate, and to love or to hate. I was privileged to decide how far I would roll with those who had no choice but to suffer down the line. History taught me and shaped my vision for obeying Christ today and in the future.

### **Balance Two Opposite Missions-History Views**

I must break my silence about how American Christians waste your great potential in missions as both black and white believers demobilize us with a race problem. The root causes of our division are spiritual and structural in nature. The race problem belongs to all members in Christ's body because we are one spiritual race in Him. Therefore, I challenge you to lead and mobilize God's people in a spiritual uprising that converts racial roadblocks into a worldwide witness of His power and glory. Dedicate yourself as Christ's vanguard to strategically and spiritually lead. With innovative spiritual-warfare tactics, courageously spearhead the breakthroughs in missions' demobilizing strongholds.

In another book, *The Study of Negro Problems*, Dubois insisted, "... if we would solve a problem, we must study it ... there is but one coward on earth, and that is a coward that dares not know."<sup>2</sup> I defy the foregone conclusion of some who say that your generation wants instant answers and will not think for itself. To become a vanguard, you must rise above low expectations and join the black "thinking class."<sup>3</sup> Certainly, a vanguard dares to study the background issues before taking on the serious responsibility of strategically mustering the divided masses as one unified missions force.

These next six chapters begin to explore the problematic reasons why African Americans do not extensively participate in missions. I call on you to study these pages. This chapter addresses the historical background to these demobilizing problems. It provides the historical basis for my challenges as well. Discover why you must bring a spiritual uprising that revolutionizes rather than just reforms our present Christian systems.

Of course some white and black theologians remain quite emotionally committed on two opposite, racially divisive, polar views of missions history. Past hurts preserve a racial wedge that keeps driving the older generations apart. Each side has hot button issues tied to these unresolved hurts. On separate paths, both voice their positions on missions boldly while ignoring hurt that divides them. Each side decides what position is right for you without letting you consider both sides of the historical issues involved.

Many traditional African American churches and HBCU leaders view past white missionaries as oppressive collaborators with racist, imperialistic colonialists. Most evangelical white Christians take the opposite view and praise missionaries as heroes of the true Gospel. Although historical research supports many claims on both sides, the balanced truth exists somewhere between these two extreme opinions. A few researchers seek to find this balance in spite of this debate. Your vanguard leadership can break the stalemate. In the next chapter, I explain a third view that may help you minister to people on both sides of this debate.

The stand traditional African-American ministry leaders have taken in the past few decades explains a lot about why almost no traditional black-led denominations send missionaries on long-term missionary assignments. Their position explains why few challenge students at historically black colleges and universities are aware of, and fulfill, Christ's Commission.

Many traditional African-American church, college, and seminary leaders believe that our existing world missions systems perpetrate white Christian attempts to subjugate peoples of color for the comfort of white people.<sup>4</sup> These leaders document, with historical integrity, their claims that white missionaries have mingled the Gospel of Jesus Christ during the past 200 years with imperialistic efforts to subject blacks and other races to colonialist rule. I found a number of books that explain how many white missionaries, who took the Bible literally, believed untrue racist doctrine that claimed God gave white people superiority over blacks and other races. These whites believed they had a God-given duty and burden to explore, educate, civilize, commercialize, and paternalistically govern other races for their own good.

I must take this criticism about modern missions systems head-on, knowing that you will discuss my challenge, to fulfill the Great Commission, with campus leaders. They may bring up past failures of missions to show how racial discrimination remains in present missions structures. After addressing these concerns, I briefly discuss an opposing view of missions history held by many white Christians. In the next chapter, I present a more balanced perspective between these divided opinions to prevent one or the other from demobilizing African-American students.

I want to explain that although condemnation of missions by traditional black-led church leaders and many HBCUs seminary professors has merit, it does not give the complete picture.



Also, I explain how Christ never intended for His true Gospel to be dishonored by whites this way. Denying that injustices happened or failing to see how they remain unnoticed in missions systems will continue to demobilize you from fulfilling your vanguard mission. As I wrote in earlier chapters, I believe you have the God-given role to break the chains from past hurts that bind us all.

Jesus reigns and gives you the full right and privilege to declare His glory anywhere on the earth. I want to make that clear because many would use these accusations of colonialism, paternalism, and racism by white missionaries to discourage you from following Christ and His Word. Anticipate and be prepared for the possibility of strong, negative reactions to your vanguard stand for His Commission because of past, unresolved hurts among Christians.

### **A Look at Past Injustices in Missions**

My brief summary of 200 years of mission focuses on examples of injustices that impacted the mobilization of people of African descent. John D. Rockefeller funded a study that criticized missionary motives and theories for the century after the Revolutionary War. In his 1945 doctoral dissertation, Wilbert Hall reported on demobilizing racism and structural problems for African Americans in world missions. Other studies on missions history are abundant and accessible.

I willingly reopen some festering wounds from past white injustices against African Americans for several reasons. First, I want to position my challenge to you in a historical context that explains why your vanguard leadership is an important act of justice. Racial inequality persists in missions for black Christians. Although many black heroes broke color barriers in other causes, African Americans have yet to break through extensively in missions. Second, some African-American leaders reject evangelicals' calls to mobilize for world missions because unresolved hurts from the past still divide us. Third, most white evangelical Christians are unaware of white racism in missions and the hurt it caused. They, therefore, cannot recognize how these unresolved issues demobilize African Americans. I believe many black and white Christians would come together to mobilize you if they knew the serious consequences of past racial division in world missions systems.

African-American clergy and professors who remain offended by past white missionary injustices would point at two eras of white oppression in missions history. First, they often begin with accusations of racism, colonialism, and cultural imperialism against England's missionary societies and American missionaries after the Revolutionary War. Second, they bring charges of racial discrimination, segregation, and neglect against American missions boards and missionaries after the Civil War. Together, these two eras encompass the entire 200 years of our modern missions movement.

### **William Carey's Demobilizing System**

As a case study of how these demobilizing traits became implemented in mission structures, consider William Carey's system that began in England after the Revolutionary War. Acclaimed

as the father of modern missions, with others, Carey intentionally designed missionary societies as new structures for mobilizing missionaries.<sup>5</sup>

Carey became the father of modern missions because he invented, promoted, and demonstrated today's missionary society system. Carey spoke against slavery as a committed abolitionist and world missionary. Yet, he and his missions society made no structural provisions for extensive, global mobilization of people of African descent. Christians of his day did not see worldwide missionary potential in black people. I believe that Carey's missionary society set precedents made up of norms, ideals, and structures that it built on the prejudiced thinking that leadership of world missions is the obligation of whites.

During Carey's lifetime, literature reveals how white Christians saw slaves as their missions field instead of potential global missionaries. In America today, many Christians view inner-city residents the same way. Applying recent research about race problems among white evangelical Christians, I believe that the "taking-for-grantedness" of sending out only white missionaries by these societies blinded them to unnoticed structural racial discrimination and status quo segregation in their systems.

I also believe that hidden norms and structures still preserve this white-only assumption in missions systems. This assumption remains backed by missions structures that maintain divides between black and white Christians as the status quo.<sup>6</sup> Using a phrase coined in South Africa to describe whites' subconscious acceptance of racial segregation, Wilbert Hall called this white-only assumption in missions a hidden "lie in the soul," which destructively exists unrecognized.<sup>7</sup> In 1945, he also observed that some missions boards failed to notice the loss of African-American missionaries in their ranks.<sup>8</sup>

White missionaries from the society Carey founded went overseas as pastors, indicating that it took for granted that missionary leaders would be white. They went out to evangelize but failed to disciple and equip indigenous leaders to govern their churches.<sup>9</sup>

By not empowering indigenous leaders, the missionaries' governing role became permanent. African-American leaders today would point to this failure as evidence that the white missions system oppresses.<sup>10</sup> This permanent rule by missionaries led to a leadership crisis as many blacks in the Caribbean and Africa came to Christ.

Our present missions system formed during an era when the British felt economically, culturally, intellectually, spiritually, and morally superior to other nations. With Europe's industrialization success, the British pursued progress, reform, and expansion. England expanded its world empire while under the impression that it possessed a God-given duty to govern countries it deemed less civilized.<sup>11</sup> All of Europe had just gone through a time where its culture came to value progress through research, exploration, and commerce.

England's Christians combined these influences to support causes like abolition or fulfilling Christ's Great Commission. Funding for both became available outside of traditional church structures as businessmen, abolitionists, and the British government provided support for ventures in the West Indies and Africa. Christians formed societies that crossed church and

denominational boundaries to raise funds, mobilize missionaries, and implement strategies to end slavery.

In cooperation with missionary exploration, European countries began scrambling to occupy, govern, and exploit African resources. The invention of cars and the demand for rubber tires made colonialism extremely lucrative to European rulers. Thousands of Africans died in this exploitation.<sup>12</sup> Missionaries even saw benefit in this selfish exploitation because they believed that Europe's colonialism would spread Christian civilization.<sup>13</sup>

England's believers wanted to compensate Africans when the slave trade ended. Yet they viewed blacks as savages who needed Christ, civilization, and commerce. Skin color did not matter as much, but they viewed blacks as morally inferior, uncivilized people who needed governing. Therefore, missionaries worked to spread Britain's civilization with the Gospel.<sup>14</sup>

### **Prejudice Demobilized People of African Descent**

The prevalent thinking of missionaries from Carey's day held that people of African descent were culturally, intellectually, and spiritually unfit and would always need white people to govern them.<sup>15</sup> When the Society did mobilize Jamaicans to serve in Africa, they put a white missionary over the Jamaican missionaries and the indigenous African leaders. Regarding his rule over the Africans, the Society gave him the assignment to "govern those who were not governable."<sup>16</sup>

No doubt false and racist Bible doctrine prejudiced white-controlled missions. According to a popular heresy in those days, whites believed that God had endowed them with racial superiority. Many misused the Bible to teach falsely that God intended for whites, as descendant of Noah's son Japheth, to rule over people of African descent, whom they mistakenly labeled as cursed descendants of Ham.<sup>17</sup> One missions group even made a distinction between what Africans were easier to civilize based on their estimated relation to Noah's son, Ham.<sup>18</sup> This false teaching provided whites a way to use the Bible to justify slavery, segregation, and colonialism.

Additionally, white missions leaders made stereotypical racial assumptions. When Africa became a graveyard for white missionaries who succumbed to malaria and other diseases, whites assumed that Jamaicans and African Americans were immune to malaria and other diseases in Africa. White Christians sent black missionaries where whites could not survive. Today, some leaders believe black missionaries became less valuable to the missions societies as the use of quinine proved effective against malaria.<sup>19</sup>

Also, in missions, as in white American and European societies, people of African descent had to overcome prejudices caused by scientists of the time who taught that blacks lacked whites' mental capacities.<sup>20</sup>

### **Colonialism Ended Black Empowerment**

Carey's missions society quickly aligned with British colonialism for racial, financial, and philosophical reasons. At first, its missionaries wanted to end the slave trade and make

reparations to former slaves. They used both as their primary reasons for beginning work in Africa. The society planned to accomplish these purposes by bringing Christ, British civilization, and commerce to the continent. In 1879, the Baptist Missionary Magazine revealed the colonialism embedded in Carey's system when its primary leader William Wilberforce wrote an article praising Carey as the one who "saved India to the British Empire."<sup>21</sup>

Many missionaries accepted British occupation, which controlled one-third of Africa, and believed it was needed to civilize people. To encourage the U.S. to implement this same kind of imperialistic rule, British poet Rudyard Kipling labeled this perceived need as "the white man's burden" and described Africans as "half devil and half child."<sup>22</sup> Still today, a Christian website that documents this history credits colonialism with advancing the Society's missionary witness for Christ in Africa.<sup>23</sup> Many black Christian leaders condemn this kind of racist expansionism as devastating oppression, a judgment that still must remain hidden to the Christians who published the website.

With the arrival of England's colonialism, for example, the British Missionary Society abandoned a good philosophy of empowering self-supporting, self-governing, and self-reproducing indigenous leaders in Africa.<sup>24</sup> From its beginning in Africa, philanthropists and commercial interests wanting to exploit Africa's natural resources sought missionary help with African exploration. This commercial financial support increased the governing role of white missionaries but ended the empowerment of indigenous leaders they replaced.<sup>25</sup>

White missionaries accepted support from British colonialism to speedily achieve the goal of reaching Africa's interior. The purposes of winning Africans to Christ and exploration to expand the British Empire became intertwined by the funding that the latter brought the missionaries. British commercial and colonialist leaders wanted to end the slave trade because it depleted the African work force they sought to exploit along with other resources.<sup>26</sup> The Baptist Missionary Society recruited Jamaicans for service in Africa whose motive was ending slave trade more than spreading the Gospel.<sup>27</sup>

Fundraising from white sources played a role in mobilizing people of African descent. For example, white missionaries in Jamaica came under severe criticism for raising great amounts of money that many outsiders assumed paid high salaries. This criticism reduced philanthropists' donations and provided a reason for the Baptist missionary society in England to force the Jamaica mission to become self-supporting. Then the British Parliament passed legislation that caused sugar prices to fall drastically. As a result, the Jamaican missionaries in Africa went underfunded and eventually most returned home. Much controversy arose in Africa because missions societies that sent Jamaicans there did not pay them the same wages they paid white missionaries.<sup>28</sup> For instance, a missions society in Nigeria wanted to pay Jamaicans 1/20th of a white missionary's salary, consequently, the return home.<sup>29</sup>

### **Prejudice Caused Missed Opportunities**

Influenced by the prejudiced norms and ideals of his day,<sup>30</sup> I believe Carey used Scripture to perpetrate hidden racial hypocrisy in his famous writing that launched our modern missions era.

I believe that he excluded blacks when he obligated all Christians to obey the Great Commission. In his book, *An Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*, Carey documented from the Bible why the Great Commission is binding on all believers.<sup>31</sup> Unfortunately, in practice, Carey fell short of including Christians of African descent in his concept of “all.”

He denounced the African slave trade and encouraged Britain’s efforts to establish a colony in Sierra Leone for Africans rescued from slave ships. Carey had taken this radical abolitionist stand at home in England and against the African slave trade. While establishing the Baptist Missionary Society and preparing to become its first missionary to India in 1793, Carey denounced slavery in speeches and writings. He worked with other abolitionists in England, including John Newton, the converted slave trader who wrote the hymn *Amazing Grace*. Carey even refused to eat sugar that slaves had been forced to harvest in the West Indies. In his 1792 book that brought about our modern missions era, Carey expressed his contempt for the African slave trade.<sup>32</sup>

However, in spite of this abolitionism, British Parliament acted 26 times that same year to encourage it.<sup>33</sup> Carey responded by attempting to establish a mission in Sierra Leone, Africa. His society sent missionaries there to civilize the people instead of emphasizing the Gospel.<sup>34</sup> This mission failed, and Carey went to India where he worked for social reforms and evangelism.

At this point, Carey had missed the opportunity to demonstrate to the world the slave and freedman’s great spiritual capacity and glory. He failed to elevate those rescued from slave ships to the high status of Christ’s ambassadors to the entire world. At that time, many whites considered Africans brute beasts without souls. Most others regarded them as barbaric savages who needed slavery to bring them salvation. Carey could have proved them all wrong through discipleship and missions mobilization. Imagine the potential impact and testimonies of these rescued Africans if Carey had equipped them as missionaries to India.

Remember that during this era, the self-emancipated slaves in Haiti successfully organized a revolt, defeated Napoleon’s French soldiers, and established their own government. During Carey’s missions career, ex-slaves in Haiti and America fought tenaciously for freedom and equality under the battle cry “death or liberty!”<sup>35</sup> What if he had empowered them as free and equal vanguards, with himself, and focused their passion on world evangelization? Although the British trained ex-slaves in America to be disciplined, self-sacrificing soldiers during this time, Carey’s missions society in England failed to deploy them globally as soldiers for Christ and His world mission.

I am sure that Carey assumed that the Christians mobilized by the challenge in his famous book would only be white. I doubt that he intended to obligate slaves, freedman, and other people of African descent to obey Christ’s global mandate.

Previously, I wrote about our partnership with a Baptist circuit in Jamaica that began in 1993. These churches descended directly from Carey’s missions system. We found them facing this same leadership crisis that existed 150 years ago. Almost all Jamaicans assumed that missionaries are white. Usually, Jamaican Christians do not include themselves in Christ’s

Commission, and most unchurched men label white missionaries as oppressors. In fact, many unchurched men view the Gospel itself as an oppressive white belief.<sup>36</sup>

I have heard unchurched Jamaican men express resentment against Christ and His Gospel that parallel the accusations made by Boakman Dutty, a voodoo priest in Haiti, as he instigated the slave revolt in Saint Dominique:

The god who created the sun which gives us light, who rouses the waves and rules the storm, though hidden in the clouds, he watches us. He sees all that the white man does. The god of the white man inspires him with crime, but our god calls upon us to do good works. Our god who is good to us orders us to revenge our wrongs. He will direct our arms and aid us. Throw away the symbol of the god of the whites who has so often caused us to weep, and listen to the voice of liberty, which speaks in the hearts of us all.<sup>37</sup>

Ironically, many white churches and missions agencies refuse to send missionaries to Jamaica because they consider the country already “reached” with the Gospel. The resentment felt by many unchurched Jamaican men against white-governed missions systems must also remain hidden to these churches and sending agencies.

The Baptist Missionary Society’s work with Jamaicans gives examples of how structures may have demobilized people of African descent from world missions. George Liele and other former slaves from America, who used the British Army to escape slavery and travel to Jamaica, invited the Baptist Missionary Society to join their struggle to evangelize and free slaves on the island.

About 50 years later, the “Baptist War” in Jamaica provides an insightful example of how missionaries’ good intentions became demobilizing in paternalistic and race-divided structures. When the Baptist Missionary Society positioned white missionaries over its churches in Jamaica, their paternalism gave rise to two kinds of Baptists - missions Baptists, with white missionary pastors, and Native Baptists, with black Jamaican leaders. Many Jamaicans had dual membership in both churches. Jamaicans not wanting subservient roles in the missions churches could become a “daddy” or “ruler” in the Native Baptist churches. More likely, these Native Baptists leaders used the missionaries for their own purposes. Also, since the missionaries returned to England often, they left their churches open to the influences of the native leaders. Can you see any structural problems in this system?

When (white) Baptist Missionary Society missionaries, like William Knibb, returned from England and reported the progress of the Abolitionist Movement there, they raised the slaves’ expectations about immediate emancipation. One vanguard slave leader, Sam Sharpe, put this excitement into action in 1831 and organized a large passive-resistance effort against plantation owners. In this sit-down strike, slaves swore on Bibles that they would not work at the start of the cane harvest after Christmas. An estimated 60,000 slaves participated in this action.

The white Baptist missionaries did not find out about this plan to strike until the last minute at their Christmas services. They tried to persuade the Jamaican slaves to obey their masters and

continue to work. “General Ruler” Sharpe led the strike anyway. This action escalated into a 10-day revolt in which slaves killed 16 white people and burned many plantations. The British militia ended the poorly armed slaves’ uprising. In revenge under martial law, whites quickly tried and executed 312 slaves, including Sharpe.

This revolt set into motion a series of events that show the lost potential caused by the white missionaries’ paternalistic missions structures. Although the Baptist missionaries had attempted to prevent the uprising, the plantation owners blamed them and all missionaries for agitating the slaves and causing the revolt. They arrested six missionaries and wanted them all expelled from Jamaica. Ironically, free black Jamaicans, who were pro-missions, had gained enough political clout to come to the missionaries’ aid.

When the Jamaicans stood up for the Baptist missionaries, they drew them into their political action as well. Missionaries could no longer remain neutral in the slaves’ struggle for freedom, nor compromise with plantation owners to focus on slave evangelism. William Knibb returned to England and used the slave uprising to mobilize the Baptist Missionary Society, with other missions societies, for more intense political action against slavery in Jamaica. With eye-witness testimonies, missionaries became the slaves’ spokesmen before the British Parliament. They expressed confidently that the slaves’ intellectual abilities equaled that of whites and that Christianity could not suppress their ambitions for freedom.<sup>38</sup> The plantation owners waged their own political campaign against abolition, but the increasingly high cost of their sugar in England diminished their influence. In 1834, the British emancipated slave children under the age of 6 and all slaves by 1838.<sup>39</sup>

This history shows how the Baptist’s paternalistic missionary system demobilized Jamaican slaves, like Sharpe, instead of empowering them as vanguards of the Gospel and social justice. With his passion for freedom and action, Sharpe could have edified the British missionaries and made their outreach more effective. Left to mobilize social action on his own, Sharpe organized the masses outside of the traditional missions systems. Yet as a true vanguard, his self-sacrifice and leading from the front mobilized Carey’s missionary system to bring the political pressure that won emancipation for Jamaica’s slaves.

Unfortunately, the paternalistic missionary system continued to demobilize the Jamaicans after their emancipation. Baptist Missionary Society leaders believed that God had directed it to recruit Jamaicans to evangelize West Africa through a mission in Cameroon, West Africa. Former Jamaican slaves, who concluded that God had given them freedom so they could take up the cause of ending African slavery, enthusiastically took up the society’s call to serve in Cameroon. The Jamaicans assumed that they would minister as equal partners with the British missionaries. The British Missionary Society required the Jamaican workers to be self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating. Yet after arriving in Africa, the society expected them to be content with African-level wages in a two-tier system where British missionaries received more. Also, at the beginning of this work in Africa, the society planned to raise up indigenous leaders to govern the churches there.

The society's progress revealed status quo structures that eventually demobilized most of the Jamaicans who left after five years. For instance, a white missionary brought forward and then published accusations of missionary cruelty against Jamaican workers, saying that a missionary mistreated them like slaves. Existing structures maintained white missionary rule at the mission.<sup>40</sup>

Another colony in Liberia established by former slaves provides another example of the missionary potential of freed slaves. These missionaries went to receive emancipation or basic rights. The literature also testifies how many believed that God had entrusted them with freedom for the purpose of spreading the Gospel in Africa.

In general, freed slaves believed that their loyalty to Christ was superior than that of whites, making them better missionaries to Africa.<sup>41</sup> A missionary magazine reported that liberated slaves who followed the British to Nova Scotia learned how to read, came to Christ, read the Bible during their leisure times, and showed "willingness to aid every institution that has been brought before them."<sup>42</sup> No doubt they would have gladly taken on Christ's Commission to evangelize the world if asked and sent out.

After slave emancipation in the States, our government's Freedman Bureau and more than 50 missionary organizations spent millions of dollars for four years trying to put millions of destitute freed slaves to work in the resentful unreconstructed South.<sup>43</sup> What if these missionary organizations and Carey's missionary society had mustered former slaves to reach other continents, since their freedom brought with it such a great sense of destiny and mission?<sup>44</sup> Reading of their committed zeal for evangelizing Africa, I believe, without doubt, that they would have mobilized gladly as missionaries to the ends of the earth. If they had been treated as equal ministers of the Gospel, the witness of their unity with white missionaries could have turned the world upside down again.

As it were, white missions societies only accepted blacks as missionaries in America, Africa, and in other places where people of African descent had settled. I can find no indication that missionary societies in Carey's day conceived of ever extensively mobilizing them to fulfill their global obligation to Christ's Commission.

The concept of keeping African Americans in home missions or limiting them to service in Africa contradicted arguments in Carey's book. He asserted that all Christians must attempt the impossible to reach the entire world regardless of the needs at home. Carey said that out of pity for humanity, which lacked good civil government and Bibles in their written language, Christians must be willing to go abroad.

From the beginning of modern missions, those blacks providentially sent out by Christ into His harvest, as exceptions, only went to serve other blacks in the world. This limitation probably suited the liberated slaves because they must have wanted to establish new black identities in the white Christians' system. Reaching their own race would give them daily interactions with other blacks. According to today's research, these interactions would likely have helped them establish their identities as free black men and women.<sup>45</sup> Unfortunately, this racial and



geographical segregation enabled white Christians to maintain the segregated status quo in missions.

It took 30 years for Carey to win a convert in India. I wonder what might have happened if the Africans rescued from slave ships had the opportunity to reach the oppressed, darker skinned people of the lowest caste in India? I doubt that Carey saw slaves from Africa as potential missionaries. Like many American Christians today, he took for granted that global missionaries would only be white.

In hindsight, the European colonialist governments' reactions to the work of African Americans in Africa shows how they could have edified white missionary forces. I believe that African Americans' mobilization would have increased the long-term credibility and effectiveness of the Gospel worldwide. For instance, Wilbert Harr documented how European governments did not want African-American missionaries in Africa. As these governments cruelly oppressed, they called African Americans "agitators" who inspired oppressed Africans to rebel against European occupation.<sup>46</sup> The Europeans regarded African Americans as threats to their status quo colonialism.

By 1920, American missions agencies, governed by white board members, accommodated European governments' efforts to keep black missionaries out of Africa. These agencies withdrew their African-American missionaries thinking it was best to maintain law and order, and wrong to pressure the European governments to act justly.<sup>47</sup> Silent while Jim Crow laws oppressed African Americans in the U.S., these missions agencies accepted prejudice and neglect in Africa as well. For their part, the European governments tolerated white missionaries who counted converts, served sacrificially, provided education, and silently watched Africans suffer from colonialism's oppression. In 1917, and when my missionary grandparents served in Africa, 119 protestant missionary societies had more than 5,000 in its white missionary force there while keeping African Americans at home.<sup>48</sup>

The sensitivity, moral courage, and voices for social justice that African Americans brought to missions could have encouraged white missionaries to speak up with them for both spiritual and physical freedom. Missionary to Africa and Hampton Institute graduate, William Sheppard, and his white missionary colleague accomplished this very thing in the Belgian Congo.<sup>49</sup>

In turn, like with Sheppard, the white missionaries' willingness to die for the Great Commission could have inspired African Americans to become world pioneers for Christ.<sup>50</sup> Black and white Christians missed the opportunity, during colonialism's time frame, to glorify Christ through a racially and doctrinally unified witness. Together they could have stood for the true Gospel and real social justice.

Without this mutual edification, African American and white Christians became divided in missions, and the Bible's true Gospel came under attack. Harr reported in 1945 that black Christians contributed to the missions racial divide as much as whites by wanting to keep their boards separated. His assertion shows that the race-divide, which white segregation wrought between black and white-led churches, carried over into American missions societies and divided our missions forces. A world-changing unified witness for Christ, which the past black and

white generations failed to muster, awaits your vanguard leadership. Understand how this racial divide demobilized American missionaries so you can strategically lead the masses.

### **American Christians' Racial Divide**

A colleague of William Carey imported his missionary society structure from England to the States in 1793.<sup>51</sup> In addition to foreign missions, Christians began "home" missionary societies here to send missionaries to minister among Indians, slaves, and those living in the frontier. These home missions societies established African-American churches and colleges, contributing to the idea that blacks should focus only on local missions.<sup>52</sup>

Although Carey fathered modern missions and rejected slavery in England, in 1792 the movement that he began became divided racially, geographically, and spiritually in America as slavery quickly grew more entrenched here in the following few decades. A year later, in 1793, Carey left for India, but Eli Whitney perfected the cotton gin. This invention made slave exploitation much more profitable and permanent in the States.

For example, by the time Carey saw his first Hindi convert in 1820, the number of slaves in America had increased by 83 percent. The cotton gin increased profits as the demand for U.S. cotton climbed in England. Cotton revenues jumped from \$150,000 to more than \$8 million in the first 20 years after its introduction. Economic success at southern cotton plantations made it difficult for slaves to purchase their own freedom. As the cotton industry spread westward and increased the demand for slaves to move with it, human trafficking tore slave families apart in America's expanded domestic slave-trade.<sup>53</sup>

As you know, slaves struggled for survival and freedom as they searched for their identities in a white, oppressive society that regarded them as savages and property. As they struggled by defiance, compliance, passive resistance, hard work to earn freedom, and faith, white and black Christians became racially divided by segregation. Many African Americans found their identities in separate, black-governed churches. Missions became a part of their survival at home. Some middle-class African Americans attempted to earn approval from influential whites by becoming missionaries. Some also used missions to receive prestige and status to prove themselves as members of a "better class" above most other blacks whom whites regarded as savages.<sup>54</sup>

Adding to this past hurt is the fact that many white missionaries laid down their lives to save the souls of people they considered savages while segregating themselves at home from African Americans. This discrimination sent the message that white Christians viewed them as inferior and worthless - below the worst cannibals of the world.

Wilbert Harr's doctoral dissertation provided a snapshot of missions and black missions mobilization in 1945. He documented missionary racism, racial discrimination, segregation, racial division, structural problems, neglect, inconsistency, disinformation, and miscellaneous issues as barriers to African Americans in world missions. Harr concluded his dissertation by raising hopes in the abilities and commitments of missions conferences and sending agencies to

increase the number of black missionaries. Since this increase never materialized in the 75 years since then, one wants to ask whether these barriers still exist and demobilize you.

Harr documented in missions the relatively recent racism that offends many African-American leaders today. Some stereotype white evangelical missionaries as faceless members of a racist group who all neglect social justice and oppress with imperialism. Yet understanding white missionaries' motives over a 200-year period is complicated and more involved than these generalizations suggest. Their emotional reactions demonstrate why I believe your vanguard leadership is needed to set us all free!

In later chapters, I address more observations made by Harr, including some insights on African-American roles and advantages of a diverse missionary force. First, I address the spiritual devastation and social destruction inflicted upon African Americans by white missionary paternalism after the Civil War.

### **Why the True Gospel Spreads in These Countries Today**

Some historians address why evangelical Christianity rapidly spreads today in countries where past white missionaries brought paternalism, colonialism, and imperialism. In these countries, many indigenous church leaders welcome white missionaries and appreciated those who came in the past. I offer several observations to explain this phenomenon.

First, never underestimate the Holy Spirit's power to illuminate God's Word to accomplish His purposes, regardless of how white people mishandle it. Time proves that the true Gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. (Romans 1:16) Even in oppressive structures, white missionaries translated and taught the Bible. The Holy Spirit demonstrated His Bible's supernatural usefulness for equipping men of God for every good work. Increasingly today, nationals accept Christ and His true Gospel beyond what one would expect from their backgrounds under colonialism. Yet the surprising harvest shows how God gets glory by backing up His Word in unlikely circumstances.

Second, do not underestimate the savvy and creativity of indigenous leaders who benefited from the resources made available to them in paternalistic missionary systems. Many came to Christ and received formal Bible training needed to start ministries outside of white missionary control. An African-American pastor who served 10 years in West Africa reminded me that African leaders used the missionaries while the missionaries used them. This pastor also reported that the white missionaries' self-sacrifice inspired African leaders to higher levels of commitment in their own outreaches. At the same time, many white Bible-believing Christians in the States, including missionaries, rejected African Americans through segregation. The resulting deep, unresolved past hurts keep many white and black Christian leaders divided in America while a much more powerful, reconciled witness expands in some other nations. Please, let nothing stop you from reconciling a new missionary force from here!

### **A Second and Opposite Perspective**

Many Christians would take a second and opposite view of white missionary history. They feel strongly that past missionaries fulfilled Christ's mandate courageously as spiritual giants and heroes. Indeed, an untold number of white missionaries laid down their lives for the Gospel. Many lost wives and children who went along to increase the missionaries' effectiveness. White missionaries started schools and hospitals all over the world. Many became martyrs by refusing to leave their posts during political uprisings. Only a fourth of the missionaries who first went to the Congo survived their initial term. Most who died were in their 20s.<sup>55</sup>

Surely, many thousands of nationals received the Gospel and eternal life through the self-sacrifice of these laborers in Christ's world harvest. Missionaries' faithfulness in separating from family to give up everything and love people in other lands makes them highly regarded as faith heroes by many Christians.

My siblings, cousins, and I share a small part of the ultimate price paid by missionary pioneers. We grew up without receiving in person the love of a wonderful grandfather. Before dying in missionary service, he revealed in a diary his amazing heart for Christ and for Africans. I witnessed my mother coping with other hurts as well. Hers came as a young teenager when my grandmother left her behind at a boarding school in the States. Missionary self-sacrificial commitment built both joys and regrets into our lives.

These hardships are links in the chain on my neck. The Body of Christ's failure to invite and mobilize all of its members caused more strain on those members left doing the work on the missions field, and our family suffered from this loss. The following verses teach how God designed the Body so that all members need one another and strengthen one another during difficult circumstances:

That there should be no schism in the body; that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. (1 Corinthians 12: 25-27)

When white Christians fail to mobilize African Americans, we demobilize ourselves because we are all one Body. Of course, the reverse is also true. Should African-American Christians fail to invite other races to mobilize with them, they would put more strain on their missionaries and demobilize themselves in the process. We must all go forward together because there can "be no schism\*" in the Body.

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\*The word "schism" means "division."

Past failures to mobilize African Americans for missions increased the suffering that my family endured - that is how a critical part of the chain fastened to my neck. I know that this kind of demobilizing still goes on today as black and white Christians maintain the same status quo racial schism in missions. It is time to end my silence and take a stand against this unbiblical division. I write to become free from this old chain.

Discern Satan's spiritual opposition to our united and diverse witness for Christ. Ephesians 6:11-12 challenges us to stand against the devil's schemes:

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

The next chapter exposes hidden hurdles to missions mobilization that Satan recycled through the centuries. The evil one initiated his divisive demobilizing wiles (deceitful strategies) soon after Christ gave His Commission. As Christ's vanguard, learn to diagnose and overcome these hurdles.

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## **Chapter 11**

### **Diagnose Hidden Hurdles**

#### *A Vanguard Shines in Spiritual Warfare*

From 1932 to 1972, black and white professionals from Tuskegee University and public health services cooperated on the destructive Tuskegee Syphilis Study. They deceived 400 African-American sharecropper men, whom the researchers diagnosed as having syphilis. Doctors withheld medical treatment from these men and focused their research on autopsies of the dozens who died. The researchers lied to the men about the nature of their disease. They withheld medicine from them even after penicillin became a proven cure for syphilis. As a result of this deception, some of the men infected their wives and children. President Clinton gave a formal apology in 1997 to the remaining survivors and the families involved, calling the experiment “shameful.”<sup>1</sup>

How could African-American professionals at Tuskegee University treat black sharecroppers inhumanely for 40 years? If Booker T. Washington and other Christians founded Tuskegee to uplift African Americans, why would its black leadership collaborate with the government to harm them? How could African-American leaders at Tuskegee allow people of their race to be treated as laboratory materials and not as sick patients?<sup>2</sup>

Answering these questions, I believe, may give insights for diagnosing some hidden barriers that undermine African-American participation in full-time missions. This chapter will require serious study of Christian history. Be prepared to need more than one sitting to complete it. As a vanguard, you must know and overcome current barriers to African Americans in missions that intensified in the years after the Civil War. Thank you for investing the time and hard work to become equipped with insights to lead well. I present the background to why some historians identify these same missionary demobilizing problems when analyzing the Tuskegee Syphilis Study. Hopefully, when you have completed the chapter, you will see how the ideology supporting this horrible experiment came from the same ideology that hinders African-American missions mobilization.

After the Civil War, many African-American Christians felt a strong sense of duty and destiny to serve as missionaries to Africa. Nevertheless, African-American missions professor and author Dr. Sylvia Jacobs writes that even though this missionary impulse continued on, it failed to create a missionary movement. Only a few African Americans completed long missionary careers.<sup>3</sup> By 1920, most African Americans stopped going to Africa, and elsewhere, as missionaries. Jacobs concludes that the percentage of African-American missionaries who served in Africa before 1960 was relatively insignificant compared to the percentage of white American missionaries who ministered there.<sup>4</sup> What stopped African Americans from mobilizing as missionaries for Africa and the world?

In 1917, American missions agencies met in New York City for a three-day conference called The Christian Occupation of Africa. A missions leader addressing the conference called Africa the Laboratory of Christianity.<sup>5</sup> The white and black experiments on African-American

missionary mobilization conducted in this laboratory after the Civil War failed with devastating consequences. Some of the same reasons for this failure to mobilize African Americans also apply to the shameful Tuskegee Syphilis Study. With God's grace and as Christ's vanguard, lead in such a way that prevents this kind of historical failure from repeating itself.

My theme is that spiritual warfare raged in the decades following Reconstruction (starting with 1880s) to prevent African Americans from fulfilling Christ's Great Commission. During the many cultural changes that occurred after the Civil War, I believe that Satan sent combinations of spiritual assaults against black and white Christians. His intentions, I am sure, included shutting down African-American missionary mobilization.

Foremost in this hidden spiritual warfare is a demobilizing ideology that African Americans began using as a way to cope with racism and their lack of citizenship rights after the Civil War. This unbiblical ideology came from white paternalistic missionaries' efforts to instill "missionary spirit" into people of African descent.<sup>6</sup> Built upon white racial prejudice and feelings of superiority, American missions agencies wanted to give this "missionary spirit" as the key to mobilizing black people to bring civilization to their own race. This ideology included evolutionary views of culture and became known as "uplift." I will explain how uplift ideology, evolutionary theory, and destructive criticism of the Bible swept across our nation among white and black people. Ultimately, these hidden problems brought damaging and demobilizing spiritual consequences to both races.

In addition and as part of the spiritual warfare, the black-white divides among Christians widened because of racial discrimination, politics, and money issues. Reading prominent African-American theologians and sociologists' documentations about the demobilizing effects of white racism saddens me the most. I will go into more detail in the next three chapters about how many black students turned away from correct Bible doctrine or moral standards when resisting white segregation or missionary paternalism. I summarize three instances now. First, in the 1920s, cultural changes undermined the sanctity of the home and godly morals among African-American young people. I commend their determination and success in overthrowing the white missionary paternalism and segregation at many of the HBCUs. Unfortunately, many students threw out some godly moral standards that the missionaries had strictly enforced. Second, missionary ideology created a black social class hierarchy in which upper and middle-class African Americans tried to distance themselves from the "lower" class masses. Third, by the 1950s, several future African-American civil rights leaders emerged from white liberal seminaries during a time when many Bible-believing seminaries remained segregated.

One of the most prominent black theologians and a leader in the Civil Rights Movement, Samuel Proctor, wrote how he came to accept white liberal theology's attack on the Bible's authority.<sup>7</sup> James Cone, and other African-American theologians who followed the same white liberal-doctrine path behind Proctor, even attempted to prove from Martin Luther King Jr.'s writings that he had forsaken faith in the Bible's authority. Cone asserted that King chose white liberal theology over the truth taught in his home church. Cone claimed that King rejected Christ's deity and faith that Jesus died on the cross as a substitute to pay the penalty for our

individual sins.<sup>8</sup> Also, these same theologians take credit for influencing black college students to accept white liberal doctrine.

Accepting white liberal doctrine demobilized African Americans from fulfilling Christ's true Commission. This white false teaching not only undermines faith in Christ's deity, the Bible's authority, and the true Gospel's credibility, it rejects the priority of fulfilling Christ's Commission through world evangelism. These three changes point to demobilizing spiritual warfare in both the black and the white Christian communities. Satan, the evil one, aimed his attack at the Bible, the Gospel's credibility and world missions.

Satan eliminated a potential movement to mobilize African Americans for Africa. White paternalistic missionaries and their segregated, discriminating missions systems thwarted plans for African-American mobilization. Well-meaning missionaries imposed "uplift" ideology upon African Americans that proved spiritually, morally, socially, and physically detrimental. Blacks' trust in this ideology's potential to uplift Africa collapsed when Jim Crow oppression caused many to lose respect for its ability to achieve civil rights in the States.

### **Atlanta Congress on Africa**

In 1895, prominent African-American theology professor John W. E. Bowen sponsored the Congress on Africa convention as part of the Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition. He purposed to mobilize African Americans as missionaries for Africa through this convention. At the time, Bowen served as Gammon Theological Seminary's missions professor and as the secretary of its foundation that supported African-American missionary mobilization. He documented and published the Africa Congress's speeches and minutes that showed great potential for starting a missions movement among African Americans.

The Congress on Africa's great timing gave an opportunity for black and white Christians to end racial division and send out African-American missionaries together. A former slave, Bowen was the first African American to earn a Ph.D. He taught at Morgan College and Howard University and eventually became the Gammon Theological Seminary's president. Other African Americans who addressed the convention came with advanced degrees and a wealth of missionary experience.

Both black and white speakers expressed amazing unity at this missions convention. They respected African-American leadership in missions. For example, Bowen's minutes recorded the following encouragement given to the African-American leaders by the white bishop of the Episcopal Methodist denomination:

I was born among you. Don't think of yourselves as 'colored people,' but think about yourselves as those whom God has called to be men. I never put in the definition of 'man' the idea of color. Be men, and I assure you that the lines of longitude and latitude will not measure the respect given to you. I welcome this hour. Determine that you will solve your own problem by being true to the estate to which you are called in these latter days.<sup>9</sup>



When other black denominations accused the A.M.E. of letting white people “boss” them to get missionary money, a black A.M.E. minister responded: Because we are men and propose to stand up side by side with the best white membership in the church and show them and the world what great work being done ... for the evangelization of the world ... we can bear our share of the burden.<sup>10</sup>

Even Georgia’s white governor attended and expressed commitment to equality in education. The governor’s support at the convention demonstrated its racial unity.

This racially diverse Methodist denomination and its Freedman’s Aid and Southern Education Society considered African Americans and Africa as the world’s greatest missions fields. Solving the race problem for all people and for all time by training and mobilizing missionaries became their sense of duty.<sup>11</sup>

By 1901, these related institutions held valuable experience at mobilizing large numbers of workers for missions. As missionary ventures, they founded the Gammon seminary and many other institutions after the Civil War for the primary purpose of training evangelical African-American missionaries for service at home and abroad.<sup>12</sup> By 1905, the missionary society had grown to 600,000 national members. Blacks and whites worked together to bring 10,000 instructors who taught at the many HBCUs, academies, medical schools, and hospitals that the denomination’s missions efforts had established.<sup>13</sup>

This missions society implemented advanced fundraising programs including planned-giving opportunities through banks. It standardized special Lincoln Birthday church services designed to raise missionary support throughout the denomination’s churches. Philanthropists of both races financially endowed black education in response to missionary appeals. One white pastor gave most of his extensive personal assets to start the foundation at Gammon Theological Seminary to mobilize African Americans “for the uplift of Africa.” Bowen became the secretary of this foundation, which also financed this Africa Congress.<sup>14</sup>

This conference occurred in an era before widespread acceptance of European evolution theories and liberalism destroyed faith in the Bible’s true Gospel for many in our country and at this denomination’s HBCUs. One black pastor stated at the congress that African Americans in their denomination were not only Christian, but were committed evangelical Christians.<sup>15</sup>

Just 30 years after the Civil War and in Atlanta, the convention’s speakers understood the demobilizing impact of slavery well. They recognized barriers that prevented African Americans from going to the field. Many Methodists became highly committed to the cause of evangelizing Africa, believing that Abraham Lincoln had ushered in the Kingdom of God with slave emancipation.

Therefore, the Congress on Africa enjoyed remarkable racial unity, vision, funding, mobilization experience, evangelical doctrine, student power, education, and the will to mobilize thousands of African Americans for missions.

So what went wrong? Almost everything imaginable went wrong to quickly destroy this vision of African-American missionary mobilization. This vision died in this Episcopal Methodist denomination and in the rest, as well. The Congress on Africa demobilized more than

just Episcopal Methodists. In effect, it forced the other denominations to follow suit. Although intended to mobilize African-American missionaries, its ideology turned out to be a house of cards that quickly collapsed. In my opinion, the waves of complicated and combined opposition that came against its missions vision possessed all the divisive traits of spiritual warfare. Let me attempt to explain what happened.

### **Start Diagnosing in the Third Century A.D.**

To diagnose the loss of black vision for missions after the Civil War, we must go back in history to the problems Jesus encountered with the Pharisees as He served the poor and outcasts. First, I formulate our diagnoses of these problems by starting with the third century after Christ's return to heaven. Then I go back to the days of Christ's ministry on earth and the Pharisees' issues. From there, I trace how these problems recycled through the centuries, played out in the late 1800s in America, and still demobilize today. Focus with me as we move quickly through much history in a few pages.

Let us begin our diagnosis with the third century A.D. Depending on whose opinion you choose, the Roman Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity to either seek God's assistance or to gain a political advantage. He made Christianity the Roman Empire's national religion. This move introduced politics into the Church and eventually divided the Christian elite, ruling class from the masses. As the Roman Empire declined, Christian leaders centralized their power as the Roman Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church took several steps to empower its elite class of clergy by taking the Bible out of the hands of the common man. They taught the masses that only the spiritually elite at the top of a leadership hierarchy possessed the ability to correctly interpret the Bible. It gained power by adopting a system of Bible interpretation that centralized its clergy's authority.

Catholic Church leaders began "spiritualizing" the Bible to find hidden meaning beyond the way human language is normally interpreted literally. About four centuries after Christ's resurrection, theologians used this spiritualizing interpretation method to view God's people as a kingdom on earth. By figuratively interpreting Revelation 20, and other passages about Christ's 1,000-year (millennial) reign, Christian leaders concluded that Christ's kingdom had already begun. This belief is called post-millennialism because it held that Jesus would return *after* (post) His "spiritual" millennial kingdom-reign first occurred on earth.

In the centuries that followed, all the way to America's Civil War, most Christians believed it was their God-given responsibility to Christianize the world and bring about Christ's return. With this post-millennial doctrinal framework, most Christians became optimistic about the potential for their evangelism efforts to produce a utopia of peace on earth in a new, Christian world order. They expected the Gospel to prevail over evil and cause worldwide spiritual, social, and political transformations to bring about Christ's return and world peace. Their mission included proclaiming the Gospel *and* reconstructing social and political systems.<sup>16</sup>

For a time, the Catholic Church adopted the mission to expand Christ's kingdom on earth by any means necessary. Its crusades and violent inquisitions came out of this thinking that

prevailed through the middle ages. Christianity became a military force determined to conquer the world.

Later, England emerged from the Reformation believing that God had given it a superior form of civilization with the duty to help other nations progress by governing them. At the same time, Christians in Britain believed, based upon post-millennial doctrine, that they would also change the world through Christ, civilization, and commerce. By this formula, they wanted to bring about social and political progress through the Gospel to fulfill Jesus' Commission and bring on His return. Their post-millennial views paralleled the desires of England's government and commercial interests to expand its world empire. As a result, post-millennialism and British colonialism thrived together in England as Christians formed our modern missions system.<sup>17</sup>

For instance, famous British missionary pioneer, David Livingstone, explored Africa to advance the Gospel and commerce.<sup>18</sup> Both objectives fit in his post-millennial belief of bringing about a Christian kingdom on earth. He failed to foresee the ruthless oppression of European colonialism that he facilitated through his exploration and post-millennial doctrine of Christ's Second Coming.

In addition, William Carey and many other missionaries in his era became abolitionists and worked for social justice in their missions fields as post-millennial efforts to establish a worldwide Christian kingdom. They confronted social injustice expecting "the golden age of Gospel domination" to change individuals and institutions of the world. They believed that God uses people and institutions to regenerate world kingdoms. Their missions societies began to cooperate with British colonialism because of their similar kingdom expansion motives and objectives.<sup>19</sup>

### **Diagnose a Hidden Spiritual Stronghold**

I believe that Christian leaders through the centuries remained demobilized and unable to fulfill Christ's mission because a particular unrecognized sin that held them in spiritual bondage. In spiritual warfare terms, this kind of bondage is often called a "spiritual stronghold" that enslaves like a blind spot. When a spiritual stronghold becomes embedded in social structures and cultures, some might call it the "status quo."

Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for perpetrating a status-quo, blind-spot in their religious system. After He called Matthew to follow him, the Pharisees criticized Him for eating with sinners at Matthew's house. Under Roman dominance, Pharisees sought status and power for themselves and their race by becoming an elite, pure-blooded, representative class of Jews. They distanced themselves from the lower classes or, like in Matthew's case, from Jewish "sinners." Pharisees kept and enforced their elaborate system of strict rules against specific sins because they hungered for this status and claimed spiritual, racial, and social "eliteness."

Their spiritual stronghold, and self-deception, became evident in their futile attempts to earn status with God and man as their hearts remained prejudiced against those whom they ostracized in the lower classes or as sinners. This prejudice against sinners demobilized them from loving and serving the masses for whom Christ felt compassion.

The Pharisees attempted to bring about the Messiah's coming through Jewish nationalism. They took it upon themselves to represent the Jewish race and nation in Jerusalem, but distanced themselves from the lower-class Galilean Jews. They demanded justice for their elite Jewish class from Roman oppression, but withheld mercy and justice from Hebrew widows and orphans.

Jesus responded to the Pharisees' criticism by quoting the Lord's command in Hosea 6:8: "Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.'" The Pharisees' sinful stronghold neglected and discredited God's Word.

When Christian persecution ended under Constantine in the third century, these same sins - hungering for status, prejudice, discrimination against lower classes and sinners, and trying to earn respectability by moral accomplishments - demobilized Christians.

Then during the Reformation, this stronghold became evident among the ruling class who protected Martin Luther during his rebellion against the Pope. Luther taught salvation by grace through faith to this ruling class that defended his Reformation. Peasants, who served the ruling class as slaves, made a respectful appeal for their equal rights that included Scripture references. They explained how their appeal advanced the true Gospel, not discredited Christ's cause. Luther called on the peasants, instead, to submit to the ruling class' authority in order to maintain law and order. When they revolted violently, Luther wrote that any of the rebelling peasants should be killed immediately because their violence had earned them damnation.<sup>20</sup> He "threw them under the bus" to accommodate the ruling class so the peasants' revolt failed.

Later as Europe's industrialization elevated its working class, Christians sought freedom from state churches but maintained prejudice against Africans, whom most regarded as inhuman savages. Through the African Slave Trade, this stronghold of class discrimination mixed with racial prejudice and brought about American atrocities that still demobilize our missions systems today.

Whites brought post-millennialism to America from England and linked it to the ideal of liberty. Many American theologians viewed the freedom won in the Revolutionary War as another God-given opportunity to advance God's global kingdom. Patriotic white post-millennial thinking held that spreading democracy would advance the Gospel and bring the world closer to Christ's return and Utopia.<sup>21</sup> Likewise, black slaves used this liberty ideology, brought forward during the Revolutionary War's Declaration of Independence, to advance their own struggles for freedom.

In summary, to survive political and social oppression through the centuries, Christians repeated a pattern of prejudice against the less fortunate. The Pharisees responded to Roman domination by internalizing feelings of superiority and prejudice against their uneducated, impoverished Jewish countrymen. Contrary to Christ's mercy, leaders in the Roman Catholic Church, in the Protestant Reformation, and among those who came to America seeking freedom maintained prejudices against the less fortunate as well. Many survivors used accomplishments and strict authoritarian rules to achieve status and respect. Their rise to power came at the expense of the certain groups over whom they felt superior. Repeatedly, the Christian elite

social classes in each instance internalized prejudices against these groups and emerged from their own conditions of oppressions wanting to represent or rule the less fortunate. They intended to govern the poor while thinking it best for their own good.

Over the centuries, did not the evil one war against God's purpose using this cycle of repeated oppression? Instead of spreading the knowledge of God's glory, Christians' hungering for status and power when surviving oppression brought shame to Christ. They have discredited His Gospel and Word worldwide since the beginning. Also, during significant movements of survival, Christians invented structures that centralized their power but demobilized the masses, so they failed to complete Christ's Great Commission.

Missionaries and evolutionists fostered this type of survival strategy among the black middle class after the Civil War, which failed to extensively mobilize African Americans for world missions. This failed strategy is called "uplift." In addition, as African Americans became interested in missionary service to Africa, Satan unleashed a barrage of other demobilizing attacks against God's Word, the true Gospel, and the Great Commission on top of Jim Crow oppression. I address the "uplift" problem here and begin to explain the rest of these attacks, which I will cover more extensively in coming chapters.

### **Diagnose Unbiblical Cultural Conceptions**

During the past 150 years, white social scientists came up with two unbiblical concepts of "culture" that demobilize African Americans to this day. Before this time, many viewed culture with prejudice as something only a small segment in any social group "has." Then white social scientist Edwin Taylor championed a concept of culture based upon evolution that violated sound Bible teaching. This led to a widespread view that culture is an evolutionary ladder of progress on which people in social groups could be placed. In this evolutionary thinking, people who were considered "savages" could progress up the culture-ladder to become "barbarians" and then eventually become "civilized." It provided the possibility for anyone to move "up" when having the necessary education and ambition. This evolution-based use of "culture" supported the ideology of colonialism and missionaries who focused on "civilizing" blacks and others.

At the end of the chapter, I will explain how social scientists in the 1950s made popular another unbiblical concept called "cultural relativism" as a hidden barrier to African-American missions mobilization. First, I address the hidden missions problems pertaining to uplift ideology.<sup>22</sup>

### **Diagnose the Missionary Uplift Problem**

Under severe Jim Crow oppression after Reconstruction (after 1870s), and with paternalistic\* input from missionaries, the black middle class adopted uplift's evolution-based concept of culture in an attempt to win full citizenship rights. Strategically thinking members of the African-American middle class wanted to pull themselves up the evolutionary culture-ladder as representatives of the civilized black race. They valued high moral values, hard work, and thrift as the means to earn the respect of influential whites in order to gain equal rights through

them. To prove their worth even more, the black middle class took on the responsibility of “uplifting” and “civilizing” uneducated freed slaves in America. Many whites viewed these ex-slaves as savages on the lowest rung of evolution’s culture ladder in a predicament that most called “the black problem.” When black uplift efforts did not bring equality, some middle-class African Americans became missionaries in a much greater attempt to prove their worth to earn respect and equal rights.<sup>23</sup> They accepted responsibility for uplifting the entire black race in the States and in all of Africa.

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\*With feelings of superiority and believing it best for black peoples’ own good, missionaries watched over, encouraged dependence, governed and/or limited the autonomy of African-Americans.

Imagine wanting full rights as an American citizen so much that you unsuccessfully resist Jim Crow injustices by shouldering the problems that slavery and colonialism imposed on the black race. Picture climbing against racists sentiments of the same white people you want to impress in order to earn civil rights and acceptance - only to find in the end that you remain on square one. Now, consider the problem of adding Jesus’ Great Commission to this struggle for basic rights. Would you want to risk your life in Africa to earn whites’ respect only to be treated as a second-class citizen upon your return? Can you feel the demobilizing weight of hidden problems in uplift missions ideology? Obviously, unbiblical ideas about culture-evolution created this flawed missions ideology so uplift failed to mobilize African Americans extensively.

Let me give you the history of how uplift ideology played out. When the Declaration of Independence motivated both slaves and abolitionists to demand liberty and equality for African Americans, home missionary societies began sending missionaries to the South to work among slaves to “uplift” the race. This early ideology of racial uplift assumed that African Americans would gain full rights and freedom. Many abolitionists believed that slave emancipation would also be the clincher that ushered in Christ’s kingdom.

Severe Jim Crow racism, segregation, disfranchisement, job discrimination, and anti-black violence that followed Reconstruction led the white missionaries and black middle class to limit uplift ideology to lesser objectives. In this desperate racist context, they settled for an uplift ideology that no longer pursued equal rights and freedom. They emphasized, instead, Christianizing and civilizing the black race to bring on Christ’s return and peace. By not pursuing full citizen rights and freedom for African Americans, missionary uplift ideology brought lasting demobilizing consequences.

Historians and sociologists have written much about uplift ideology. I focus on how its principles demobilized African Americans in spite of its focus on sending black missionaries to Africa.

Missionary uplift ideology created a hunger for status, emphasized self-help and achievement to impress influential whites, reduced Biblical morality to just a means to counter white racists myths, increased class division and discrimination, encouraged dependency on wealthy philanthropists, increased acceptance of evolution theory, reduced credibility of Biblical moral standards, and set the stage for black acceptance of liberalism’s attack on the Bible.

Harr concluded in 1945 that the absence of black missionaries was a white problem. Instead, uplift ideology after the Civil War blamed almost every problem on the black lower class. White missionaries challenged the black middle-class Christians to solve the “Negro Problem” through uplift. As I said before, many whites believed that the lower class black masses were innately inferior, immoral, and disorderly barbarians.

This same kind of prejudice surfaced again in the Tuskegee Syphilis Study, where medical professionals viewed sharecroppers who contracted syphilis with the same low regard. With prejudice against people of lower incomes and morals, doctors justified withholding life-saving medicine from them using deception. This kind of prejudice plagues uplift ideology.

Being called “a problem” showed the desperate existence of African Americans after the Civil War. In this oppressive context, the black middle class took on the responsibility of representing and uplifting the black race. They attempted to earn the respect of influential white people in order to achieve full citizenship rights for the race.<sup>24</sup>

Notice again what the white Episcopal Methodist bishop said to African Americans at the start of Bowen’s Congress on Africa (Italics added): “Determine that you will *solve your own problem* by being true to the estate to which you are called in these latter days.”<sup>25</sup>

By blaming blacks for their low social status, uplift thinking created a class distinction between middle and lower class African Americans. Christians upholding uplift ideology based one’s status on a hard work, high moral standards, fathers providing for their families as head of their homes, thrift, and property ownership. Many middle-class black Christians highlighted the differences between themselves and the lower class in an attempt to show influential whites the progress of the black race. By contrasting themselves with the lower class, they tried to demonstrate with their relative progress that the black race deserved full rights of American citizenship.

Unfortunately, many middle-class African Americans internalized white racism and made degrading judgments about the black lower class. Like whites, many in the black middle class blamed the lower class for their inferior status and took it upon themselves to represent the race as the “better class.”<sup>26</sup> These degrading comments reinforced whites’ prejudices and enabled status quo racial discrimination. This enabling gave white society reasons to continue blaming the black race as the problem instead of ending its Jim Crow oppression. Therefore, uplift’s self-help ideology did not challenge white racist myths and exploitative structures that prevented black progress.<sup>27</sup>

Indeed, missionary self-help and uplift beliefs failed to earn civil rights for African Americans. Whites often frustrated middle-class blacks by ignoring them. Southern whites made no distinction between members of the stratified black social classes when inflicting Jim Crow oppression. Also, the black middle class’s criticism of the lower classes, regardless of race, prevented African Americans from all classes from being extensively mobilized as missionaries.

For example, I am not the first to challenge college students to bring a spiritual uprising to fulfill Christ’s Commission. The Student Volunteer Movement (SVM), started by the white

evangelist D. L. Moody, held a national convention and made the same challenge in 1898. The SVM had become a student-led missionary recruiting organization that existed for 50 years after the Civil War and mobilized an estimated 20,000 white missionaries to serve overseas.<sup>28</sup> After its first 10 years of recruiting white students at 400 colleges, the SVM held this convention and published its call for a student uprising.<sup>29</sup>

John W. E. Bowen, the prominent African-American theology professor at Howard University and the historically black Gammon Theological Seminary, spoke at this convention. He addressed the need and possibilities for SVM to mobilize black students for foreign missions. He cast a wonderful vision for HBCUs to equip missionaries for Africa but stopped short of challenging their African-American students to rise up for Christ's cause.

Instead of calling on black students to fulfill the Great Commission, Bowen called fellow African Americans, as a group, a "raw, restless, dumb, stupid, stubborn, superstitious, and corrupted race thrown into the lap of American Christianity." He described African-American ministers this way: Large in proportion of the ministry, because of intellectual weakness and moral inefficiency, is unable to check the degenerate growth. They are blind leaders of the blind moving with fateful rapidity to the ditch of destruction . . . many would serve God better upon their knees on the old-time Methodist mourners bench than orating in the pulpit.<sup>30</sup>

The SVM published Bowen's speech that challenged whites to evangelize and train African-American students in order to reach Africa. Before identifying the black colleges, he called on the whites, as men of God, to bring the Gospel to them or "the sweetness of our American life will be corrupted by the virus of lawlessness and crime."<sup>31</sup>

Interestingly, Bowen made his indictment against blacks during the same time period when William Sheppard, an African-American HBCU alumnus, became a world-famous missionary to Africa. He enrolled in Hampton (Institute) University in 1880<sup>32</sup> and left for Africa as a Presbyterian missionary in 1890.<sup>33</sup> His overseas departure came just two years after Bowen had stereotyped African Americans as stupid and their spiritual leaders as intellectually weak.

Class consciousness became the big issue in forming black identities in Bowen's day. Blacks and whites in the South made the distinction between African Americans who were and were not considered respectable. As mentioned beforehand, many whites and elite blacks stereotyped African Americans who lived in the lower socioeconomic class as barbarians.<sup>34</sup>

Blacks sought to accomplish something unusual and exemplary with high moral character and virtue to prove their fitness for responsibility. Doubting the whole black race's ability to amalgamate into white society, many attempted to become the strongest and fittest in order to achieve acceptance on an individual basis.<sup>35</sup> Middle-class blacks stood aloof from the black masses but served to elevate members of their race.<sup>36</sup> To form their identities as black men, African Americans invented traditions and used speeches, writings, and organizational networking.<sup>37</sup>

Some middle-class African Americans became missionaries after the Civil War and used all of these strategies to form their identities as respectable men. Whites esteemed missionaries as celebrities, while feeling superior to the "heathen" and "savages" living on the missions fields.



Therefore, some African Americans made missions their exemplary achievement to earn super-respectability.<sup>38</sup> Their missions reports back to the States provided opportunities for writings. They made speeches when they returned, impressing large crowds of white people with stories about great feats among cannibals and wild animals. Missions provided many networking connections as well.

William Sheppard exhibited these identity development strategies as an African-American missionary to the Congo. However, white Christians managed to treat him as a statesman during his speeches, but as a second-class citizen otherwise.<sup>39</sup>

White prejudice fostered the requirement that black missionaries must also be the strongest, most educated, and most fit of their race for missionary responsibilities.<sup>40</sup> Uneducated African Americans living below the middle class had no chance of being sent out as missionaries overseas.

Sheppard, and the few middle-class African Americans who also went to the field, endured prejudices at home that no white missionary faced. One white leader opposed sending Sheppard to the Congo, for example, fearing that single African-American men could not handle the sexual temptations facing them in Africa.<sup>41</sup>

Some whites supported Sheppard and other African Americans with racist hopes that these missionaries would take the rest of the blacks who lived in the U.S. with them. Others saw the advantages that black missionaries provided for opening trade with African tribes so white Americans could exploit Africa's natural resources like the European nations that scrambled to divide and colonize the continent.<sup>42</sup>

Looking back, I conclude that Bowen's negative stereotyping of blacks enabled whites to deem them unfit for white missions structures. Apparently Bowen affirmed his own identity as a respectable man with influential whites by describing African Americans so negatively at the SVM convention.

Again, the black middle class distanced themselves from the black underclass that most white people still regarded as barbarians. Hoping to show the progress of their race, black Christian leaders severely criticized the lower class and the unchurched. When uplift failed to bring acceptance at home, blacks turned to missionary service in Africa as the means to acquire the respect, status, and rights that racism denied them in America.

A missions professor at a black seminary with funding for African-American missionaries, Bowen tried to earn respect but instead enabled the segregated, imperialistic white status quo to continue unchallenged in missions.

I make this judgment based upon his documentation of the Congress on Africa. First, the only quote that he recorded came from the white bishop who affirmed African-American potential to demonstrate their manhood and earn respect through missions. Second, instead of challenging African Americans to mobilize, Bowen put on display the spiritual and mental capacities of the African-American participants by ending his minutes with these praises: There certainly has not been gathered in any other city a more august body of colored divines and men of brains and eloquence in their race since the days of slavery.<sup>43</sup> Sounds like to me that Bowen

was documenting an intelligent, civilized black identity that countered the racists' opinions of white society about black barbarianism.

Third, the congress made a motion in its minutes inviting church members to attend the Cotton States and International Exposition that presented "trades and handicrafts," which stood as "magnificent object lessons of the capacity and ability of the Afro-American" and "which speak so eloquently for the race."<sup>44</sup>

Fourth, white convention speakers got away with white racist propaganda. Whites praised Europeans highly for dividing and occupying Africa to subjugate its people in order to civilize them. They celebrated how white missionaries worked in partnership with European occupying governments and with exploitative traders. One speaker gave thanks for the selfishness of European colonialism that he believed would Christianize Africa. He expressed compassion for European workers who would go hungry if their industries could not export to its colonies in Africa. He praised Belgium's King Leopold as a Christian hero.<sup>45</sup> In reality, Leopold's greed and treachery left thousands of Africans murdered, disabled, dehumanized, and enslaved in the Congo while he destroyed their economy and nonrenewable natural resources.<sup>46</sup> White speakers praised European countries for sending whites by the millions to live in Africa and bring their civilizations.<sup>47</sup>

None of the African-American speakers confronted the whites' imperialistic perspectives. They challenged, instead, the congress to make empowering African indigenous leaders its absolute priority. One black speaker eloquently expressed racial pride by heralding the great heritage, dignity, and potential of the Africans.

At this early time, these black speakers did not anticipate how missionary partnerships with European colonialism prevented indigenous leadership development and supported white oppression of Africans. Speakers warned about the consequences of government injustices, but white speakers offset them by predicting that the European scramble for Africa would bring missionaries great advantages.<sup>48</sup>

I believe Bowen remained silent as white speakers supported imperialistic missions, and then denounced African Americans in his speech at the SVM convention a few years later, because he was the product of white missionary attempts to civilize blacks in the South. A former slave himself, Bowen was in the difficult process of developing his new identity within the context of an extremely racist, white-dominated society. He, therefore, enabled white racists' structures in missions to go unchallenged. He inadvertently enabled white Christians to continue their status quo imperialistic missions systems.

### **Booker T. Washington Accommodated the Problem**

Booker T. Washington became the most powerful African American in the country. He made missionary uplift ideology almost mandatory in many HBCUs. He graduated from Hampton Institute and founded Tuskegee Institute with missionary support. Washington not only embraced uplift's self-help ideology but also held that it should come about gradually as blacks laid a foundation for progress through vocational training. Washington insisted that black

colleges teach vocational skills rather than higher liberal arts education. Since white racial discrimination prevented most African Americans from obtaining professional jobs, Washington wanted to train them for agriculture work. An accommodationist, he conceded that blacks should remain segregated and live in submission to whites to survive.

Washington received extensive financial support for his accommodation to segregationists and cooperation with industrialists who wanted to control and limit black labor to farm work. His financial support came from wealthy missionary and industrial philanthropists. If one added together the endowments of Washington's Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes in 1922, the amount would be more than twice the size of all the rest of the HBCUs' endowments combined.<sup>49</sup>

At Tuskegee Institute, Washington pursued uplift ideology's quest of proving African Americans' worth to influential whites in a racist society. He considered Tuskegee to be a crucial test of African-American abilities. He designed its facilities and pushed the faculty to maintain images of perfection and efficiency, being extremely sensitive to the impressions the school made on outsiders.<sup>50</sup>

Booker T. Washington advised two U.S. presidents, and a number of black professionals were indebted to him for federal jobs, appointments, and favors.<sup>51</sup> He vindictively shut down criticism of his industrial education emphasis by getting people fired from their jobs or by preventing their institutions from getting philanthropists' funding.

Civil rights leader W. E. B. Dubois criticized Washington anyway. He accused Washington of asking blacks to submit to Jim Crow oppression and thereby surrender political power, civil rights, and the opportunity for higher liberal arts education.<sup>52</sup> Incidentally, Washington lived in an "imposing residence" at Tuskegee Institute, and his children attended prep schools in New England and black liberal arts colleges. Although he wanted low-income families to limit their education to industrial training in the South, his daughters traveled to Paris for music studies.<sup>53</sup>

Dubois laid out a gracious but unsuccessful appeal to Bowen and other black leaders to end their silence and take a stand against Washington's compromise that surrendered blacks' civil rights.<sup>54</sup>

With his silence, Bowen allowed Booker T. Washington to cancel out the missions mobilization potential of the Congress on Africa during its same weekend. Remember that Bowen held his missionary convention during the Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition. Washington did not appear in Bowen's minutes from the Congress of Africa, but whites had chosen him to speak as a representative of African Americans at the same exposition.

Washington's speech became known as the "Atlanta Compromise" because he gave in to segregation and emphasized self-help initiatives, vocational training, and accommodation rather than insisting on full black civil rights. His speech gave him national prominence but reinforced many southern whites' racist justification of Jim Crow segregation, disfranchisement, and violent enforcement.<sup>55</sup> In the face of anti-black violence, Washington remained conciliatory and purposefully avoided politics. All this occurred while southern racists managed to equate African-American social equity with a myth that black men innately wanted to rape white

women. In reality, African-American women lived in danger of rape by white employers and landlords. Lynching prevented retaliation and enforced other Jim Crow injustices.

Twenty years after his death, the legacy Washington left behind demobilized African-Americans who followed his philosophies. For instance, in 1915, African-American Robert R. Moton succeeded him as Tuskegee Institute's Principal and continued Washington's accommodationalism. Tuskegee's Syphilis Study began during his tenure and continued with his endorsement. Through Tuskegee Institute's expansion to Liberia, Morton exported Washington's political compromise and industrial education philosophies to Africa. Under Morton's leadership, Tuskegee Institute reinforced white racism, paternalism, business interests, and colonialism in Africa. Morton received funding for expansion there from white philanthropists who had rejected the Bible's authority and true Gospel.<sup>56</sup> He focused more on education expansion and African politics than mobilizing missionaries.<sup>57</sup> Yet, missions agencies at the 1917 Christian Occupation of Africa conference endorsed the replication of Washington's industrial/agricultural education model across Africa.<sup>58</sup> A conference speaker concluded that African Americans who received a higher level of education than Washington's agricultural system provided were more likely to succumb to "fleshly passions."<sup>59</sup>

Several factors contributed to the end of Tuskegee's educational expansion to Africa in the 1930s. Washington's accommodation politics became irrelevant and unappealing to African nations pursuing independence from European governments. Moton retired from Tuskegee Institute in 1935, and the new president did not maintain its focus on Africa. Also, World War I and the Great Depression reduced financial donations.<sup>60</sup>

### **Uplift Failed With Deadly Consequences**

Ten years after Bowen's Congress on Africa and Booker T. Washington's compromise speech, missionary uplift's house of cards crashed during the Atlanta Race Riots. The promise that good citizenship earned blacks respectability and civil rights lost credibility when race-baiting candidates for governor incited a mob to riot by publishing rape allegations against black men. Bowen suffered injuries when he opened his campus to rescue African Americans from a white mob. He had called the police for protection, but some of the black men taking refuge there mistook them for the mob and shot at them. This defensive action resulted in a policeman beating Bowen's head with the butt of a rifle.<sup>61</sup>

Ironically, unchurched, "lower-class" African Americans armed themselves during the riots and prevented white mobs from killing black middle-class residents.<sup>62</sup> These defenders came from the same class of black people whom Bowen had denounced as barbarians. Remember how Bowen, a black seminary professor, told white students that they needed to evangelize these men in to protect the American way of life?

Inevitably, violent Jim Crow oppression destroyed Booker T. Washington's credibility with many African Americans. Yet fearing financial repercussions, few blacks dared to criticize his ideologies. Until his death in 1915, Washington remained the broker of government jobs, favors, and philanthropist donations for middle-class African Americans.<sup>63</sup>

In addition, as black and white Christians became more racially segregated after emancipation, black Christians divided by social status and economic classes. As African Americans migrated north, churches and denominations divided along class lines, educational levels, and worship styles. Black traditional denominations and storefront Pentecostal churches separated from each other. By the 1920s, secular institutions had replaced missionaries and some churches as leading voices among the black middle class. The NAACP, black nationalist organizations, and freemasonry became more influential than black-led churches in some places.

In the 1920s, the more militant “New Negro” ideology took hold and caused the respect of African Americans for white missionaries and black clergy to decline. Criticism increased against white missionaries who practiced segregation while paternalistically governing HBCUs by enforcing stringent rules and dress codes.<sup>64</sup> Black nationalists like Marcus Garvey added to uplift ideology, among other things, the conviction that only African Americans should govern black people. They also criticized African Americans who received funding from whites.

How African Americans defined manhood underwent changes during this time. Previously with uplift ideology, they determined status and judged manhood by one’s character and accomplishments. As I said, manhood depended on high moral standards, productivity, education, authoritative rule in the home, providing to protect one’s wife by keeping her out of the work force, thrift, and property ownership. Marriages suffered because racial discrimination prevented many African Americans from achieving these ideals regardless of how hard they worked.

During the 1920s Jazz Age, many younger African Americans began to judge manhood based on physical masculinity, sexual virility, and personal possessions.<sup>65</sup> These changes influenced HBCU students who protested against white missionary paternalism, strict rules, and racial segregation. As a result, many of these colleges dropped their uplift moral standards. Although missionaries established them to equip black missionaries for Africa, HBCUs began allowing their students to party on their campuses.<sup>66</sup>

With this new criteria for manliness, many African Americans began regarding black pastors as feminine, corrupt, or as white-controlled puppets.<sup>67</sup> Middle-class African Americans not only internalized white prejudice against lower class blacks, many also discriminated against the lower class whites and new immigrants.<sup>68</sup>

Unbiblical (Psalm 18:27) missionary uplift failed to elevate the black race. Never did Christ command His disciples to trust in an ideology, ethics, or moral performance to fulfill God purposes. Hungering for status and seeking society’s respect contradicted God’s grace and opposed the call to self-sacrificially bear Christ’s reproach. Uplift ideology became a counterfeit to God’s grace and true faith in Christ. Uplift’s failure discredited the true Gospel, the Word of God, Biblical holiness, thrift, family values, and world evangelization.

### **Did the Lord Choose African Americans to Break the Cycle?**

Perhaps the Lord of the Harvest chose blacks to end the oppression cycle that opposed His eternal purposes through the centuries. Perhaps Bowen’s missions vision failed because Christ

would not allow this limited, corrupt and class-conscious version to be exported by African Americans to Africa. Did He prevent African Americans from teaching demobilizing uplift ideology in Africa like white missionaries had done in the States? For instance, about the same time that white missions agencies stopped sending out African Americans in the 1920s, because of racial prejudice and to accommodate imperialistic colonialism, these agencies organized to instill “missionary spirit” ideology to uplift Africans. Perhaps God prevented African Americans from joining in with whites to repeat uplift’s demobilizing prejudice in Africa. In any event, motivated only by love and grace, become His vanguard change-agent. Lead freely and extend mercy without uplift’s prejudice or wanting to earn acceptance and status.

Although Christians usually attempt to enlist middle-class African Americans for missions, the Lord requires you to mobilize without regard to socio-economic backgrounds. Muster racially and economically diverse believers for the Gospel’s sake. Tear down the spiritual stronghold of class-conscious racial discrimination in obedience to Christ.

I concur with some historians who offered reasons why professional African Americans participated in the Tuskegee Syphilis Study. These historians raise the possibility that the African-American professionals’ desire to succeed in white-dominated society, hunger for status, economic dependency, and prejudice against lower class immoral sharecroppers increased their willingness to collaborate in this atrocity.<sup>69</sup> If so, then this experiment warns how destructive missionary uplift ideologies may become.

### **A Barrage of Demobilizing Spiritual Attacks**

The worst demobilizing spiritual attacks in black history occurred after World War II. I believe that previous missionary uplift ideology set up African-American leaders for the most spiritually destructive consequences yet to come. In this time period, white false teachers contrived and passed on to black theologians untrue doctrine. Through these black leaders, this wrong doctrine became accepted at the HBCU seminaries that trained pastors. The following false theologies might not have much meaning to you at this point, but as Christ’s vanguard you will need to recognize and refute them: liberal theology, liberation theology, prosperity theology, and the social gospel. I provide a brief overview of their demobilizing effects.

After the Civil War, most Christians accepted the Bible as authoritative but also were influenced by the scientific revolution that seemed to contradict it. The Civil War and Darwin’s Theory of Evolution changed and divided white people’s thinking about Christ, the Bible, and missions. The Civil War and two world wars ended post-millennial optimism for most American Christians. The Civil War marked the turning point that shook their faith in the true Gospel’s power to dominate evil and bring world peace.<sup>70</sup>

White liberal theologians attacked the Bible’s supernatural inspiration, miracles, and authority wanting to reconcile it to Darwin’s evolution theory. They destroyed trust in the Bible and its revelation of Jesus Christ as God and Savior. They reduced the glory of Christ to just His humanity and ethics.

This liberal theology replaced the Bible's true Gospel with a bogus one based on doing good works rather than personal salvation by grace and through faith in Jesus Christ. Already inclined to social outreach, many post-millennialists adopted this false teaching. Called "the social gospel," this new doctrine focused on confronting social injustices in institutions' structures rather than the sins of individuals.<sup>71</sup> The social gospel's emphasis on bringing liberation to the poor and oppressed became known as liberation theology in the past century. Liberation theology reduces Jesus' death to a political act limited to justice on earth. It holds that His death does not pay the punishment for sins, but instead, politically empowers people to overcome oppression in this life. It fails to recognize the need for Christ's atonement of God's wrath for sins.<sup>72</sup>

Seeking justice only in this life, those who believe liberation theology reject God's work of justice to give eternal life. The Bible teaches that God is holy and decreed that the penalty for sin is death. Jesus, God the Son, paid this death penalty for sin, and rose again, to satisfy God's justice so that His mercy may flow to us. In short, God punished Jesus instead of punishing us. When we turn from sin and put our trust in Jesus Christ as God and our substitute, who bore our sins in His body on the cross, the Father Himself declares us righteous and gives us eternal life as a free gift. Our lives change because we become united with Christ and His death. We are also raised to a new life and in a personal relationship with God. Having received justice and mercy, we follow Christ as His disciple on a mission of gratitude and love. Our purpose is to proclaim this good news of eternal life with acts of justice and by extending mercy in this life to make more disciples of Christ for the glory of God.

By rejecting God's work of justice to forgive sin through Christ's substitutionary atonement, liberal theologians bear the penalty of sins themselves in this life and eternally. Therefore, they reject knowing Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

Many who believe in Liberation Theology, especially Black Liberation Theology, assume falsely that people who believe in Christ's spiritual atonement for sin on the cross do not care about social and political liberation from oppression.<sup>73</sup> Unresolved past hurts make it an either-or proposition to them. Your vanguard leadership will prove them wrong as you confront unjust structures and, at the same time, proclaim the true Gospel's salvation from sin and God's wrath.

In America, white post-millennialism's ideals of social progress and liberty became the foundation for the social gospel, liberation theology, and prosperity theology. Prosperity preachers used post-millennial kingdom-building doctrine to claim "dominion" in this life to gain financial and health prosperity.<sup>74</sup>

Well known for his black liberation theology, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright wrote, "We have a culture that is African in origin - not English or European. Rightly dividing the Word of Truth means taking seriously the culture that produced the Word." He wrote this statement to denounce prosperity theology preachers as "pimps" whose gospel he condemns as European capitalism.<sup>75</sup>

Interestingly, Rev. Wright's method of handling the Word's interpretation has its roots in the post-millennial doctrine of Britain's capitalists, colonialists, and missionaries. His liberation

theology was built upon the same spiritualizing Bible-interpretation system used by England's Christians to support expanding its empire. This interpretation system also produced "the word" used in prosperity theology preaching based on post-millennialism's kingdom doctrine.

Now some black pastors want to make up a new theology based totally on past African beliefs because they realize that both evangelical and liberal theology came by way of Europeans.<sup>76</sup> Yet to do so, they must handle the Bible like white evolutionists who say beliefs are also evolving.

By the 1930s, white Christian thinking became polarized between two doctrinal positions on the Bible, missions, and social justice. Those who still believed that the Bible is the God-breathed, authoritative, infallible Word of God, which He gave without error, separated from the growing number of churches and seminaries that did not. Those adopting liberal doctrine no longer held to this high regard of the Bible and to the true Gospel of salvation. For example, the Student Volunteer Movement ended after its leaders sided with liberal theology, forsook faith in the authority of God's Word, and lost its commitment to world evangelism.<sup>77</sup>

### **Liberalism's Counterfeit Mission**

Those accepting the social Gospel's reliance on ethics instead of faith in Christ invented a false, counterfeit mission to replace Christ's true Great Commission. They rejected Christ as the only way to receive eternal life. Keeping their optimism for bringing world peace from their roots in post-millennialism, these liberals turned Jesus' Great Commission into a mandate to establish a global and morally ethical community. Instead of obeying Him as the risen, exalted Lord and Christ, their bogus mission only accepted Jesus' moral ethics, liberation from structural oppression, and compassion for the poor. Instead of proclaiming Jesus as the only way to the Father, they disregarding His claims as God, made all religions equal to His teaching, and treated Him like a mere man as though He were dead. They partnered with secular humanists in governments worldwide to improve civilizations like past British missionaries attempted with England's colonialism.

I repeat this history for emphasis. Liberals invented a false global mission that they substituted for Christ's true mandate. They changed His Commission to "building a global community." White liberal missionaries and philanthropists introduced this false mission at HBCUs. Likewise, white liberal seminaries gave potential black leaders scholarships and taught them this counterfeit commission. These seminaries emphasized cultural relativism, which meant accepting all other existing religions as equal to the Gospel of Christ. This generation of African-American leaders became champions of this false mission at HBCUs and other universities.<sup>78</sup>

Cultural relativism taught that no one should place value judgments on the many unique and diverse world cultures that it claims are morally equal.<sup>79</sup> Unfortunately, theologians include religion in the definition of culture and hold that all beliefs are equally valid, including those that reject the Bible's authority, moral absolutes, and Gospel of individual salvation through faith in



Jesus Christ. Since cultural relativism opposes racism, prominent African-American theologians adopted its unbiblical and demobilizing ideology.

Tragically, during this same time period, many white Bible-believing, missionary-sending Christians, including their seminaries, remained segregated. As a result, most black theologians naturally accepted “building a global community” as Christ’s Commission and taught liberal theology’s cultural relativism at HBCUs. Many rejected adamantly His true mandate of proclaiming faith in only Christ for personal salvation as an example of whites oppressively imposing their culture on other peoples.<sup>80</sup>

Those believing the Bible and Christ’s true mission reacted by focusing only on preaching the true Gospel and lost any vision of making institutional structural changes for social justice.<sup>81</sup> Christians remaining committed to the authority of the Bible became known as fundamentalists\* who defended the essential fundamentals of the Bible. The fundamentalists also separated from theologians who believed that only certain parts of the Bible contained God’s Word. Defending the Bible and separation from false teachers became a focus of fundamentalist thinking. Prior to this controversy, many fundamentalists conducted extensive social outreaches. Unfortunately, in reaction to liberalism’s false gospel and commission, fundamentalists eliminated social outreach from their missions to rapidly avoid anything that resembled the liberals’ social gospel.<sup>82</sup>

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\*Generally, fundamentalists separate themselves from liberal theologians who do not believe and teach sound Bible doctrine. Also, most fundamentalists usually, or used to, separate from those who fellowship with liberals. During my generation, for example, fundamentalists did not partner with Billy Graham because he invited traditional denominations to participate in his crusades. Fundamentalists considered these denominations as permanently liberal and refused to support Graham. In the 1960s, Bible-believing Christians who worked with Billy Graham began calling themselves “evangelicals” instead of “fundamentalists.” I try to avoid being labeled. However, since I use labels often in this book to explain how different groups effect missions mobilization, I will call myself an evangelical. In prayer, evangelism, and social outreach, I cooperate with, and perhaps seek to transform, a few traditional mainline Christian denominations. As you read on, also notice my determination to re-combine fundamentalist Biblical convictions with social outreach. To fold together the same essential doctrines held by evangelicals and fundamentalists, I utilize the label “fundamentalist” to describe both. In the same sweeping way, I use the label “liberal” to lump together Christianity’s range of theology that does not accept the Bible as God’s inspired, trustworthy, and authoritative Word. I address vital doctrinal differences between Christianity’s theological fundamentalism and liberalism that impact the mobilization of African Americans for world missions.

Yet, liberal theology’s deceptive criticism of God’s Word brings spiritual and moral demise wherever people, churches, and seminaries adopt it. This spiritual deadness is quite evident in Germany today where liberalism’s false teaching began. A prayer guide published by Operation World described recently the consequences of Germany’s liberal doctrine:

The nation’s spiritual health is failing. Humanism and destructive criticism of the Bible in the 19th Century churches opened the way to compromise and to pagan Nazi tyranny in the 20th. Post-war dynamics accelerated the secularization and de-Christianization of society. Symptoms of this sickness are:

The marginalization of Christianity. The Church is widely perceived as irrelevant, and open hostility to anything Christian is increasing.

The rise of false religious teachings. New Age, the occult, Satanism and other religions, including new expressions of pre-Christian paganism, are increasing.

Mental illnesses are occurring in record numbers, including clinical depression. Suicide is the second-largest killer of 15-29 year olds. Gruesome crimes and killings are also on the rise as many lack a moral foundation to their worldview.<sup>83</sup>

White liberals' false mission demobilizes through spiritual destruction. Built upon this same European liberal heresy, black liberation theology brings the same result. For instance, in the 1890s, a white Virginian seminary student named Sparks W. Melton began a journey that significantly increased liberalism's demobilizing effect upon African Americans. His journey coincided with Bowen and the Student Volunteer Movement's ineffective calls for reaching and sending African Americans to uplift Africa.

Melton's journey began when he ventured north and attended Pennsylvania's Crozer Seminary.<sup>84</sup> He later became Norfolk's most influential pastor for 40 years in its most prominent Baptist church. As a Crozer trustee in 1942, Melton arranged a full tuition scholarship for an African-American student, Samuel D. Proctor, in contrast to many fundamentalist schools that remained segregated.<sup>85</sup> By the time Proctor accepted this scholarship, Melton and Crozer Seminary supported evolution and taught liberal theology, both of which Proctor soon championed. Proctor's influence radically impacted HBCUs, our nation, and the world. Yet Melton and Proctor's liberal legacies demobilized blacks worldwide and still undermine Christ's Commission to this day. This history sets the stage for African-American demobilization today.

In the next two chapters, I use the lives of these men to illustrate how white liberalism became a devastating hidden hurdle to African-American involvement in missions. In Chapter 12, I challenge you to defend sound doctrine when establishing your vanguard ministry upon God's Word. I contrast the lives of two African-American leaders from Norfolk who went in opposite doctrinal directions. One chose the broader path to fame that white liberalism offered. Accepting evolution's theory, he championed this white false teaching at HBCUs. I will challenge you to take the narrower, less popular path to defend the Bible's authority, proclaim the true Gospel and mobilize for Christ's real mission.

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## **Chapter 12**

### **Choose the Narrow Road from Norfolk**

#### *A Vanguard Defends Sound Doctrine*

In 1921, two significant African-American leaders, the late Pastor James Drew and the late Dr. Samuel Proctor, were born in Norfolk. While I assisted Drew for eight years, he told me many stories about his childhood experiences growing up in the Titustown community. Proctor wrote in his autobiography that he was raised in Norfolk's Huntersville neighborhood.<sup>1</sup> His grandfather pastored a church in Titustown, and his grandparents lived in its parsonage nearby; so, I assume that Proctor might have crossed paths with Drew during their childhoods.<sup>2</sup>

As young men, these future leaders faced the same challenges of following Christ in a segregated, white-dominated society. Also, both came on the scene as the severe controversy between white "fundamentalist" and white "liberal" theologians required them to choose between two opposing doctrinal positions. They had to accept one side or the other in order to benefit from white-controlled seminary systems. By this time, each white seminary had chosen to teach dogmatically either fundamentalism or liberalism's presuppositions about the reliability and authority of the Bible.

Drew and Proctor took opposite theological roads from the same starting point. Contrasting their lives and ministries provides a case study about the reasons why many African Americans do not participate in evangelical missions. I believe that the existence of these two pathways came about as result of an intense spiritual warfare that had been raging among white churches, denominations, and seminaries. By tearing down enemy strongholds in their paths, a vanguard defends the masses from the front. I give insights in this chapter on the spiritual warfare surrounding the Bible that you will face when strategically mobilizing the masses for missions.

This chapter provides historical background to this spiritual conflict so you may strategically defend the true Gospel and the authority of God's Word. By contrasting the doctrinal choices of Drew and Proctor, I expose the demobilizing consequences of choosing to believe white liberals' attacks on the Bible. This contrast challenges you to join a movement of African-American believers who respect the Bible's authority and take a stand against false liberal theology. Follow the example of the Apostle Paul who constantly defended and confirmed the true Gospel while using the Bible to persuade people to believe and follow Jesus. (Philippians 1:7, Acts 28:23) Additionally, I show how entering into a personal relationship with Christ provides the vital spiritual foundation for social action.

#### **Entering White Spiritual Warfare**

As I said in an earlier chapter, I believe that post-millennialism and missionary uplift ideologies were a part of Satan's setup for his spiritual ambush that came after the turn of the 20th century. Whites holding these ideologies trusted in evolutionary social progress, morality, productivity, and civilization but devalued sound Bible doctrine and the true Gospel. At Bowen's Congress on Africa, for example, no one used the Bible, and none spoke of the

transforming power of the Gospel and God's Word. To review, while African Americans struggled under white racist discrimination after the Civil War, Satan was unleashing a fierce spiritual attack on three fronts against whites and their faith in God's Word and the Gospel of Christ.

First, during a time of industrial and scientific revolution, Darwin's evolutionary theory rocked the faith of many whites. Second, German theologians applied evolution theory to Bible interpretation. They took the position that miracles were irrational myths that must be removed from the Bible. They invented "higher criticism," a method of Bible interpretation that attempted to discredit anything supernatural to make it collaborate with evolution. They rejected the Bible's authority and made themselves the authority instead. White liberals studying abroad brought this destructive attack on the Bible to America, and it eventually swept through traditional seminaries and the secular colleges that taught religion classes. Third, a notion became popular with many white Americans that science should determine theology. Their modern ideology taught that there could be no reconciliation between science and faith. Their faith applied to ethics and social outreach but not to the supernatural.

Many post-millennialists accepted this attack on the Bible's authority and the true Gospel. They had become disillusioned with previous kingdom-building expectations after the Civil War. They adopted this modern ideology to focus on ethics and try to change, what they believed, was an evolving society. This evolution-based ideology fit well with their past optimism for uplifting civilizations through social progress. Soon they changed the Gospel's definition. They limited the Gospel to falsely include only salvation from societies' sins instead of trusting in Jesus Christ for personal salvation from individual sins. Known as the "social gospel," it became popular among white liberals until the First World War's atrocities discredited its emphasis on creating a global community. This heated theological controversy among white theologians in the last century left the country spiritually divided.

African-American students wanting to find their identities in ministry after World War II entered into the aftermath of this spiritual devastation. On the one hand they encountered white segregated fundamentalists reeling from humiliating defeats in their defense of God's Word. For example, a leading fundamentalist spokesman lost a nationally-covered debate on whether evolution should be taught in schools. Once leaders in social outreach, fundamentalists reversed their past support of social action to avoid anything that looked like the liberals' social gospel. On the other hand, most traditional white seminaries and denominations adopted higher criticism and became liberal. In contrast to the fundamentalists' segregation, white liberal seminaries welcomed key African-American students and provided them scholarships. By accepting African Americans, white liberals found the future leaders needed to champion social gospel doctrines that most whites began rejecting after World War I.

As Pastors Drew and Proctor began preparing for ministry in the 1950s, they took opposite doctrinal roads. This chapter explains how Dr. Proctor became the white liberals' champion who took up their attacks on the Bible and its true Gospel.<sup>3</sup> He especially championed white false teaching at HBCUs. Drew took the road less-followed, at that time, by many African-American

leaders. Looking back on this history, we see how the true Gospel eventually prevailed, as God's power of salvation for everyone who believes, just in time for your vanguard leadership.

### **A Narrower Road**

As young men, both Drew and Proctor encountered fundamentalists who believed and taught that the Bible is the authoritative and trustworthy Word of God. Fundamentalists defended essential doctrines founded upon the belief that God inspired men supernaturally to write the Bible without error when given. The Bible is God-breathed, but He did not dictate His revelation to make the writers into robots. God used human language so that it must be interpreted in the normal, literal sense.

Therefore, the essential Bible doctrines defended by fundamentalists were always that Jesus Christ is God the Son, born of a virgin, died as a substitute to pay the punishment for our sins, rose again, commissioned His disciples to make disciples of all nations, and will come again as promised. They believed the Bible's teaching of a literal heaven and hell. They believed that everyone must be born again by putting their faith in Jesus Christ as God and Savior. To fundamentalists, these nonnegotiable essentials have eternal consequences.

Unfortunately, after the Civil War, many seminaries that defended these true doctrines also practiced racial segregation. They remained silent during Jim Crow oppression and the Civil Rights Movement. Their rejection caused much hurt among African Americans. Those practicing racial discrimination deserved to forfeit their title of being Bible-believing Christians. Instead, they kept the title, and their segregation discredited the good cause of defending the fundamentals of our faith.

Doctor Proctor's autobiography describes the hurt that whites' segregation brought African Americans:

Even as children, we knew that there was a huge wall "out there" that no black person could go over and around, regardless of our qualifications. It's difficult to describe our feelings of the "respectable" white Christians who sang in church choirs, served as deacons, trustees, and elders in downtown churches, who joined the Boy Scouts, and sat on city councils, court benches, and in the Congress, yet felt no shame in endorsing this whole-sale racial discrimination.<sup>4</sup>

As a result, Proctor made the following stereotypical judgment against all fundamentalists:

My seminary training help me see how orthodox, fundamentalist Christianity, with its credulous literalism about the Bible, ended up as a religion that found reasons in the Bible to accept slavery and the subjugation of women; a religion that ignored Jesus, its Lord, and became comfortable with the rich; a religion that subjugated and exploited all the darker skinned people of the world for the comfort of whites; a religion that quietly endorsed

militarism and bloodshed everywhere. In the hands of the fundamentalists, Christianity had become an embarrassment to Jesus.<sup>5</sup>

Drew chose the fundamentalist's theological road. He believed in the authority of the Bible regardless of how whites misused it. His choice subjected Drew to humiliating racism from segregated whites and insults from blacks who followed white liberals who were going in the opposite doctrinal direction.

### **Scofield's Reference Bible at the Colored Union Mission**

James Drew came to Christ and received training at Norfolk's Colored Union Mission, which operated outside of the traditional black church network. His African-American pastor James A. Handy founded this compassionate ministry after seeing the desperate plight of many homeless blacks. The white and segregated homeless mission turned them away without assistance. Unable to attend segregated evangelical colleges himself, Pastor Handy taught his students the Bible using the Scofield Reference Bible's notes as their training curriculum. White fundamentalists published this study Bible in 1909 to refute white liberals' false doctrine.<sup>6</sup> It listed Henry G. Weston, the founding president of Crozer Seminary in Pennsylvania, as a contributing editor to the Bible's notes. As you continue reading this chapter, keep in mind the following stand that Weston took at Crozer against the onslaught of liberal false teaching:

New England was settled by a people who held evangelical doctrine above all price. To attain it and retain it, they sacrificed everything. In an evil hour their descendants lost sight of the true nature of the church, adopted what was styled "The Half-way Covenant," and admitted to church membership those who gave no evidence of regeneration. The natural result followed. In the beginning of the present century, the pulpits which once resounded with the gospel preached by the Mathers, the Eliots, the Shepards, were occupied by men of an alien faith. With a single exception, every old Puritan pulpit in Boston and vicinity was in the possession of men who scorned the evangelical creed. Preaching by the Baptists of the truth, "Ye must be born again," awoke men from the slumbers of spiritual death and dotted New England hills with Baptist churches.<sup>7</sup>

As a result of Drew's studies with the Scofield Reference Bible, he and other future leaders accepted the Bible as authoritative. By applying the literal interpretation of the Bible as God's inspired Word, they defined the Gospel as Jesus' deity, death, and resurrection for the atonement of sin. They also embraced the Great Commission as making disciples for Christ of all nations. They especially appreciated the Gospel's power to improve men's lives by impressing in them a moral compass through sound Bible teaching. This background led Pastor Drew to seek formal Bible training at a white evangelical Bible college.

While a letter-carrier in Norfolk, Drew graduated from Norfolk State University. After receiving a cold shoulder from other Bible colleges, Drew completed a three-year Bible training

program at Washington Bible College near Washington, D.C. He told me stories about making the four-hour drive back and forth to the campus each week. He made this long drive to break the racial barrier for the young men who followed him in ministry.

Drew's conviction that the Bible is God's authoritative Word became evident in his commitment to fulfilling Christ's Great Commission. His church supported black and white missionaries. Naomi Dose, an African-American missionary from his church, served in Liberia and co-founded the Carver Bible College there. His church sent one of its best leaders, Pastor Olah Moore, as a missionary to Nigeria for 10 years. Church members financially supported both black and white missionaries. They defined the Gospel as the good news of God's grace in giving salvation from sin and its punishment through faith in Jesus Christ. They proclaimed this Gospel in their community through a five-week summer Bible school and challenged African Americans to declare it to the ends of the earth.

Drew preached the Bible's true Gospel that Christ gave the Apostle Paul:

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

Defending and confirming this true Gospel put Drew outside of the mainstream, traditional African-American church system. In Norfolk's Park Place community, he pastored a small non-denominational church that met in two buildings - a converted house and a small former fork lift repair shop. I heard students heading to Virginia Union University's seminary label him an "Oreo" for his alliance with white evangelical Christians.

As he broke segregation barriers, Drew remained humble but fiercely persistent and undeterred. He faced humiliating rejection from both blacks and whites, but nothing stopped him from challenging others to take up his cause and proclaim the true Gospel at home and abroad.

Pastor Drew died as a relatively unknown pioneer in American Black History. The good seed that he sowed in his legacy has yet to bear fruit in our nation and world. You may change that as you rise up with a heart for Christ's Gospel and for a lost world. Take his narrow road that leads to life.

## **A Balanced Mission**

As Pastor Drew ministered, he bridged the divided views of fundamentalists and liberals on social outreach, community development, and the true Gospel. Liberal theologians made social outreach their gospel and community development their mission. Most fundamentalists overreacted to the liberals' social gospel, back then, by avoiding any kind of social outreach in the States. They limited their mission to mostly preaching the true Gospel to introduce people to a personal relationship with Christ and on an individual basis.

Fundamentalists believed that social justice would naturally follow as individuals came to Christ. Racial justice meant repenting of personal prejudice and loving one's neighbor instead of confronting institutions or supporting African Americans in their political struggle for equality.

In the 1960s, African-American leaders interpreted fundamentalists' silence and non-involvement in the Civil Rights Movement as assent to the unjust status quo. They saw fundamentalists' emphasis on personal salvation as a problem that kept whites from recognizing society's sins against black people. Many African-American leaders considered the process of "accepting Jesus Christ as one's personal Savior" as a white protestant doctrine that maintained the status quo injustice of white society.<sup>8</sup>

The resulting racial and doctrine division created the belief that ministry must be only one or the other, either evangelism or social outreach, and not both – as Christ commanded.

The stand by fundamentalists against social outreach, combined with segregation, alienated many African-American leaders who then embraced only the social gospel. Proctor correctly called it a "cop-out" for fundamentalists to label concern for human suffering as a liberal or social gospel. Unfortunately, he made the social gospel the means of personal salvation. He preached, "One sure way to go to hell is to ignore the social gospel ... the gospel is by nature social."<sup>9</sup>

Drew demonstrated a fresh commitment to combine both evangelism, for personal salvation from individual sins, and community development. He mobilized his church for evangelism while he tirelessly spearheaded community-development initiatives to empower the poor. Drew must have been well acquainted with the poor. After World War II, many houses in the Titus Town neighborhood where he grew up with his grandmother deteriorated into slums.<sup>10</sup>

Almost every one of his sermons challenged listeners to minister to the poor who lived in the church's neighborhood. His outreach included establishing a preschool, a community library, a thrift store, and a workshop for teaching skills. Drew responded to many requests for assistance from the poor. I spent many days crawling under houses with him to fix plumbing problems. He specialized in fixing stoves and furnaces but made many kinds of emergency repairs.

Pastor Drew became a champion for the poor on several levels in the city. He enrolled his children in a Christian school to break through the racial barrier for other African-American students there. Some in his congregation wished he had spent more time inside the church's four walls rather than exhausting himself and others on outreaches to the poor.

When the church's neighborhood became one of the most violent in the city, Drew lived there in a house donated to the church. He remained a part of the community even though he had the means and opportunity to live elsewhere. He stayed even after a purse-snatcher struck his wife, and, on another occasion, a man robbed her at gunpoint.

Drew balanced meeting social needs through community development with confirming Christ's true Gospel and with teaching the Bible as trustworthy and authoritative. His dedication to community development became recognized by a national leader in social outreach, Dr. Anthony Campolo, who endorsed Pastor Drew's vision for empowering the poor. Drew's



appreciation for political action came across as he expressed gratitude often for leaders in the Civil Rights Movement regardless of their theology.

Gratefully praising God for Drew and Proctor's generation of African-American leaders, I give them all due respect for their sacrificial and courageous struggles for civil rights. Yet, I ask for grace and the chance to explain the tragic consequences that eventually came about when Proctor and others championed, with good intentions, the road where white liberal doctrine rejected the Bible's authority. The next chapter outlines the tragic results of taking this broad road to destruction. I challenge you to respect, above all opinions, the Bible as God's Word and choose His road to life.

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## **Chapter 13**

### **Recognize the Broad Road's Destruction**

*A Vanguard Chooses Right*

#### **Good Intentions and a Destructive Turn of Events**

National prominence came to Samuel Proctor as he took the road that followed white liberal deception. Unlike segregated evangelicals, many liberals, who openly rejected God's Word as authoritative, accepted African Americans into their northern seminaries. Some financially supported southern historically black colleges and universities as well. Support for HBCUs came through home missionary societies and philanthropists who sided with white liberals who had reduced the gospel to only helping one's fellow man. Their theology came from whites who thought Darwin's evolution theory had enlightened them enough to attack the Bible. They offered African Americans great opportunities at a great price. In these white liberal seminaries, many African-American leaders abandoned the essential doctrines of the Christian faith. They rejected Jesus Christ as the only way to come to the Father to receive life and the forgiveness of sins.

With God's authority, the Bible teaches that rejecting God's Word and Gospel results in death and destruction. (Psalm 1:4-5; Matthew 7:26-27; John 12:47-48; Galatians 1:6-9; James 1:22-25; 2 Peter 2:1; Revelation 22:18-19) This chapter explains how unbelieving whites, who trusted in liberal doctrine, evolution, and in making man the center of the universe instead of God, brought about death and destruction in the last 100 years. The devastating impact of abortion upon the black community provides a case study of how this occurred. For instance, through liberal theology or politics, white-organized Planned Parenthood partnered with African-American leaders, including W.E.B. Dubois and Martin Luther King, Jr. to provide contraception. Then with abortion's legalization after Dubois and King's deaths, white liberals used these heroic leaders' good intentions to promote abortion and control the "lower" class black population.

In the 1920s, Dubois partnered with a white woman, Planned Parenthood's founder Margaret Sanger. They brought contraceptives to Harlem to control the population and poverty of "lower" class African Americans.<sup>1</sup> From the beginning, Sanger and her colleagues practiced eugenics, which was a weird science based upon selective breeding and genetics. Eugenicists wanted to control the population of the poor and weed out the unfit (minorities) using birth control, abortion, and sterilization to create a "thoroughbred" race. Some black women resented how white-controlled organizations pushed the pill on them. Sanger's own writings show how her commitment to eugenics and population control motivated her efforts to provide contraception to the poor. There were African Americans who distrusted Sanger, believing that she wanted to eliminate future black generations.<sup>2</sup>

Working closely with Dubois while being accused of practicing eugenics, Sanger opened a contraception clinic in Harlem in defiance of the law.<sup>3</sup> Decades later and from the start of his ministry, Martin Luther King, Jr. assisted Planned Parenthood's efforts to provide

contraceptives, but not abortion, to the poor. In 1966 and a few month before her death, Martin Luther King, Jr. credited Sanger's social action with giving resolve to his own non-violent struggle for equality. With good intentions, he praised Sanger for preventing "the unwanted child." When accepting the Margaret Sanger Award from Planned Parenthood, King made the following statement about providing contraceptives to prevent poverty among African Americans:

The Negro constitutes half the poor of the nation. Like all poor, Negro and white, they have many unwanted children. This is a cruel evil they urgently need to control. There is scarcely anything more tragic in human life than a child who is not wanted. That which should be a blessing becomes a curse for parent and child.<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, Alveda King, Martin Luther King's niece, is an outspoken critic of Planned Parenthood and insists that her uncle was against abortion. She posts an article in her blog about an advice column King wrote in *Ebony* magazine that provides evidence of his pro-life position.<sup>5</sup>

Again, Sanger and Planned Parenthood won Dubois and King's support when the issue was providing contraceptives to the poor, not abortion. Planned Parenthood began promoting and performing abortions later when it was legalized in 1973 after King's death. Unfortunately, before his death, King wed Planned Parenthood's population control agenda to the Civil Rights Movement.<sup>6</sup> Planned Parenthood began performing abortions about five years after King's death with endorsements from other prominent black clergy. To this day, Planned Parenthood uses King's support of providing contraceptives to imply that he put his stamp of approval on abortion as well.

Sanger and Planned Parenthood recruited the support of theologically liberal clergy to promote its population control efforts.<sup>7</sup> Their liberal doctrine denied the Bible's God-given authority to declare that the life and soul of the unborn child begins at conception. (Psalm 51:5; 139:13-16; Jeremiah 1:5) Does not God charge with murder those who take an unborn child's life? (Exodus 21:22-25) Like I said, Planned Parenthood began promoting abortion after politically aligning with King and other leading African Americans who had only promoted contraception. When Planned Parenthood began performing abortions in 1973, and increased aggressively the number of new abortion clinics, it brought about a destructive change in the meaning of "contraception" that turned Dubois and King's good intentions into black genocide.

Therefore, by embracing white liberal theology, Proctor unintentionally paved the way, theologically and politically, for the Planned Parenthood organization to receive black clergy support to kill African-American unborn children. For instance, the two seminaries that Proctor influenced the most now champion the abortion cause. Leaders at Howard University's School of Divinity and Virginia Union's Samuel Proctor Theological Seminary became prominent in a national black religious coalition that dogmatically supports pro-choice, abortion agendas.<sup>8</sup>

The alignment of so many significant black leaders with Planned Parenthood forces the Democratic Party to include abortion in its platform. This alignment resulted in our first

African-American president's willingness to allow government funding for abortion. How can we celebrate racial equality and progress before God with clear consciences when a vote for President Obama was a vote to provide government funding to Planned Parenthood, which, in God's eyes, murders by abortion unborn children? It was also a vote for our nation funding other international abortion providers who increase its genocide worldwide. Accepting white liberal doctrine provided the theological foundation for this horrible turn of events.

What would Martin Luther King, Jr. say today if he knew that this white-organized, pro-choice, abortion-rights group had used his support of contraception clinics to justify killing 13 million unborn black children in abortion clinics? What would he say if he knew that Planned Parenthood changed his concept of preventing "unwanted children," who had not yet been conceived, into meaning the killing of unborn children already in their mothers' wombs?

Would not King reject Planned Parenthood's inferences that the child in the impoverished mother's womb is the problem preventing racial equality? For instance, would not he take a stand against the abortion of a disproportionate number of black babies? The 2007 U.S. Census\* recorded three times as many whites living in poverty as blacks.<sup>9</sup>

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\*I chose this year because the latest U.S. Census annual abortion statistics only go through 2007.

If preventing poverty justified abortions, then one might expect three times as many white babies being aborted. Yet, in that year, white women aborted 668,000 babies and black women aborted 448,000. White women of childbearing age outnumbered black women five to one but black women had more than 37 percent of all the 2007 abortions in America, including all other race/ethnic groups.<sup>10</sup> Would not King reject Planned Parenthood's assumption that they must advise and empower the poor to kill their unborn to elevate African Americans from poverty? Would not he want to find out why many more black babies get aborted than the unborn of other races?

In regard to New York City where Sanger opened contraception clinics with Dubois, would not Martin Luther King, Jr. now protest against killing more than 40 percent of unborn children in this city each year? In 2010, 60 percent of African-American babies were killed by abortion there. Seventy percent of New York City's black teenage mothers aborted their babies.<sup>11</sup> Does this tragedy equal the freedom and progress that Dubois envisioned when he brought the first contraception clinic to Harlem?

If Dubois' heart broke for the loss of African-American children's potential in the South, how would he respond to the abortionist killing millions of black children across our nation? Would Dubois and King remain silent during this genocide today or would they take a bold stand against it like Mother Teresa. In the following part of her 1994 National Prayer Breakfast speech, she denounced abortion and called it murder:

But I feel that the greatest destroyer of peace today is abortion, because it is a war against the child, a direct killing of the innocent child, murder by the mother herself. And if we accept that a mother can kill even her own child, how can we tell other people not to kill one

another? How do we persuade a woman not to have an abortion? As always, we must persuade her with love and we remind ourselves that love means to be willing to give until it hurts. Jesus gave even His life to love us. So, the mother who is thinking of abortion, should be helped to love, that is, to give until it hurts her plans, or her free time, to respect the life of her child. The father of that child, whoever he is, must also give until it hurts. By abortion, the mother does not learn to love, but kills even her own child to solve her problems. And, by abortion, the father is told that he does not have to take any responsibility at all for the child he has brought into the world. That father is likely to put other women into the same trouble. So abortion just leads to more abortion. Any country that accepts abortion is not teaching its people to love, but to use any violence to get what they want. This is why the greatest destroyer of love and peace is abortion. Many people are very, very concerned with the children of India, with the children of Africa where quite a few die of hunger, and so on. Many people are also concerned about all the violence in this great country of the United States. These concerns are very good. But often these same people are not concerned with the millions who are being killed by the deliberate decision of their own mothers. And this is what is the greatest destroyer of peace today - abortion which brings people to such blindness.<sup>12</sup>

Would not King defy prejudice against the unborn that makes “unwanted children” expendable in present-day pro-choice political platforms? Also, would not King reject Planned Parenthood’s continued use of his name to promote the murder of so many unborn black children under the disguise of civil rights for women? Would not he speak for the defenseless unborn? What would he dream about white and black children if he knew how abortionists kill thousands of them each week?

When Samuel Proctor promoted white liberal theology, he chose a path that wed him with whites who promoted these abortion atrocities. Additionally, this broader, destructive theological path included false doctrine, the social gospel, and a bogus commission that brings eternal destruction. With good intentions, he promoted this white liberal theology at HBCUs that became a broad road that leads to destruction and demobilization. In this chapter, I explain more of these tragic consequences that came about when Proctor chose this white liberal theological path that rejected the Bible’s authority and true mission.

### **Promoted White Liberal’s False Teaching**

Sparks Melton, the liberal white pastor in Norfolk who I introduced in Chapter 10, showed kindness that impressed Proctor during his childhood. When Proctor’s church had a fire, the pastor came out in the middle of the night and shed genuine tears. Then his segregated congregation invited the African-American church to use their Sunday school’s meeting room while it repaired its own building. Melton later obtained a full tuition scholarship for Proctor to attend Crozer Seminary that was notorious for attacking the Bible with white evolution and liberal doctrine.<sup>13</sup>

Proctor entered Crozer Theological Seminary as the only African-American student. Like James Drew, he broke the racial barrier for future generations of black leaders by humbling himself and enduring prejudice.

Crozer started out well under Weston's 40-year presidency but soon began using liberal presuppositions and approaches to Bible training.<sup>14</sup> A wealthy family founded, endowed, and governed Crozer instead of a church denomination. Without theological accountability, it quickly became one of the country's most liberal seminaries.<sup>15</sup> Although Sparks Melton studied under Weston, he went through a spiritual crisis two years after graduation and became more theologically liberal.<sup>16</sup>

At the time, many Baptist congregations recruited pastors based upon their preaching ability rather than their doctrine. Melton struggled academically but spoke eloquently, receiving Crozer's coveted award for preaching.<sup>17</sup>

Throughout his lifetime, Melton received much recognition and many pastor job offers because of his speaking ability. Mercer University, for example, invited Melton to join its trustee board after he gave an impressive speech when he received an honorary doctorate. Melton's message encouraged the university to accept evolution. The same trustees had recently fired a professor for teaching evolution, but accepted Melton on their board after he so eloquently supported it.<sup>18</sup> Melton became friends with John D. Rockefeller who funded liberalism's attack on fundamentalists and evangelical missions.

A biographer made it clear that preaching doctrine was not important to Melton. With impressive stature and a compelling voice, he brought topical sermons without notes and usually on just one Bible verse each message.<sup>19</sup> Apparently, his white listeners also enjoyed his insensitive minstrel-like stories about African Americans that heavily invoked the N-word.<sup>20</sup>

In Norfolk's fiercely racist and segregated context, Melton spoke up for African Americans. Yet, his church remained segregated as African Americans moved into the downtown houses that turned into slums around Melton's church. Some senior African Americans told me about blacks living on dirt floors at that time in the neighborhoods near his church. The housing authority tore them down and built two large public housing communities.

In 1924, his congregation went into shock when a Methodist church on its street prepared to sell its building to African Americans who had been moving into the area. Melton's church took steps to buy the Methodist's building to prevent its sale to blacks and considered moving out if blacks acquired it. A Catholic group bought the building to end the whites' "crisis."<sup>21</sup> In spite of this racism, Melton took personal initiative almost 20 years later to obtain a Crozer scholarship for Samuel Proctor.

At Crozer, Proctor coped with white liberal professors tearing his faith in the Bible to shreds by accepting the writings of other whites who approached the Bible already believing that Darwin's Theory of Evolution was true.<sup>22</sup> One of these writers, Reinhold Niebuhr, started out teaching liberal social gospel to replace the true Gospel. He then changed his beliefs to "neo-orthodox" theology that did not regard the entire Bible as the completely inspired, trustworthy Word of God.

The other writer, Harry Fosdick, championed false teaching called theistic evolution. This doctrine holds that God created the universe but let Darwin's evolution occur under His control. To do so, Fosdick rejected the Bible as God's literal, inspired Word and promoted the acceptance of this kind of evolution instead of a miraculous creation. He taught that the Bible evolved like evolution and rejected all of its recorded miracles.<sup>23</sup>

Proctor became one of the most influential African-American champions of white liberal theology. At seminary, he became a friend and mentor to a younger student named Martin Luther King, Jr. Proctor helped King accept white liberals' teaching about evolution using Niebuhr and Fosdick's wrong presuppositions about the Bible.<sup>24</sup>

In addition, Proctor mentored James Cone who later in the 1960s used Black Power and liberation theology from South America to promote Black Theology. Cone elevated black experiences, in his theology, to equal authority with the Bible. In reaction to white racism, he built his new teaching upon white liberals' rejection of the Bible and its essential doctrines.<sup>25</sup> Dr. Proctor also mentored Jeremiah Wright, who is well known as President Obama's former pastor who champions liberation theology based upon liberal doctrine.

Samuel Proctor influenced many future African-American leaders as president or professor at several seminaries. He was an author, statesman, and civil rights leader. Many African-American theologians cite Proctor in their writings. He oversaw a Peace Corps program in Africa. As James Drew had accomplished in Norfolk, Proctor integrated a previously segregated school by enrolling his children. He earned the respect of many in his lifetime. After his death, Virginia Union University named its theological seminary after him. Unfortunately, Proctor's influence encouraged many other African-American leaders to build their faith on doctrines that white liberals had championed at the expense of Biblical truth. African-American leaders like Cone modified and adopted this white false teaching until it became their own. Some might now think that Proctor's liberal theology had somehow originated with people of African descent, rather than being invented by Europeans who attacked the Bible to support evolution.

Proctor made the unfounded claim that African Americans had developed liberal doctrine on their own - as a black thing separate from white beliefs. His following assertion deserves severe criticism because this untruth became popular with black leaders:

Although customs varied from one congregation to another, black people had carved out a distinctive style of biblical interpretation and worship. White people spent most of their time preparing for heaven; although blacks did not reject the vision of heaven, they emphasized that a better day would come, here on earth. Whites emphasized God's holiness and judgment; blacks saw God as the liberator of the oppressed. Whites asked, 'What if you should die unsaved?' Blacks believed that God would help them to bear their daily burdens. Whites said that they wanted to be ready when Jesus came again; blacks that God would make a way out of no way.<sup>26</sup>

This racialized, stereotypical, and divisive judgment basically said that whites had their evangelical doctrine while blacks had developed their own liberal theology. Nothing could be further from the truth. Proctor and his generation of leaders fail to tell you the following facts about their work:

### **Promoted White Liberals' Evolution Theories**

Whites invented liberal doctrine based on Darwin's Theory of Evolution. The well-documented truth is that black and white Christians held the same evangelical beliefs about the Bible, although these beliefs were distorted for both by white racism. Then a spiritual crisis occurred in the last century as white liberal Europeans, who considered themselves more enlightened and insightful than Bible-believing Christians, embraced Darwin's evolution and used it to attack the Bible. These whites, feeling scientific, took up the cause to "tear to shreds" faith in the Bible by teaching it to students in seminaries and colleges where no one could defend the Word of God.<sup>27</sup> White liberals managed to flip the doctrine of the Ivy League seminaries and many other white seminaries around our country.

Whites themselves have been divided over liberal theology for generations. As white seminaries produced ministers who did not accept God's word as authoritative, white leaders across our nation became severely divided between those who accepted the Bible's account of creation and those who rejected the Bible in favor of science. Although churches still had high regard for the Bible, most of the white seminaries that taught their pastors rejected the authority of God's Word.\*

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\*A term used for the Bible to describe it as God-breathed direct revelation from God given without error. Supernaturally, the Holy Spirit used men and their normal human languages to write down God's revelation. The Spirit gave, confirmed, and preserved the Bible so it has authority to be believed and obeyed like no other book. He illuminates our hearts to receive God's revelation as we hear or read the Bible. Therefore, the entire Bible as originally given, including its words and grammar, is the inspired, trustworthy Word of God. 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21

Fundamentalists received their name because they defended Bible doctrines that are fundamental (essential) to the Christian faith. Unfortunately, many of their Bible-believing seminaries remained segregated until too late, which alienated African Americans. Fundamentalists, when reacting to liberalism, also rejected the social gospel that motivated liberal whites to provide educational opportunities to blacks after the Civil War. White liberals could then easily equate fundamentalism with the Pharisees that killed Jesus. These Pharisees, as you know, studied the Old Testament Law but would show no mercy to those in need. Some liberals today go a step further and equate the word "fundamentalist" with terrorists.

Since the name carries so much baggage, most whites who believe in the Bible's fundamental, essential doctrines call themselves "evangelical." As you know, the designation "evangelical" eventually became a political label. Bible-believing Christians do not have a good way now to describe themselves without liberals broadly stereotyping them as a group.



## **Assisted White Liberals in Targeting Students with Deception**

Saying they value intellectual freedom, white liberals strategically target college students. They use the classroom and academia's open-minded environment in colleges and seminaries to intentionally destroy faith in the Bible among young students. Even though evangelicals can refute the same old arguments of liberal theologians, the liberal teachers' do not invite evangelical theologians into their classrooms to defend the Bible's trustworthiness.

In his autobiography, Proctor expressed gratitude to Sparks Melton, the liberal white pastor who arranged a full scholarship to a liberal white seminary. He also appreciated studying under white liberals who had come from the most notorious liberal seminaries. Proctor shared how liberal whites spoke at Virginia Union University during his college days there. Their presence is significant because he described VUU as "a black Baptist school known for training ministers." He told how his uncle who attended a liberal white seminary had influenced him to consider a career in ministry. Proctor said that liberal church leaders associated with that seminary were more enlightened than the many black pastors who revolted him as "given to gaudy dress, unbridled egotism, and self-aggrandizement; they exploited women willing to do anything to be close to the 'pastor.'"<sup>28</sup>

Instead of blacks carving out their own liberal theology, the truth remains that Dr. Proctor, and black leaders who followed him, embraced white liberal theology. He thanked the white seminary for delivering him from the theology of black-governed churches. Whites had taught him to see traditional black church doctrine as old, stifling, narrow-minded, and anti-scientific.<sup>29</sup>

James Cone, Dr. Proctor's protégé, boasted how white liberals influenced Dr. Martin Luther King to also reject the essentials of the Christian faith that he had received in the black-governed church.<sup>30</sup> As I said, Proctor is credited with helping King accept white liberal teaching to make that change from truth that was believed in black churches.

Proctor failed to write that since his seminary days, the Lord has been creating a movement of strong black evangelical leaders who reject white liberal theology. He does not mention that white and black-led churches that adopted liberalism are dying or dead. Evangelical black-led churches are growing and replacing liberal churches as community builders.

I am quite familiar with the Norfolk street where Samuel Proctor grew up in Huntersville. I volunteered for 12 years as the athletic director of the Huntersville Recreation Association. In the late 1980s, crack cocaine created a deadly crisis for this historically black community. During this crisis, evangelical Christians, both black and white, joined me in taking great personal risks to intervene with families there.

Liberals do not acknowledge that many black and white evangelicals reject past white oppression and now bring the radically changing power of the true Gospel of Christ to neighborhoods that they abandoned.

## **Accepted White Liberals' Integration-Without-Rights**

Black nationalists warned African-American leaders to beware of the “drug of integration” offered by white liberals in the place of giving full rights.<sup>31</sup> Unfortunately, Samuel Proctor and the black leaders following his liberal doctrine failed to heed this warning. They did not recognize that white people gave African Americans scholarships for white interests. Liberals intended for black leaders to champion their doctrine or make their institutions more diverse and attractive to other African Americans. Proctor accomplished both. He championed liberal doctrine among historically black colleges and universities that train ministers.

Liberal theologians failed to empower him with the full spiritual rights of the true Gospel. He achieved integration but lost the spiritual right and mandate to fulfill Christ’s true Commission. This failure seems like the same limited racial uplift for which black and whites settled during Jim Crow. As I said, God gave rights of equality and freedom, but racism changed uplift into “better class” settling for unsuccessful attempts to earning acceptance through progress and productivity. Likewise, black liberal theologians settled for just earning status on earth through reason, ethics, and social progress. Christ would have given them full rights and the freedom to fulfill His Great Commission, meet social needs, and bring God glory worldwide.

Yet, you may still exercise this right to empower Christians of all races to make disciples for Christ. Bring Him glory through both individual and social outreaches. Mobilize believers of all races to offer the nations His free gift of personal salvation and to end human suffering.

### **Championed White Liberals’ System of Moral Destruction**

Proctor’s high moral standards were evident in his autobiography and in Rev. Jeremiah Wright’s testimony about his mentor’s values and lifestyle. However, moral decline was the unexpected results of the white liberalism that he championed.

Liberalism rejected the Bible’s authority and its absolute moral standards. Liberalism teaches that each interpreter’s reason and culture become the authority that determines what is morally right or wrong instead of the Bible. Then in the 1960s, American society went through a cultural revolution and split into many cultures with conflicting morals. Without the Bible’s absolute standards, liberals could not provide a moral compass. With so many moral compasses to choose from, liberals could not determine right from wrong.<sup>32</sup> Children of many white liberals began rejecting their parents’ morals, churches, and denominations in the 1960s. Proctor’s liberalism, which seemed liberating to him, helped destroy our nation’s moral compass.

When Proctor championed the social gospel’s disregard for the Bible’s teaching on personal sin and replaced it with addressing only social sins and justice, he opened the theological door for other leaders who followed after him to tolerate sexual immorality. For instance, why did 2000 Harlem residents and civic leaders welcome President Clinton in 2001 to establish his headquarters there in spite of his sexual scandal with Monica Lewinsky?<sup>33</sup> An influential black leader called him “the first black president” because he received judgmental criticism for his adultery.<sup>34</sup> Did not these leaders condone former President Clinton’s sexual immorality with their silence?

Although extremely politically incorrect to point out, the unspoken reality is that sexual immorality is one of the most destructive problems in the inner city. In the neighborhood where Proctor grew up, children grow up hurting without their fathers, watch their mothers shack up with other men, live in poverty, become sexually active, degrade girls, and memorize sexually explicit songs with the N, B, and F-words. The fact that sexual immorality destroys families with full acceptance of too many in their church and political systems points out the social injustice caused by the loss of moral leadership in their homes, schools, churches, and government systems. Often children's moms and some of their teachers and athletic coaches shack up. One of the greatest threats to family stability is that men and women can shack up and be members in good standing in churches, schools, sports, and government structures that follow the social gospel's philosophy of allowing individual immorality. Parents who never married raise more than 8.5 million children in America. More than two million of these children are white and almost four million are black.<sup>35</sup>

With liberal theology's license to commit individual sins, young people in the '60s replaced traditional morals with widespread sexual permissiveness and drug use that devastated families. Today, more than 20.5 million children live without their biological fathers in their homes. Fifty-nine percent of African-American children do not live with their biological fathers. Children in father-absent homes become more likely to live in poverty, have emotional/behavior problems, die in infancy or have health problems, commit crimes as juveniles, become incarcerated, engage in premarital sex and get pregnant as teenagers, are abused, abuse drugs and alcohol, suffer from obesity, and underachieve academically.<sup>36</sup> White liberal theology contributed to our nation's moral decline that destroys families and traps children in the poverty cycle. It now lacks the necessary moral absolutes to correct the family breakdown that undermines progress.

The problem of failed moral leadership is not in Dr. Proctor's individual faith but in the system that he taught and implemented. I have seen enough scandals go unconfessed and pastors' wives hurt by sexual immorality to convince me that the social gospel destroys lives on this earth. This destruction dehumanizes women, even though liberal black leaders accuse white fundamentalists of subjugating women. Of course, fundamentalist leaders commit adultery, but if true to God's Word, their system must not tolerate it.

When I started in ministry more than 30 years ago, the government welfare system created "mother's day" every month when men would show up at mothers' homes to get part of their welfare checks. Now after welfare reform, men can avoid paying child support by shacking up with their children's mothers. Abortion became birth control because of the immorality condoned in church and government systems built upon the social gospel's tolerance of individual sins. In supporting Planned Parenthood's call for women's rights, black liberal pastors remain silent about its continued use of abortion to control black populations in inner cities.

African-American leaders have judged white Christians and pronounced them guilty for silent neglect during black struggles for freedom. They say that silence and non-involvement

gives assent to the status quo. Whites who remained “apolitical” were also judged as giving their assent to social injustices.<sup>37</sup>

Yet African-American leaders have remained silent while white-dominated organizations murdered one-third of the African-American population. Black liberals condemn white fundamentalists for silent neglect, but they also remain silent as these white-controlled organizations kill unborn children for economic reasons. Where is their revolt? Do not black Christian leaders know that abortion is morally wrong? Are they paying too steep a price to align with liberal whites for political gain? Will not Christ judge them with the same standard that they used to judge whites’ silence and oppression? Are they giving assent to the murder of millions of their unborn children in exchange for political power? Ironically, the worst kind of white-imposed disenfranchisement must be the loss of potential voting rights by the 13 million African Americans who were murdered by the white-controlled abortion industry.

In contrast, remember that Drew, on the fundamentalists’ narrower road, used sound doctrine to better lives by creating a system that impressed a Bible-based moral compass on individual hearts while implementing community development. Dr. Proctor had this same biblical, personal moral compass, but the white liberals’ church and government systems that he championed among African Americans surrendered it to white liberalism.

### **Championed White Liberals’ Bogus Commission**

Proctor also championed the white liberal attempt to change the focus of the Great Commission. Instead of making disciples of Jesus Christ through evangelism, he taught salvation by good works and community development. This teaching created a church structure that eliminated many black churches from fulfilling Christ’s true mandate of world evangelization.

Accepting Jesus as the only way to receive salvation, and eternal life makes the difference between Drew and Proctor’s community development. Proctor’s liberal world-mission amounted to “building a global community” that accepted the teaching of all religions.<sup>38</sup> As a result, traditional black church leaders influenced by Proctor and his legacy forsook Christ’s command for world evangelization and promoted white liberal theology that they made their own.

Regarding Christ, Proctor championed the idea that sustaining a “global community” required finding God in Jesus’ moral integrity rather than making a distinction between religions. He believed that universal moral ethics, which he said expand across different religions, and not the fear of God, make up the core practical theology of a global community.<sup>39</sup> He viewed Christianity as one small community among many in a larger global one that includes many other religions and communism. Drew, in contrast, stressed Jesus’ moral integrity and His deity as God the Son. He believed in the Bible’s absolute ethics. He put his faith in Christ as the one and only true way to find real community with the Father and with other people. (John 14:6)

### **Brought White Heresy to Historical Black Colleges and Universities**

You deserve to know that God has been calling African Americans to missions, but many black theologians, like Samuel Proctor's protégés, have rejected Christ's deity and the Gospel of the Great Commission. Again, reacting to white oppression, they mix white liberal theology with Black Power thinking to conclude that the Great Commission is a white doctrine.

In review, this white liberal theology came about when theologians put their trust in evolution's theory instead of the absolute authority of the Bible as God's miraculously inspired Word. They fail to believe that God gave the Bible without error and preserved it to remain completely trustworthy. They disrespect Christ's virgin birth, His death, and resurrection as a substitute to pay the punishment for our sin and any of the Bible's miracles. Some allow the Bible to contain the Word of God, but they make themselves the authority on what to keep and what to disregard. Their religion makes mankind the center of the universe instead of God. Loving their fellow man became their way to earn heaven instead of salvation received freely through faith in Christ as a free gift. (Ephesians 2:8-9) Their belief in doing good deeds for salvation became known as the social gospel.

To the shame of segregated evangelical whites who believed the true Gospel, liberal whites took radical steps to help African Americans during times of their worst suffering. Following Christ's example of love and mercy, some white liberals led or aided the abolitionist movement and contributed resources for African-American education during reconstruction. They also promoted their social gospel among African Americans, which only went as far as helping one's fellow man. These whites, unfortunately, introduced this liberal doctrinal framework that theologians in traditional black denominations and historically black seminaries eventually used to reject world evangelization as God's purpose for African Americans.

As Dr. Proctor pointed out, after the Civil War, there has been a "deep layer of black people who believed they had a place in society and that sooner or later they would enter fully into the American system."<sup>40</sup> White liberal philanthropists, home missionary societies, and seminaries took radical steps to support young leaders from this layer to achieve this vision.

In the 1960s, some African-American theologians, including many in the seminaries and churches affiliated with historically black colleges and universities, enthusiastically promoted Black Theology. To support this false doctrine, they relied on liberal theology's acceptance of the Theory of Evolution and belief that their theology is still evolving. This thinking used Black Power to elevate the "Black Experience" to even par with the authority of the Bible.<sup>41</sup> By the time I entered the ministry in 1980, the doctrinal divide had become quite racial.

In the late 1970s, several Norfolk State University students came to the predominantly white evangelical church that launched our work to request scholarship funds to attend Virginia Union University's seminary. The pastor, who became my supervisor, called the seminary and asked a dean whether they taught the Bible as the trustworthy authoritative Word of God. The dean said that the seminary would not make that theological decision.

Although the pastor allowed the students to hear this conversation with the dean, they enrolled in VUU's seminary anyway. The students indicated that the main, traditional black churches in our metropolitan area usually hired pastors who studied there.

## **Enabled White Liberals' Segregation and Abandoned the Lower Classes**

When Starks Melton died in 1957, the newspaper's headline read, "Norfolk's Pastor is Dead." An editorial described Melton as the "spokesman for religion in Norfolk."<sup>42</sup> This designation as Norfolk's pastor had been published several times before. On Melton's 30th anniversary, the paper praised him for making "life more tolerable for the weak and oppressed, that opened men's minds and hearts to new vistas of sympathy, tolerance and understanding."<sup>43</sup>

Yet as Norfolk's pastor, why then did Melton fail to open the doors of his segregated church to the impoverished African Americans living around it? The neighborhood surrounding his church deteriorated into the slums on his watch. Why did he fail to accept these families as members and empower them with better jobs and housing?

African Americans made up half of Norfolk's population then. If Melton was the city's pastor, what about them? What about the children who suffered in impoverished conditions? I have heard stories from senior African Americans about blacks living near his church in houses having dirt floors at that time. Parents with children suffered without heat in thousands of dilapidated, one-room shacks that decayed on the street adjacent to Melton's church while he pastored the city.<sup>44</sup> For African Americans, deplorable living conditions in 1920 caused the death rate for black adults to be more than twice as high than for whites. The infant mortality rate was one out of six for African American babies versus one out of 20 for whites.<sup>45</sup> In spite of many requests by blacks and a few whites, Norfolk provided segregated beaches and 21 segregated recreation parks for whites in 1926, but none for blacks.<sup>46</sup>

As I said earlier, in 1924, Melton's congregation became shocked when a Methodist church on its street prepared to sell its building to African Americans who had moved into the area. Melton's church took steps to buy the Methodists' building to prevent its sale to blacks and also considered moving out if blacks acquired it. A Catholic group bought the building to end the whites' "crisis."<sup>47</sup>

Since Melton's Baptist church became the mother of others, its daughter churches followed suite. Most maintained liberal doctrine and refused to welcome African Americans when their neighborhoods changed from white to black and from middle class to low-income. These churches defiantly remained segregated until their congregations dwindled to the brink of extinction. Generations of African Americans grew up around these buildings and watched elderly whites arriving on Sunday mornings demonstrating racism's bigotry.

When did Melton, as the liberal spokesman of religion in Norfolk, challenge social injustices against the City's blacks? Racial discrimination prevented African Americans from getting good jobs and most were underemployed. For example, in 1921 when the Ford Motor Company opened a plant in Norfolk, it immediately barred blacks from employment.<sup>48</sup> When other employers hired them, they treated black workers disrespectfully.<sup>49</sup>

In 1920, like the book and movie, *The Help*, 81.9 percent of all Norfolk black women worked as domestic servants. When they threatened to strike for a guaranteed salary of one dollar per day, the Norfolk police chief ordered his officers to arrest them as "loafers" and

“slackers.”<sup>50</sup> He took this same action against black oyster shuckers to also prevent their strike but did not arrest white workers for striking at other times. I wonder how many African-American women worked at all hours for Melton’s church members while neglecting their own children and trying to survive.

Since Melton had joint services with a Norfolk rabbi, I wonder if he preached against white discrimination in Norfolk that forced Jewish merchants to open their stores, and saloons, in the black business district. These Jewish stores competed with fledgling African-American businesses and helped prevent blacks’ dollars from staying in their community.<sup>51</sup>

From Samuel Proctor’s autobiography, *The Substance of Things Hoped For*, I conclude that he grew up in the black middle class. Proctor’s parents graduated from Missions College in Norfolk.<sup>52</sup> An elderly black pastor once proudly told me how African Americans founded this college themselves by walking through their neighborhoods asking families to contribute one dollar. This pastor said that the college became the forerunner to Norfolk State University. During World War I, Proctor’s father took a job at the Norfolk Navy Yard. They lived in Norfolk’s Huntersville community, which would have been considered as housing a mix of both working and middle-class families. Proctor’s grandfather and uncles were ministers of large churches.<sup>53</sup>

I also conclude that his book reveals how extensively uplift ideology shaped Proctor’s thinking. Proctor wrote much about accomplishments that distinguished him and his family from lower class African Americans. He emphasized his family-background, education, self-help achievements, hard work, high moral character, conservative preaching style, manhood, economic status, church members’ professions, and property ownership. Proctor’s uplift thinking comes across in his paragraph about two black social classes:

Looking back it is now clear to me that two strata of blacks in America had been solidly entrenched. Those who had been shut out and lived on subsistence wages, in cheap tenements or rural shacks along unpaved back roads, far removed from any talk of black destiny. By contrast, those who made it through the open door of Reconstruction felt that their faith was being validated; they were leading lodges and churches, some had professional careers, and they were in the forefront of organizations dedicated to black education and black liberation.

In his autobiography, therefore, Proctor provided evidence that he aspired to achieve the higher, second stratum that he called the “heirs of the missions schools.”<sup>54</sup>

Another indication of Proctor’s uplift thinking is that he seemed unsure about how to enter into a personal relationship with Christ. Uplifts put so much emphasis on productivity and ethics that accomplishments replaced the true Gospel’s salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. For example, Proctor made water baptism the focus of his conversion rather than becoming born again.<sup>55</sup>

By taking Melton's seminar scholarship opportunity, Proctor heightened his status and earned the respect of influential white and black people. Like when Booker T. Washington accommodating whites' segregation, Proctor became an accommodationist to his white benefactors' liberal doctrine. Instead of enabling Jim Crow laws like Washington, Proctor enabled white liberal churches' racist, segregationist structures to continue unabated. He preached at Melton's church after his death and perhaps showed black middle-class progress. Yet to this day, black families continue to suffer from poverty in Norfolk while still being rejected by these entrenched churches. Of course, abandoning black lower class residents in Norfolk also included failing to mobilize them with true discipleship to fulfill Christ's Great Commission. I know of some white clergy who became radical enough to break out of these segregated church systems. My father was one of them.

### **The Broad Road White Money Paved**

In 1930, John D. Rockefeller, the wealthy oilman and a good friend of Sparks Melton, provided funding for HBCUs and other causes. He also financially backed the cause of liberal theology. He funded efforts to attack the Bible as the Word of God, destroy faith in the true Gospel, change Christ's Great Commission, and criticize fundamentalists who defended all three.

Rockefeller funded the distribution of a book that denounced fundamentalists.<sup>56</sup> To change the Great Commission into a global strategy based on the white liberals' agenda, his money brought them together for a study of missions that promoted the social gospel. He funded their analysis of the progress of world missions in the previous 100 years that followed Carey's death. They found fault in the extra-biblical structures of missionary societies.<sup>57</sup>

They questioned missionaries' colonialist motives and their failure in general to turn over governance to local leaders. Seeing how the world was becoming more secular with the rise of communism, these leaders proposed making theological changes in missions. They rejected the Bible's teaching of the true Gospel and started a new, but false, missions system that accepts the teachings of all religions as equally true. They de-emphasized the teaching of sound doctrine and changed the true meaning of evangelism.

White church leaders involved in this study invented this new concept of missions that viewed the world as a "global community." In this global community framework, missionaries would work to improve the lives of people overseas without needing to share Christ's Gospel of salvation. According to this unbiblical system, missions would instead research social problems, provide schools for social workers, and work with businessmen, labor unions, and communists to bring social change.<sup>58</sup>

Since many white seminaries that respected the Bible as God's Word remained segregated, African-American men who would become national leaders attended schools that attacked the Bible. These leaders also brought white liberals' rejection of the Bible and world missions to the HBCU's seminaries and made it their own.

Again, Dr. Samuel Proctor, for whom the seminary at Virginia Union University is named, was a strong proponent of liberal theology and rejected the Bible's authority. He taught the



white heresy that missions should only better the global community without sharing the Gospel of salvation from sin. Therefore, he promoted African-American involvement in missions when it focused on meeting social needs, but without introducing Christ's plan of personal salvation.<sup>59</sup>

About 20 years ago, black and white ministers from across our Hampton Roads attempted to unite and mobilize together for inner city ministry. A year of prayer meetings did not solve the problem that pastors could not agree on whether the Bible is God's Word. This doctrinal disagreement, from what I understand, ended the effort to unite our witness for Christ.

To summarize, Christ's Great Commission became doctrinally and racially divided between those who believed the authority of the Bible and those who did not. Many of those who believed in the Bible and the true Gospel sent out thousands of white missionaries but remained segregated. They condoned with their silence the oppressions of slavery and Jim Crow against African Americans. Closed doors at their seminaries led to African Americans choosing the false, liberal definition of world missions.

Again, white missionaries gave their lives to serve people of color overseas, many of whom they considered savages back then, while most Bible-believing Christians remained segregated. Through segregation, these white Christians, in effect, turned their backs on African Americans who suffered in our own land. Reacting to the liberals' social gospel, many white Christian workers also avoided any kind of social outreach in the states, which increased neglect at home and destroyed their credibility with many African Americans who, in turn, chose the social gospel of white liberal seminaries.

On the other side of the doctrinal divide, missions societies that forsook the true Gospel took up causes that helped African Americans. As I said, for their social gospel's cause they supported the abolitionist movement and then helped found some historical black colleges after the Civil War. As a result, racial equality eventually became the leaders' mission in most traditional African-American churches and in HBCU's seminaries during their struggles for civil rights. African-American churches focused on caring for the poor in their own communities. They disregarded, therefore, Christ's world mandate as not being relevant to African-American experiences. Now, some African-American church leaders also promote the pursuit of prosperity and/or the American dream, which drown out the missionary call.

African-American students deserve to know that God will provide their needs, but to expect little support for world missions from most traditional African-American churches. Most will believe the false concept of missions as only bettering the global community--unless, of course, Christ gives a spiritual revolution through your generation's commitment to God's Word.

Those who believe in Christ's Commission in my generation, both white and black, have become dreamers instead of visionaries. Some of us keep saying that we want African Americans on the missions field. Some of us see the effectiveness of our united witness for Christ. But the bottom line is that our conferences and discussions still fall short of changing our segregated status quo in missions.

The existing divide between black-governed and white-governed parts of Christ's Body demobilizes you and other African-American students. When leaders in the white-governed part

fail to teach Christ's authoritative, commissioning words to African Americans, their racial discrimination deprives you of your spiritual right to freedom. Their failure denies you the opportunities to believe Jesus and his Commission, to become His disciples through absolute devotion to Him as the Revelation of God, to know His complete truth, and to be set free of the spiritual chains of our hurtful pasts.

If leaders in the African-American-governed part of the Church deny the authority of Christ's Great Commission, deem it not relevant to your race, or leave you unaware of His mandate, they likewise deprive you of spiritual freedom. How then can you believe in what you have not heard? You cannot respond in obedience to a command that remains unknown. If they fail to teach you Christ's Commissioning words, then they also deprive you of opportunities for real discipleship and to receive the knowledge that would set you free. If preachers fail to call you to obey Christ's Commission, then you miss the chance to glorify God and fulfill His global purpose. Are they not also guilty of silent neglect of African Americans? By not preaching Jesus as Lord of the Harvest, do they not sin against Him and you?

My ministry experiences with students over the years heighten my zeal to challenge you to rise up as Christ's vanguard on your campus. Since a vanguard defends from the front by taking down strongholds, defend and confirm the true Gospel and the authority of God's Word. Choose the less-traveled doctrinal road and lead into spiritual warfare with the Bible's absolute truth as your armor.

Remember that a call by God to a minister is also a call to prepare. Determine to study the Bible formally under professors who respect its authority as God's inspired Word. You will not find this kind of sound doctrine in college religion classes. As you plan out your academic training, include taking Bible institute classes or attending a seminary that teaches sound doctrine.

When I graduated with my M.B.A., I felt exhausted and done with school at age 24. Yet praise God that a Christian leader took me aside and challenged me to take Bible institute classes. He advised me correctly that I did not know what God had in store for me in the future and that I needed to prepare by formally studying God's Word. I took one or two Bible classes a semester for five years while working full-time in inner city youth outreach. This difficult investment transformed my life and ministry. In this high-tech age, free online resources provide opportunities for you to begin your Bible training while still in college.

In conclusion, strategically make Christ and His Commission known on your campus as you defend and confirm the Gospel with sound doctrine. Introduce many to discipleship that begins with personal faith in Him as the foundation for acting justly and extending mercy. Proclaim God's Word. Celebrate your right and freedom to make His truth known regardless of false opinions. Do not sweat anyone who tries to belittle you as close-minded. Through your vanguard commitment, stand for truth and holiness. May many students discover in Jesus the life and purpose that they miss out on. The Lord transforms the hardest path into victory's highway. He will empower you to run spiritually hard and healthy on the narrower road so you

lead God's army strongly. Go forward under the high calling of being a deliverer and defeat every form of evil by the power of His grace.<sup>60</sup> (Psalm 18:36-37)

Chapter 14 provides insights into the background and thinking of white Bible-believing missionaries, so you may balance opposing opinions and deploy a unified missionary force. Chapter 15 then explains how missionaries with diverse races and backgrounds may build up one another to increase their overall effectiveness and overcome unnoticed hurdles that hinder mobilization.

[Notes](#)

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## **Chapter 14**

### **Understand America's White Christian Mindset**

*A Vanguard Skillfully Unites His Forces*

Uniting black and white American missionary forces will be one of your greatest challenges in light of past unresolved hurts. Accept this glorious vanguard calling and learn to skillfully address this contradiction: Many good white missionaries sacrificially gave their lives for the Gospel overseas while most white American Christians remained silent during segregation and Jim Crow violence. Can you vehemently denounce white racial violence and silent neglect while bringing healing, encouraging forgiveness, teaching sensitivity, honoring sacrifice, and uniting God's racially divided people in America?

For example, when mobilizing a unified missions force, how would you address the racial contradictions of white Christians that occurred at the same time in the late 1950s? On December 1, 1955, Montgomery, Alabama police arrested Rosa Parks for refusing to give up her seat in protest against segregated city buses. Later, on January 10, 1956, the Interstate Commerce Commission forced carriers to integrate interstate buses and their waiting rooms. Then about a month later on February 26, 1956, Virginia Senator Harry Byrd called for massive resistance against school integration. His call led to laws authorizing Virginia's governor to close Norfolk's schools, and elsewhere, to prevent integration. Montgomery officials indicted Martin Luther King, Jr. on that same day in February for inciting the bus boycott.<sup>1</sup> All the while, most Bible-believing, missionary-sending Christians remained silent and segregated.

In contrast to this segregation and during these same months of turmoil, five white missionaries gave up their lives on January 8, 1956 in the attempt to meet and live among Ecuador's Waodani Indians. On January 30, *Life Magazine* published a 10-page article covering the deaths of Jim Elliot and the four other pioneering missionaries. This moving article captured their self-sacrifice and willingness to integrate with these people of color.<sup>2</sup> These missionaries arrived unarmed, wanting to connect for the first time with the Waodani. The Indians felt threatened and killed them with spears.

The Lord honored the sacrificial love of these missionaries and their families. In addition to bringing many of these unreached people to Himself, the Lord used their deaths and the startling testimony of this *Life Magazine* article to rally many more white laborers for the world harvest.

In fact, these men mobilized thousands of white missionaries through their sacrifices. Their published diaries and family legacies inspired many for service. The following entry from Jim Elliot's diary instilled the eternal significance of their sacrifice in many Christians coming after him: He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.

I grew up in the next decade with the advantage of reading this quote and seeing a picture of him slain and partly submerged in a river, which today still strongly impacts my values. I remember my dad referring to their willingness in his sermons as he called for more missionaries to go overseas. In 2006, the movie, *The End of the Spear*, told this story and challenged yet another generation of white missionaries to make the theme, "Go and Preach the Gospel," the

precept they follow as well. Unfortunately, white segregation's divisive effects prevented Jim Elliot's mobilizing sacrificial love from making an impression on you.

In this same racialized historical context of the mid-1950s, my father's action against segregation and his vision for mobilizing African-American missionaries failed for lack of support in South Carolina. How would you explain the motivation of white missionaries who gave up their lives to integrate with Indians while evangelicals Christians segregated themselves from African Americans in the South?

Similar to when someone changes their Facebook "in a relationship" status to "complicated," the racially divided relationships among American believers needs revision. Instead of taking one of the extreme positions in the black-white debate, step outside the drama with me to see the complexity of the emotionally charged issues that divide us all. If we understand what each side is thinking, then maybe progress can be made to mobilize everyone together.

A vanguard charged with mobilizing and leading a united missions force might benefit from analyzing white Christians' motives and thinking. For example, in Norfolk, many African Americans require that anyone who enters the presence of others must verbally greet everyone in the group. Failing to speak first and give a greeting is considered a disrespectful insult. Not greeting someone is tantamount to communicating anger or superiority. I have known African Americans who held grudges against a particular neighbor who failed to greet them on one occasion. Children who enter a room without addressing black adults receive a loud rebuke in the form of a question, "You can't speak?!"

White people seem to have no idea about this tradition. Most of our parents raised us to "only speak when spoken to." We walk silently into church like going to the mall. Many whites might consider it rude to enter a room and greet people who are already engaged in conversation without being invited to do so. See the problem?

When whites fail to give this greeting, some blacks assume that they are uppity racists who think that they are better than them. Likewise, some whites jump to the conclusion that black people hate them because the whites receive undeserved "attitude" from African Americans when they first cross paths. This cultural misunderstanding opens old wounds from past malice and racism. What other misunderstanding still demobilize us?

### **Twentieth-Century White American Missionary Motives**

Research shows that white American missionaries in the last century have remained consistently strategic in fulfilling their mission. Most remained focused and sacrificially fulfilled Christ's Great Commission. Unfortunately, they addressed social and political structures only when they interfered with this one missional purpose for going out. They worked within existing structures that were compatible with their goals of making disciples.

For instance, European colonialist governments often required them to work within unjust structures that missionaries could not individually control. Yet many white missionaries courageously laid down their lives to fulfill their mission from Christ. Without confronting

social injustice, they tried to strategically convert oppressive European structures while staying on task.<sup>3</sup> As I said, white missionaries did not include the objectives of social justice and the global mobilization of people of African descent in their otherwise-biblical reasons for serving.

Today, 90 percent of overseas missionaries believe evangelical doctrine. Most white evangelical missionaries hold with unwavering conviction to the Bible's teaching that Jesus Christ will return again. Those I know believe its warnings that unbelievers, as individuals, face eternal punishment for sin. They believe the Bible truth that all believers will appear before Christ and give an account for obedience to His Great Commission.

Faith in Christ and these essential doctrines motivated thousands of missionaries to obey and preach the good news of His salvation to the ends of the earth. His love and these truths compelled most American missionaries to willingly risk their lives to love and save the lost. In his diary, my grandfather mentioned that eight from his mission had already died in Africa before his arrival. He went anyway to attempt the same evangelism assignment as theirs, which eventually cost him his earthly life.

As a young widower in 1916 who had already lost a wife and child in the States, my grandfather left Brooklyn on a freighter heading to East Africa. His diary testifies of but one reason for leaving family and going across the ocean to risk his life:

Even tho I am sailing away from native land, from loved ones, & friends, yet - I am happy, oh! so happy, because I am in the service of the King, & because he has chosen me to take the message of salvation to those who are in the depths of sin in Africa. I want my life to count for Jesus. "He MUST increase, but I MUST decrease."<sup>4</sup>

Almost all of the missionaries who I have met in my life go to the field to unselfishly bring lost people to Christ or to support those who do this work. Missionaries proclaiming the Gospel's good news of salvation make great sacrifices as acts of love for people who have never heard. Many other missionaries died for this cause. Consider my grandfather's diary entry as he traveled to East Africa:

**Thursday August 10, 1916**

"Go ye into all the world & preach my gospel to all nations" I praise God that he has put the response of "Here am I, send me" in my heart to this command & today I am on my way to preach the Gospel to the African.

Even though my grandfather gave his life as Christ's ambassador, African-American liberal church leaders would say he failed because he did not also bring about social justice and liberation for the Africans. Let me review the reasons for this difference in thinking.

**What White Fundamentalist Missionaries Think**

In defense of the Gospel during the controversy caused by the liberals' attack on the Bible since the Civil War, many white Christians refocused on Christ's Second Coming, on living controlled by the Holy Spirit to pursue holiness, and on fulfilling Christ's Commission. With high regard for God's Word, they believed the Bible's teaching in 2 Timothy 3:16 that all Scripture is God-breathed, including the words and grammar. Believing that God supernaturally used men and human language to provide His written direct revelation, fundamentalists interpret the Bible in a normal, literal way that makes God's Word, not the theologians, the authority. Therefore, passages may only be taken figuratively when the Bible, itself, justifies doing so.

Many fundamentalists believe, therefore, that Jesus Christ will bodily return *before* He establishes a literal 1000-year reign on earth. This timing of the Second Coming of Christ is called *pre-millennial*. For instance, when responding properly to this belief, white fundamentalists' mindsets remain centered upon Jesus' imminent return. Instead of being optimistic about global social progress, pre-millennial fundamentalists expect the opposite to occur. They anticipate world civilizations becoming more ungodly as Christ's imminent return gets closer.<sup>5</sup>

Most fundamentalists believe, therefore, the Bible's teaching that progress in our world must come on an individual basis as Christ transforms each heart. Salvation from the punishment of one's individual sin is necessary to become God's child and to have a personal relationship with Christ. Taking personal responsibility to obey Christ and pursue His holiness are discipleship requirements after salvation, not the means to earn acceptance from God. Eternal life is a free gift accepted by faith through grace and not by taking social action. The highest form of love in action is to introduce someone to this personal relationship with Christ. This thinking focused on bringing individuals to Christ is also reflected in my grandfather's diary:

### **Monday Aug 21, 1916**

Trust in the Lord with all thy heart & lean not unto thine own understanding. Pro. 3:5 Had another pleasant day today - altho tonight is quite windy & stormy looking. The weather is much cooler. We had a prayer meeting tonight for the salvation of our unsaved loved ones. Ethel among them. We are expecting to hear of salvation coming to them as a result of. As the Lord has promised "If two of you agree on earth as touching anything I will do it." Matt. 18:10. Praise him for his ability & willingness to keep his promises. If he would not, I would not venture to go to Africa.

### **Wednesday August 30, 1916**

Jesus said, I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live. John 11:25 I praise God today that I saw & set foot on for the first time my future home & field of labor "Dark Africa." I praise him also, because for this passage of scripture which he gave to me after I had looked upon the faint outline of the land & realizing that the darkness hovering the land was nothing to the appalling darkness that overshadowed the people of the land. As my eye could not penetrate far into the darkness at 4

o'clock this morning so not human efforts can penetrate the darkened hearts & minds of the people but praise God for a Savior who is a resurrection i.e. one who can bring even those dead in trespass & sin to life & then he is the life i.e. one who comes in and makes his life our life. I am glad that I am the messenger of such a Gospel to Africa. And I pray that God may in all ways make me a faithful proclaimer or herald of this good news & hence forth I say: I live, nevertheless not I, but "Christ" liveth in me" I labor, nevertheless not I, but "Christ" laboreth thru me. I love, yet nevertheless not I, but "Christ" loveth by me.

### **March 2, 1917**

Arrived in Busea four thirty [sic] today after a hard walk part of the way through mud & water half way to the knees, & in a tired condition, but nevertheless enjoyed the safari. We had had an opportunity to see vast multitudes of villages all without any workers for Christ at all & it gave me a sense of the bigness of the field God has called me to labor in. And I pray that during my stay in Africa I may have the opportunity to preach Christ to many of these same people & also that in the near future if Jesus tarries we may see many workers in these fields. Surely the need is great but the laborers are few. Found the workers here well & happy in spite of the fact that for two years they were shut in from outside communications because of the war.

Unfortunately, fundamentalists overreacted when denouncing the social gospel's view that God only cares about institutional sins and unjust social structures. Before the 1920s, fundamentalists led significant social outreaches. However, since then and until the late 1960s, fundamentalists not only denounced the social gospel, they went too far to reject social outreach all together. For many decades they lost the good doctrines that Christ is glorified and His true Gospel is advanced through social outreach, justice, and mercy. Confronting institutional injustice became replaced with silent neglect. Fundamentalists wanted to prevent social outreaches from distracting from their mission of inviting people to have personal relationships with Christ.<sup>6</sup>

I conclude that the goal of changing hearts with the Gospel guided white fundamentalist thinking when they remained silent during Jim Crow and the Civil Rights Movement. This silence, regardless of evangelistic motives, must be denounced because it enabled cruel violence and other injustices to continue. For example, white evangelist D.L. Moody (1837-1899) preached the Gospel to millions of people at evangelistic crusades held around the country and in England. He was somewhat like a Billy Graham of his day. Moody focused on saving souls but addressed social issues only when personal repentance could be preached. I assume, therefore, that he believed lynching could be stopped by introducing each racist to Christ.<sup>7</sup> He knew that white southerners would not attend his revivals in the South if he condemned lynching or segregation.

Moody, I assume, kept silent during Jim Crow oppression wanting Christ to individually change the hearts of white racists through his Gospel preaching. I agree with an African-



American social activist who accused him of caring more for the future of white people's souls than the life of the African American being lynched in his day. Although hard to imagine, I can also believe Moody kept silent purposefully in an attempt to change each racist, brutal heart with the Gospel at his revivals.<sup>8</sup>

Analyzing the choices Moody made would make a good case study on how to effectively mobilize a unified missions force. How would you have challenged him on lynching and missions, if you were a vanguard leader during his lifetime? If he were alive and holding crusades today, would you want Moody to preach against abortion for the sake of the thousands of babies being murdered each week? Would you expect him to take a stand against these murders even though he would alienate many members of a political party? Would it matter that those alienated would never receive the Gospel from him after he took his stand against abortion? To stop abortion, should he try to change the hearts of the individual mothers seeking them or should he use his international platform for political activism? Would you speak up and burn bridges along with him or remain silent?

For generations, fundamentalists avoided politics altogether because they anticipated societies becoming hopelessly more ungodly. They considered secular government programs as hapless attempts to solve society's problems. They disliked watching social gospel ideals being implemented by liberals in government, but remained silent, detached and stayed out of politics until the '80s.<sup>9</sup> In addition, 20th-century missionaries accommodated colonialist governments but viewed their selfish interests as unrighteous detriments to the Gospel. Their avoidance of politics meant that they seldom spoke up against social injustices that they observed.

This silence resulted from the priority missionaries place on only preaching the true Gospel to bring lasting change. They believed that when individuals came to Christ, social justice would naturally follow.<sup>10</sup> In addition, fundamentalists respected government authority as God-appointed rule. Many chose to work within an unjust system to convert it one person at a time rather than openly confront it.

For example, you might know about the eight white Birmingham, Alabama pastors who wrote an open letter in 1963 to African Americans calling on them to end their civil rights demonstrations. The pastors challenged the activities of outsiders and called on the black community to instead take up their cause in the court system. They meant Martin Luther King, Jr. when they referred to outsiders. At the time when these white pastors wrote the letter, King was in jail for civil disobedience. He responded with his famous letter from Birmingham that explained a Christian's moral obligation to disobey unjust laws and work tirelessly for social change.<sup>11</sup>

Take your vanguard opportunity to end the divide between African-American leaders and white missionaries. Can you imagine what would have happened if black civil rights leaders and white missionaries had joined forces in the 1950s? Picture thousands of Bible-believing missionaries risking their lives in the Civil Rights Movement to end segregation in the South. What if white Christians boycotted buses with Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr.? See church buses from white congregations offering rides to African Americans during the bus

boycott! Imagine someone like Billy Graham holding a prayer crusade for King outside of the Birmingham jail. What if King rallied black college students for mission service in Ecuador to overcome with love the killing of white missionaries? What if black students arose like the Freedom Riders to join with white students and win spiritual freedom for the Waodani Indians? Of course, we cannot turn back the clock to make this happen. Yet, you can lead this unified force today.

Understand white missionaries' evangelism motives, challenge them to speak up for justice, and muster them for social causes, as well. Learn to pioneer from their examples of personal sacrifices so all may build each other up in Christ and accomplish His mission. As you step up to lead, weigh carefully the next chapter's challenge to bring change by adding three important dynamics to your campus ministries. These dynamics determine whether you build your new missions structures upon the true Cornerstone, Jesus Christ, and God's powerful Word. Chapter 15 will explain how to rise above existing black/white structural hurdles and lead Christ's freedom forces in a global missionary uprising.

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## **Chapter 15**

### **Add Dynamics of a Successful Missionary Uprising**

#### *A Vanguard Revolutionizes Structures*

#### **Breaking Silence for Change**

Consider my purpose for breaking silence on race and doctrine controversies related to missions. The chapters on these issues provide you a platform for bringing about change. As vanguard change agents, design your student ministries so missions-mobilization begins and progresses on your campuses. Empower Christian students with ministry qualities, called “dynamics,” which bring change and cause progress to occur. Equip them to add these three dynamics of a successful missionary uprising to their cultural frameworks: expectation, investigation and edification.

First, add *expectation* to Christian students’ cultural toolboxes. Revolutionize demobilizing race-based assumptions that black and white Christians tend to make about African Americans in missions. For instance, correct wrong thinking that African Americans are somehow limited to ministry with people of African descent. Mobilize missionaries from all socio-economic classes. As a vanguard, create expectation that Christ commissions a unified missions force without race or class discrimination.

Second, add *investigation* to Christians’ cultural mixes. Equip disciples to search the Scriptures, missions history and their hearts. Encourage them to become spiritual detectives who discover for themselves sound doctrine and the truth about racial division in missions. With fearless moral inventory, address the spiritual consequences of Christian black and white racial discrimination. Investigate together the reasons for inferior discipleship, false doctrine, moral decline and failure to fulfill Christ’s commission.

Last, but not least, create a new culture of *edification* where diverse, but unified, members of Christ’s Body build up one another using their given frameworks. Make diversity the means for God’s people to equip one another to translate other cultures for world missions. As you step forward and lead His missionary uprising, navigate students beyond segregated ministry structures that undermine missions mobilization. Help them avoid token structures where whites promote a few African Americans to leadership positions and maintain status quo segregation. Optimize individualism to introduce white Christians to racial reconciliation that changes status quo, racially divided structures. Also, prevent black enabling of white neglect in missions.

Before providing more details about these three catalysts for change, this chapter must first introduce how structural sins undermine the Gospel’s credibility and why most white people do not notice them.

#### **Society’s Structural Sins and the Gospel**

During my adolescent years, my father’s ministry took me outside of the white-Christian structural box. His commitment to equip African pastors placed me under the leadership of an African-American Child Evangelism Fellowship missionary whom he mentored. In this context

and from age 12 to 14, I learned much from African Americans about white society's structural issues. A number of them used examples from their personal experiences to reveal the existence of systemic, structural sins to this young white teenager in their midst.

In this diverse context with my dad and this black missionary, I learned how to explain the true Gospel. I began exercising my spiritual gift of personal evangelism during outreaches they organized. Additionally, I folded together my experiences with African Americans and evangelism to combine two issues that divide many Christians. I learned to accept the necessity of confronting unjust structures and the unquestionable spiritual need for personal salvation through faith in Christ.

For instance, in the summer of 1970, an unchurched African-American senior adult schooled me on white structural sins when I attempted to explain the Gospel to her. Our missionary leader had brought us to her impoverished rural black community in Currituck, North Carolina, as an outreach from our church's teen camp. I met her at a retirement home while making "door-to-door" visits to introduce people to a personal relationship with Christ.

Unfortunately, my African-American Currituck teacher gave only her first name. I felt uncomfortable using it then and cannot recall her name to use it now. Yet her lessons came to me from first-hand experiences. These experiences dated back to the days of Jim Crow oppression and the era of prominent African-American leaders like J. W. E. Bowen, Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Dubois.

She allowed me to spend time visiting with her on two occasions. We talked as she sat in a row with other residents on the front deck of their meager retirement home. Feistier than the rest, she controlled our discussions there. This strong but aged woman addressed me like a school teacher who had just graded my work as "unsatisfactory." I explained the Gospel on my agenda. She told me about the frustrating hurts on her heart and mind.

At least while I visited with my Currituck teacher, my prayerful witness failed to persuade her that acceptance by God and salvation from sin came by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. She stubbornly remained convinced that salvation must be earned with good deeds. She refused to believe that God would accept her because she chewed tobacco.

My education about structures began when this elderly woman introduced herself by her first name. Immediately after her introduction, she told me how slaves had adopted their owners' family names because the slaves had none. Aggravation in her voice convinced me that something bothered her about her last name. I tried to imagine what life would be like if my own name and identity brought me hurt.

Then she launched unhesitatingly into a discussion on how white men had raped African-American women. Her declaration of "y'all messed up our blood" made her accusations personal. She asserted that in the past, all African Americans had the same color. She invoked "y'all" several times and made quite an impression on the 13 year old she lectured. I discerned no malice directed personally toward me, but I sensed the resentment she held against whites and Christians. I believe that her inability to protect herself and other black women caused the hurt

that she expressed. She resented the white religious systems that condoned rape through silence and degraded women with blame.

I recognized three systemic injustices that distorted her perception of Christ and His Gospel. These injustices impact my present perceptions about structures. First, she found no identity in the Christian's system. Second, she felt unwanted for chewing tobacco in a structure founded on good works theology. Third, she resented how local white Christian systems condemned her tobacco use but had condoned white rape of black women. Her lessons inadvertently taught a teenage evangelist how Christian systems may rape the Gospel and soil the sacrifice of Christ's blood.

To mobilize, the vanguard must organize God's missions forces strategically. The rest of this chapter equips you to rise, unhindered, above race-related demobilizing structures.

### **Why Many White Christians Do Not Recognize Structures**

Most white fundamentalist Christians reacted to the social gospel's focus on social structures by shifting the paradigm in the opposite direction. They somehow, in my opinion, eventually adopted a world view that assumes no structures exist at all. Most middle-class white fundamentalists think in terms of individuals and do not recognize social structures in government, schools, neighborhoods, and civilizations.<sup>1</sup> Most do not recognize how their church structures maintain status quo racial divides.<sup>2</sup> In the same way, they would not see any structural barriers to African-American mobilization for world missions.

Until relatively recent times, fundamentalist Christians avoided politics and political structures to emphasize evangelism instead. My grandfather's diary comments reflected this focus. He showed no regard for government or commercial interests in Africa. He went to Africa during World War 1 but scarcely mentioned it in his diary. He never mentioned the major political changes that occurred in Tanzania\* after this war. For instance, the League of Nations transferred colonial rule from the defeated Germans to England, which completely changed Tanzania's system of government.

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\*Named Tanganyika at that time

Like most missionaries, my grandfather's motives centered only on the high calling of proclaiming the Gospel and bringing spiritual peace with God, as shown in this entry:

#### **Wednesday Aug. 16, 1916**

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Passed the Equator during the night of Tuesday & land now down in new regions. Sea is a little calmer today. Saw another freighter today possibly on its way to South America. There is an American consul on board going to Port Elizabeth, but my position is greater than his, he only represents a country, but I represent the King of Kings & Lord of Lords. I am His ambassador carrying

the Gospel of Peace to those bound in the chains of sin & darkness. Praise God for the privilege.

Sociologists have studied the values, norms, attitudes, and social structures of white evangelical Christians -who have the same fundamentalist beliefs about obeying the Great Commission. These sociologists show how white evangelicals form their identities by bundling together their race with norms, attitudes, and ideologies from being an American and a Christian.<sup>3</sup> Evangelical Christians are also more likely to believe that their whiteness is important to their identities than other American whites. Racial identity is usually hidden to most whites but is real and important to white evangelicals who try to preserve their racial and cultural identities.<sup>4</sup>

White evangelical Christians highly value personal relationships and individual responsibility.<sup>5</sup> Most also believe that African Americans have the same opportunities as whites.<sup>6</sup> White evangelical Christians are more likely to reject any explanations about the black-white racial and economic divides that are based on social structural influences and inequalities.<sup>7</sup> As a result, most white Christians attempt racial reconciliation by seeking to introduce blacks to a personal relationship with Christ, by repenting of personal prejudice, and by getting to know and love individuals of the other race.<sup>8</sup> They do not perceive any structural barriers dividing black and white Christians.<sup>9</sup>

In addition, two particular researchers show how white evangelical Christians negatively stereotype African Americans as a group while taking for granted their own hidden advantages when judging them.<sup>10</sup> Many white evangelicals believe that blacks, as a group, do not take enough personal responsibility, especially for racial reconciliation. Most whites think that everyone in America has equal opportunity and may become successful if they work hard.<sup>11</sup>

The well-researched conclusions are that white evangelicals have strong desires to maintain the racial status quo and do so with their superior economic positions.<sup>12</sup> Many white Christians wanting unity expect African Americans to assimilate into white culture. Many also believe that blacks cause the racial divide by sticking to themselves.<sup>13</sup>

To this research I add my observation that many white evangelicals take for granted an all-white American missions force. I believe they bundle their white missionary identity with their white American Christian identity. Whites do not miss African Americans on the fields nor perceive any structural barriers preventing black mobilization.<sup>14</sup>

These results became real to me recently after a campus ministry meeting where I had been invited to speak about racism. A white student respectfully expressed, almost word for word, the exact sentiments that these researches describe.

This research about the structures of white Christian systems supports my case for revolutionizing the missionary system that my grandfather's generation implemented. I conclude that many whites and blacks take for granted that full-time American missionaries are white. I believe that our norms and structures preserve this perception in missions systems. Demobilizing structures in missions maintain the status quo divides in missions between black

and white Christians. As a vanguard missions leader, recognize and act against these structural injustices.

Take the opportunity to correct and edify white evangelical Christians with your sensitivity to social injustice and heritage of social activism. Receive from the history of white missionaries their commitment to sacrifice everything for Christ and His global mandate.

Had we lived a hundred years ago, we might have edified my grandfather, and he could have inspired us with how he suffered for Christ's mission. He recorded specific injustices and cruelties that European colonialism had inflicting upon Africans at the time. Naming them "civilizations without God," my grandfather wrote a page of indictments against the occupying countries.

My grandfather accused Germany, in its rule of German East Africa, of doing nothing for the natives. He reported that officials "held native women" and used cruel "kipoko" whips to rule the people. These whips were called "kipoko," which is the Swahili word for "hippopotamus," because they were made out of strips of hippopotamus hide. Kipoko whips could cut and bruise with one stroke.<sup>15</sup> Also, he referred to a "trail of blood in war" apparently caused by German rulers.

Regarding the Belgian Congo, my grandfather complained that Belgium rulers were losing control over the Africans because of the immorality of white officials. He reported that automobiles were used more for carrying prostitutes than soldiers. He also accused Belgium soldiers of stealing women during the war. He did not document or resist the many cruel social injustices that the Belgium government inflicted upon Africans during this same time period. Devastated by Germany in World War I, Belgium partnered with big businesses to exploit the Congo's resources for its own economic recovery. Belgium colonialists used high taxes to force Africans to work on plantations located on ancestral lands that they stole from them. They used natives to beat or imprison other Africans for not paying the taxes. Therefore, Belgium received the benefits of forced labor and tax revenues from Africans who became impoverished because they had no time to raise their own crops. Additionally, Belgium enticed business investment by giving away large land grants in the Congo. The government appointed corrupt chiefs and left village life demoralized. They called their worst exploitative policy "Total Civilization" and insisted that it helped lazy Africans learn how to work hard.<sup>16</sup>

My grandfather wrote of a British lieutenant who received a letter from his home office asking if the natives were occupying any large tracts of land in German East Africa that would be suitable for white settlers. He witnessed England's expanding colonialism in South Africa and several injustices that must have paved the way for apartheid. He reported that "20,000 die of white man's vices, drink, etc." as 200,000 British immigrants arrived in Johannesburg each year. He indicated that one in every three natives there contracted tuberculosis from the British. Since Britain ruled where he served in Tanganyika, I believe that my grandfather missed opportunity to protest against these social injustices.

Britain acquired Tanganyika about the same time that my grandfather arrived there after World War I. The League of Nations gave this colony, of defeated Germany, to England in 1922

as a spoil of the war. England's government instituted three policies in Tanganyika that created structural injustices. First, the government implemented a vague principle called "Trusteeship." Feeling superior, England justified imperialistic colonialism saying that Africans could not stand on their own two feet and needed a trustee to oversee their government. Second, the British government instituted an "interventionist" form of the Doctrine of Indirect Rule. To manage African populations, England appointed administrators who created "tribes" and oversaw select native inhabitants who ruled them. Third, the British intentionally slowed progress in Africa during the years after World War I.<sup>17</sup> I doubt that white missionaries were sensitive enough to recognize systemic injustices and regard these as exploitative.

My grandfather seemed to take for granted that the Europeans would rule in Africa and be needed to control the indigenous people. He recorded civilizations' godlessness but did not denounce their unjust subjugation of Africans. He did not grieve oppressive commercial and government systems. He ministered to the Africans within the confines of these oppressive structures. He wanted to save the Israelites without confronting the Pharaoh.<sup>18</sup>

His diary indicated that colonialist governments subjugated my grandfather as well. Also, he lacked opportunities to take action in the States. He had raised financial support to only travel to the field but not enough to return home. I heard stories of how my uncle and aunt had become seriously ill but could not get medicine. A missionary doctor wrote back to the States pleading for money to get them home for medical care. Also, my grandfather died because he could not return to the States before his appendix burst. When in pain, he would get off of his motorcycle and lie on the side of the road. An African pastor prayed for him, and he would continue his safaris that lasted weeks in dangerous conditions. He even expressed frustration that the local government would not give him a marriage license and delayed his wedding. I am sure that he believed that European oppression forced him to minister under oppressive systems that he assumed were beyond his control to change.

Instead of protesting social injustice, my grandfather sacrificed his life to preach the Gospel and translate the Bible for Africans who had never heard of Christ. Yet my grandfather did not write any prayers grieving injustice. In the diary that criticized godless civilizations, he did not plead for God to reconstruct the social institutions that oppressed Africans. His sincere sacrifice to convert individuals, without confronting oppressive social structures, demonstrates how many white fundamentalist missionaries usually think. For instance, my grandfather did not join Christian Africans in their resistance against colonialism. His diary showed no support for African believers seeking equality. He made no references about Africans breaking off from missionary-planted churches in the 1920s to form their own churches and speak up for justice. This independent church movement grew to become more than 10,000 denominations that spread across Africa and now exist on other continents.<sup>19</sup>

Some historians show that missionaries like him tried to convert the colonialist structures that they worked under. I assume that my grandfather recorded these injustices because he wanted to convert colonialism one official at a time. Seemingly undistracted by consequences of unjust social structures, he expressed no concern that oppressive white governments might



undermine the credibility of a Gospel. He did not discuss how the indigenous people had responded to God's Word coming from the lips of white men who looked like the ones who whipped, raped, and exploited them. I noticed from his diary how his high expectations of a having a great spiritual harvest in Africa noticeably diminished after his ministry started there.

American missionary-sending institutions failed to mobilize African Americans to go with my grandfather. Black and white missionaries could have edified each other to advance the true Gospel with social action. African Americans brought to the missions field higher sensitivity to colonialism's structural injustices and more support for African resistance. For instance, about 10 years before my grandfather arrived in Africa, William Sheppard, an African-American Presbyterian missionary, had already exposed Belgium's violent exploitation of Congo natives. Sheppard and a white missionary, resisting together, caused worldwide protests. Additionally, they successfully defended themselves against a defamation lawsuit brought against a company affiliated with Belgium's king. Their legal victory gave them an international platform to protest against colonialism's exploitation in the Congo.

Use this awareness in your vanguard leadership to expose how structural issues in historically white missions systems demobilize us all. Yet, give hope for a united, reconciled, global Christian witness. Step up and reach your potential to mobilize all races together. Proclaim the Gospel of personal salvation from sin while recognizing demobilizing structural barriers in missions. Be strong in the Lord and His mighty power. Mobilize for the true Gospel, social justice, community development, and freedom.

### **Three Structural Dynamics of a Successful Missionary Uprising**

Based upon my observations of black and white structures in missions, I offer the three dynamics that I deem critical to the success of your vanguard missionary uprising. Note that I summarize information from previous chapters about black and white missions structures that demobilize. Please address both sides in your vanguard leadership of us all.

#### **Expectation**

With vanguard skill, teach from God's Word how Christ expects His Body to obey His Great Commission without discrimination as one spiritual race. Recognize wrong assumptions about race in missions as you revolutionize structures through a unified missionary force. Again, many whites in missions have been assuming that they possess, as the dominant race, the God-given duty, right, and privilege to implement, govern, and finance the fulfilling of His purposes in the world. For instance, while my grandfather served in German East Africa, eight colleagues from his missions agency attended the 1917 Christian Occupation of Africa conference in New York City. They reported needing 50 missionaries to serve in German East Africa. Yet, when reading the traits they desired in potential missionary recruits, it becomes obvious that they assumed that all their candidates would be white.<sup>20</sup>

Today, most white and black Christians do not notice that African Americans remain missing in world evangelism. Likewise, most Christians, black or white, do not feel concerned

when someone points out this disparity. Recognize when low expectations for missions fosters this lack of concern.

Invoke Christ's authority to mobilize disciple-makers for all people-groups worldwide. Correct wrong assumptions about black limitations caused by inferior discipleship, discrimination or fear. For instance, many white and black Christians assume incorrectly that extensive African-American ministry is supposed to be limited to reaching only other blacks. Both expect blacks to minister to other races only as exceptions to the norm and not extensively. These wrong perceptions enable whites to maintain the segregated status quo. Perhaps this traditional paradigm helps blacks feel comfortable and find their identities as black missionaries to people of African descent. White people, in contrast, keep independent, expansionist identities as world missionaries who assume that their race is called to minister to the ends of the earth.

In addition, African Americans who maintain survival mentalities in missions set demobilizing limits on themselves, as well. Up to this point, most have preferred going to established missions stations rather than taking on more dangerous pioneering assignments. Ironically, after millions of black people died because of their skin color, Harr concluded rather harshly that African Americans limited themselves in missions because they tried to save their own skins.<sup>21</sup>

As you revolutionize the traditional expectations behind missions structures, claim God's promise in 2 Timothy 3:16: His inspired Word remains profitable for reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. With short-term missions experiences, true discipleship, and prayer raise expectations for mobilization. For instance, consider bringing students with you to the GLOBE Center in Jamaica to discover this critical dynamic.

## **Investigation**

Inspire students to become spiritual detectives. Again, to change status quo structures in missions, equip students to investigate the Scriptures, missions history, ministry structures and their hearts. Empower them to test doctrine, making the Bible's ultimate authority their litmus test of what they believe and do.

Lead the study of missions history. As I described in previous chapters, systematic racial discrimination, existing between black and white Christians, brings with it unnoticed devastating spiritual consequences. These consequences demobilize us all before Christ, who commissions us as His one body. I broke my silence on many sensitive race issues to get you started in your own analysis of missions history. Continue to investigate the spiritual consequences of Christians' racial discrimination as you lead a unified uprising beyond the structural and doctrinal hurdles they created. Regardless of past hurts, as God's change-agent, make His Word your final authority on race and missions. With true discipleship, teach Christ's truth in love, address racial discrimination, expose its spiritual consequences, bring healing and lead change.

Teach students to analyze the race divisions in their ministries. With identities grounded securely upon who-they-are-in-Christ, mobilize a movement that navigates students above and

beyond any segregated ministry structures. For instance, many American whites maintain past ministry structures that preserve racial segregation that was founded upon feelings of superiority. Economic advantages and these systems maintain their status quo segregated way of life and privilege. Usually, this status quo maintenance and its destructive consequences are hidden from them in the norms, values, and structures of their ministries. Most evangelical Christians disregard, ignore, or consider extreme the white leaders who confront the status quo racial systems. The more white leaders have to lose, the more likely they will not speak up.<sup>22</sup>

Historically, white-controlled missions agencies have looked for “above average” African-American candidates who could “meet their standards.”<sup>23</sup> I believe that African Americans do not fit in the identity mix that many white leaders bundle together for their missionaries. Be assured that your identity fits perfectly, and with many advantages, in Christ’s commissioned forces. Beginning on your campus, embrace your identity as His vanguard leader to pave new ways through traditional ministry and missions structural barriers.

Take inventory of social and economic class discrimination in your hearts and ministries. Check for the influences of retained unbiblical uplift ideologies. If African Americans divide world missions efforts along class lines, then they risk repeating uplift ideology’s failures, demobilizing themselves, and enabling whites to maintain status quo missions structures. Challenge middle-class African-American Christians to “take fearless moral inventory” to make sure that they do not view mobilizing blacks for missions as only their responsibility as a social class. They must be certain that missions is not their attempt to show progress, prove manhood, be productive, gain status, or earn respect. Before Christ, they must repent of prejudice against “lower” class peoples of any race, including their own. They must take a hard look at their own church structures to see if they favor the middle class. They must check their perceptions of the “lower” class masses to appreciate and affirm their potential to fulfill Christ’s Commission.

Subtle uplift ideology and structures may become hidden to black middle-class Christians like status quo segregation structure are to whites. For example, Pastor Drew often made class distinctions in his preaching to black and white middle class evangelicals. I doubt that he realized how his vision mirrored demobilizing uplift ideology. Pastor Drew’s theme verse was Ephesians 4:28:

Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

With this proof text, Pastor Drew preached specifically about African Americans of low-income backgrounds and referred to them as “the poor.” I am sure that in the minds of black listeners, Pastor Drew was making a subconscious social class distinction between the middle class and the “poor” class. Most white Christians who heard him preach, I suggest, probably did not make this class distinction and somehow lumped almost all black people into the term, “the poor.”

Therefore, like classic uplift ideology, Pastor Drew cast a negative image about the black lower class. By identifying the poor with “him that stole,” he implied that, as a group, they were dishonest and needed uplift. I believe that this implication reinforced prejudice and undermined his challenges to the black and white middle-class Christians whom he sought to enlist.

Also, by making “labour” and “working with his hand” the solutions to “the poor’s problem,” Pastor Drew mirrored uplift’s self-help values of productivity, thrift, and family stability. He reflected Booker T. Washington’s thinking about laying a foundation of vocational training for uplifting the lower class. Middle-class black members did not embrace Drew’s vision, since most of their children studied in college preparatory classes headed for higher education. In addition, Pastor Drew put the responsibility of uplifting the poor on the black middle class by preaching that they “may give to him that needeth” once they become elevated.

Again, I believe that most whites who heard Pastor Drew did not make a black class distinction.<sup>24</sup> They would assume that Pastor Drew meant that dishonest character is a problem of black people as a group. This kind of uplift thinking enables whites to continue status quo segregation believing that the black middle class is responsible for solving their own “problem” and uplifting the race.

Although middle-class African Americans may not embrace Pastor Drew’s vision for providing vocational training, they remain at-risk of taking on uplift’s negative attitude toward lower class peoples. If black middle-class members assume complete responsibility for mobilizing blacks or project negative images on the lower class masses, then they risk demobilizing themselves. They would also enable white Christians to maintain segregated missions structures. Whites can relinquish any sense of responsibility while waiting on the black middle class to mobilize itself and uplift the entire black race within missions structural barriers.

Now that you know the need to revolutionize status quo missions structures, keep your head on a swivel\* as you go forward. Watch out for structural factors that demobilize. As a vanguard, mobilize creatively to help other believers see them as well. Organize diverse but unified missionary-sending systems for your spiritual uprising.

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\*A sports term meaning to stay alert and see everything happening around you.

## **Edification**

In your analytical leadership, create a culture of mutual edification between Christians of different races. Since edification means to build up members of the Body of Christ, use diversity to build up believers for cross-cultural missions outreach. With this mutual edification dynamic between the races, change structures that hinder progress in missions for all. For example, encourage black Christians to rethink the use of two missions strategies. I call one strategy “black power demands” and the other “congregation.” I present reasons why they enable\* whites to maintain status quo segregation in missions and neglect mutual edification.

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\*I mean “enabling” in the sense of helping someone continue self-destructive behavior by removing the consequences. The enabler does not cause nor is responsible for the destructive behavior, but helps it continue.

Having been involved in more than a few interventions with people addicted to weed, alcohol, crack, and heroin, I have learned the necessity of carefully confronting enabling behavior without blaming the victims. One such behavior is to react in a dysfunctional way that the drug abuser uses as an excuse to shift blame to the enabler and continue drug use. For instance, when someone nags, fights, or reacts disrespectfully, substance abusers use these reactions to shift the problem's focus onto the enabler's behavior. Transferring blame to the enabler removes the consequence of being held responsible, so the drug abuse continues. I believe this same kind of enabling occurs in America's dysfunctional Christian family between black and white Christians.

**Black Power Demands.** With good intentions to change the status quo in missions, Christian African Americans may use race to mobilize blacks or to present black-poweristic demands to whites. For instance, they may insist that only blacks govern blacks in ministry and then implement separate-but-equal ministry systems. Unfortunately, when African Americans separate themselves in reaction to white domination in missions, I believe they enable whites to blame blacks for racial division and preserve racial segregation. Both sides might feel more comfortable with this segregated status quo, but the old paradigm of racial division will continue to demobilize them.

Historically, many Christian African-American leaders have used nationalistic race-talk to rally stratified black social classes, increase business opportunities, or provide a united front to racist whites. Some black evangelical middle-class leaders now imply that they want to create a separate black missions movement for African Americans. Instead, embrace a Biblical model that mobilizes a united missions force without regard to race or class.

Be careful when using race to mobilize African Americans so you do not create a separate-but-equal missions structure that perpetuates injustice. Exercise your Biblical right to enlist the support of the entire Body of Christ to send missionaries without racial discrimination. Black leaders have been legitimately concerned that African Americans remain invisible in white-dominated structures when a "raceless" vision is pursued.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, settling for a segregated missions force, to get more black missionaries, enables injustice.

Would not a vanguard refuse to settle for a segregated missions force just because it might be better than our predicament of having only a few African Americans? Black leaders made this kind of choice in the 1930s during Jim Crow segregation of Norfolk's beaches.<sup>26</sup> For eight years, I worked under African-American church leaders who had endured Jim Crow segregation. They preferred to baptize at an isolated and unused beach on the Chesapeake Bay called "City Beach."

I learned that this obscure shoreline was once the segregated "black beach." Before the 1930s, Jim Crow had prevented African Americans from swimming at all of Norfolk's beaches. Black leaders enlisted the help of elite whites to open this beach for blacks. After a two-year political struggle, city leaders allowed blacks there because of its isolation from potential white real estate development. Ironically, African-American leaders joined with elite whites and used race to encourage Jim Crow segregation. To the black leaders back then, a distant segregated beach was better than none at all, even if their efforts "enabled" injustice to continue unchallenged.<sup>27</sup> If you invoke race to heighten your cause of mobilizing African Americans, be sure to preserve your full spiritual right to mobilize all races together without discrimination.

Worse consequences may come if black leaders limit Christian African Americans' spiritual rights, in fulfilling Christ's Commission, in order to further power-broker-type agendas. In the past, sacrificing people's rights to accomplish one's own agenda has brought demobilizing consequences in other ways. For example, NAACP lawyers won a state Supreme Court decision in 1940 that gave Norfolk's black teachers the legal clout to demand equal pay. Yet, several black leaders convinced these teachers to settle for much less. These leaders wanted to use this court victory to push their own agenda with city officials. The NAACP lawyers called the city's offer to the teachers "disgraceful."<sup>28</sup> World War II prevented these black leaders from ever getting what they wanted from the city officials.<sup>29</sup>

Empower all believers to exercise their spiritual rights to mobilize with the entire Body of Christ. Be prepared to avoid racialized agendas that may undermine this mobilization process. In the 1960s, African Americans implemented the "Negro Strategy" that used black group-unity to negotiate for improved balance of power.<sup>30</sup> However, Scripture and history bear witness to how power struggles among Christians demobilize us all.

Let me adapt W. E. B. Dubois' criticism of Booker T. Washington's self-help ideology that denied blacks their rights, equality, and opportunity at the beginning of the 20th century. I dare to take great liberty when paraphrasing his words to apply them to black leaders today who limit African Americans' rights and opportunities to fulfill Christ's Great Commission:

Some black leaders' doctrine has tended to make whites shift the burden of black missions mobilization to the African American's shoulder and stand aside as critical and rather pessimistic spectators; when in fact the burden belongs to the entire Body of Christ, and the hands of none of us are clean if we bend not our energies to righting the great wrongs that undermine black rights, equality, and opportunities in world evangelization.<sup>31</sup>

**Congregation.** In the early 20th century, urban African Americans coped with white segregation by transforming it into "congregation." They used segregation's structural barriers as opportunities to increase their community and autonomy outside of white control. This autonomy provided power, though limited, to exercise free-will within their culture and communities. Congregating produced the vanguard organizations that worked to improve African Americans' home lives. By being in community with other African Americans, they affirmed their humanity and rose above their status as second-class citizens.<sup>32</sup>

In case you did not notice, African Americans still may group together to cope and find their identities. Beverly Tatum explained this black identity-formation strategy that enables racial division between black and white Christians. Tatum's book, *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*, provides insights about how African Americans help each other find their racial identities in white society. Their subconscious objective for sticking together is to figure out their black identities and roles in white-controlled systems.<sup>33</sup> These insights seem relevant to my discussion on race and missions. I minister in multi-racial contexts where I often see African Americans searching for their racial identities in white-dominant environments.

From my observations, I believe that this congregating phenomenon occurs when African Americans mobilize for missions. To sort out their potential missionary identities, they turn to other African Americans for input and discussion. Since missions is still segregated, I believe this congregating strategy explains the reason African Americans sponsor their own afro-centric missions ministries, conferences, prayer meetings, symposiums, etc.

For my purposes here, Dr. Tatum's title could be rephrased to ask: "Why Are All the Black Christians Sitting Together in World Missions?" It seems that when African-American missions mobilization is addressed, African Americans congregate together under the Black/African-American identity banner to have separate prayer meetings, conferences, departments, panels, student ministries, movements, strategies, schools, websites, etc. Dr. Tatum's book explains why this happens and why it is a good phenomenon. (I will not try to convince anyone that I can relate to the experience of developing one's black identity in white society). Unfortunately, separate black mission's mobilization systems may not achieve your vanguard mobilization results. I believe that mobilizing separately from whites will "enable"\* white Christians to continue negatively stereotyping Christian African Americans. Doing your own "black thing" more likely reinforces the impression among whites that African Americans cause the racial division among Christians.

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\*Again, I am using the clinical definition of enabling where someone helps another to continue self-destructive behavior by removing the consequences. The enabler does not cause nor is responsible for the destructive behavior, but helps it continue. In this case, the enabler reacts in a dysfunctional way to give a self-destructing person reasons to shift the focus of the problem back on the enabler instead of taking responsibility to change.

When Christian African Americans separate missions under their own black identity, they may leave whites feeling absolved of their own responsibilities to send out people of African descent. Whites who feel they have taken responsibility for their own, individual prejudice and want to love and get to know African Americans may return to their white-only view of missions, believing that African Americans must want it that way.

Also, researchers say that whites become frustrated with reconciliation and believe that blacks are trying to be divisive when they conduct separate black cultural events. I believe this frustration with reconciliation may also occur in missions. For example, a white missions leader told me of his impression that American black Christians carry a racial chip on their shoulders.

A comment like this would offend many African Americans, but if you structure your vanguard movement separately from other races, who will confront this kind of status quo thinking and mobilize a diverse, but unified, Body of Christ? You did not cause white Christians' neglect of African-American missions mobilization and you are not responsible for their discrimination. Yet, if you react by separating from them and other races, will you not "enable" whites to maintain status quo segregated structures? Would not a vanguard react in such a way that requires whites to take responsibility for their segregated structures without allowing them to shift the blame for racial division on African Americans as the "black problem?"

Unfortunately no one has been explaining to white Christians this need for blacks to process their racial identities. Instead, whites assume that blacks who congregate separately do not want or need them, which enables whites to carry on the status quo within their segregated missions structures.

Again, exercise your spiritual rights to mobilize the entire Body of Christ and to be sent out by all believers without racial division or discrimination. In the present paradigm, black and white American Christians frustrate and neglect each other while trying to fulfill Christ's Commission in two-tier, racially segregated missions programs. Shift this paradigm, as a vanguard leader, and mobilize a unified missionary force and support base.

Offer the Biblical alternative to Christian ministries that try to use congregation to grow their ministries through segregation. For example, college ministries may capitalize on student congregation tendencies on campuses to establish separate-but-equal, racially divided chapters. For the cause of embracing ethnic and cultural diversity, they may also teach that status quo racial division is Biblical. They might support racial segregation by saying God divided the races at the Tower of Babel in Genesis, people heard the Apostles speak in their own languages at Pentecost in Acts, and every ethnic group will worship before Christ as prophesied in Revelation.

I agree that these Bible precedents celebrate racial diversity but they do not encourage segregation. If anything, these examples in Scripture support integration of diverse races and cultures "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord." (Ephesians 2:20,21) I acknowledge that ministries face circumstances that are unique to their own contexts. Yet, dividing ministries by race to increase growth in numbers, in my opinion, sets back racial reconciliation 50 years. Homogeneous growth strategies are impractical for mobilizing African Americans in the existing race-segregated American missions system.

Raise this question as a standard: Does it work? I mean, how well do segregated college ministry structures mobilize a diverse and united missions force for campuses, communities, and the world? If ministries divide by race to grow, then I guess it is OK to get racial and ask: Where are the long-term African-American missionaries from the separated-but-equals' systems?

When African Americans mobilize themselves under a separate black banner, they enable\* white Christians to stereotypically group them as a race. Whites may conclude, then, that blacks are mobilizing separately for missions because they still carry the racial chip on their shoulders. Separate black meetings allow white Christians to maintain their segregated systems and put the blame on African Americans for their failing to mobilize. White Christians individually confronting their personal prejudices do not have to identify and change demobilizing structures as they wonder why blacks cannot get over the past.

In addition, seek diverse worship experiences to prepare for global leadership. Enter God's presence and communion with Him through many diverse cultural expressions. Those who segregate worship must assume that God will limit your leadership to black people. Prepare for



world impact by locking hearts with believers of every ethnic group as possible. Embrace their cultures as you serve to mobilize them. Doing that, I am confident that you will never go back to separate-but-equal discriminating attempts to glorify God. Since He gives you the nations as your missions destiny, why imitate white ethnocentrism by embracing only the black culture and limit your global leadership expectations?

Lock together Christ's diverse work force for His glory. I recently asked my daughter to tell me the strangest thing that she learned as a freshman physics major in college. She explained how a double pendulum cannot be mobilized. First, she told how the swinging motion of one pendulum could be mathematically explained and predicted. Then she showed me on YouTube that attaching a second pendulum creates an inexplicable, random, and unproductive motion that looks like cool chaos to me. One way to make the double pendulum work orderly is to demobilize one of them. Another way is to lock them together to form only one pendulum.

Does not the same dynamic occur in the Body of Christ? Jesus musters us in battle array like one spiritual pendulum to fulfill His Commission. By locking together diverse ethnic groups, which ordinarily would create confusion, we collectively spread His glory. However, any part seeking to dominate or defy the whole sends us all into demobilizing, unproductive chaos.

Make mobilization your vanguard priority and avoid token structures that might undermine fulfilling Christ's Commission. Whites may promote a few African Americans to token leadership positions, a step that maintains the status quo racially divided structures. Harr found also that whites often treated African Americans like charity cases in missions. This structure and attitude threatens the vanguard leader's ability to mobilize the masses. Likewise, some African Americans protect the power they wield as token leaders in white systems. They use this power to assist whites in preserving demobilizing segregated structures.

Optimize whites' individualism to introduce them to new missions structures. Usually, Christian whites attempt racial reconciliation on an individual basis. For instance, they confess individual prejudice, try to get to know specific African Americans, and want to show love through personal relationships. Unfortunately, this individualized approach to reconciliation may allow their status quo segregated missions structures to remain unchallenged and unchanged. Ask the Lord of the Harvest to use white Christians' individualism to send them into His harvest as your co-laborers in a new missions paradigm. When you welcome them into your new unified movement, I believe you will find some willing to make great personal sacrifices. Perhaps these white students will confront status quo structures bravely like the ones who joined black student leaders as Freedom Riders.

Now take your turn to sacrificially pull students of different races and socio-economic backgrounds into your movement. Lead them from the front and bring freedom and justice to fulfill God's eternal purpose. Make known His great glory, fame and majesty as vanguards of Christ's missionary uprising.

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## Conclusion

Wherever your spiritual journey goes from here, I challenge you to passionately fulfill Christ missions as His vanguard. Champion a spiritual revolution where African-American students from across our nation mobilize for God's great glory. Pioneer to unite racially and socioeconomically diverse American and international Christians under Christ's Commission.

I trust that this book helped you define Christ's mission and know it well. I am grateful for my missionary heritage and my father's vision of your great potential to declare God's glory to the nations. In the first section, I provided the fundamentals of missions and discipleship so you may discover and reach this great potential as Christ's vanguard disciple-making leader. Find your identity in Christ and exercise your privilege to minister cross-culturally anywhere in the world. Equip others as a pioneering role model to takes true discipleship to the highest level.

I pray that you opened your heart to my encouragement to find this new identity in Christ and deploy for action. Champion the authority of God's Word to celebrate the freedom He gives. In Christ's freedom, unleash from survival mentalities and open your heart to His Spirit's healing power and compelling love. Gain a winning attitude and compete for Christ. Heed God's warning, through Israel's failure in the wilderness, to step up when He sets you free. Begin finding Christ's calling and assignment through discipleship as I did on a wooden board at a summer camp. Pioneer like the Freedom Riders for the commission-rights of those you mobilize. Leave the right to govern churches to other leaders and empower many at home and abroad instead of seeking titles and buildings. With your new identity in Jesus, invite cross-cultural disciple makers onto your campus and deploy with them cross-culturally to become a strong vanguard of a unified but diverse missions force.

Gain this wisdom: If God commands and calls you to lead, then He also calls you to prepare yourself for such a great privilege of mobilizing His people. As I challenge you in this fourth section with these last three chapters, dedicate yourself to prepare for your high calling in Christ's mission. Make sure you know Jesus, our Commissioner, well to bring His uprising strategically. Just as I introduced a Norfolk State student to Christ during his senior-junior year, be sure that you understand the true Gospel. If you know Him, dedicate yourself to a life of prayer. Pray for a missionary-minded spouse. Pray in many ways as you pursue holiness. Find a missionary-sending church, campus ministry, and disciple-maker, since you must become a disciple-maker before you mobilize the masses. Choose a simple lifestyle, manage your money well, become free from debt, learn how to financially partner with missionaries and sacrificially invest in Christ's global harvest. These disciplines will prepare you to seek partners to join in with you. Pray about my invitation. Come to Jamaica and prepare for the launch of your mighty vanguard uprising in Jesus Christ's power and for His great glory.

Continue to study the historical background of African Americans in missions that I presented in the second section. I provided these five chapters to help you discern real problems behind the fact that African Americans do not participate in missions extensively. Take ethnically diverse people on this historical journey, like Dubois accomplished with stories about

riding in a Jim Crow rail car. Balance divided perspectives of this history and diagnose hidden systemic problems and spiritual strongholds that still demobilize. Guard against the class-prejudice of the professionals who conducted the destructive Tuskegee study. Extend mercy without using the poor to gain money, impress influential people, or earn respectability. Skillfully unify blacks and whites into one missionary force. Understand white missionaries' evangelism motives, like those who sacrificed their lives in Ecuador, and help them stretch their thinking to include social action.

With many believers in your generation, choose to take Pastor James Drew's narrower road of sound doctrine that is founded upon God's trustworthy Word. Balance your community development with a strong defense of the true Gospel's salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Guard against and defeat the destructive, demobilizing attack on the Bible that white liberal theology passed on to many African Americans during segregation.

Therefore, add expectation, investigation, and edification to your new paradigm of change. Recognizing how often white Christians fail to see structures, get a clear picture of demobilizing structures that you must navigate and revolutionize to mobilize the masses. Discern how these structures impact our witness, like when an elderly woman in North Carolina expressed her frustration with a church structure that she felt judged her for chewing tobacco but overlooked worse injustices in the past. Think through how you organize your mobilization to avoid enabling white Christian status quo segregated missions to go unchallenged. Establish a culture of mutual edification among believers of different race and backgrounds. Lead God's masses as one people to finish the great global task that Christ sent and authorized us to complete. Step up to the front lines and mobilize us all with vanguard innovation. Then we will obey Christ together - free at last to fulfill such a Great Commission. Thank God, we will be free at last!

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