HOWARD UNIVERSITY

**An Analysis of Black Power and Black Consciousness
Philosophies and the Use of Christian Religion as a Tool
for Empowerment And Social Protest**

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by

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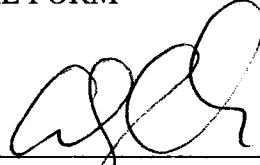
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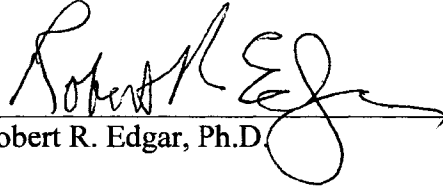unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

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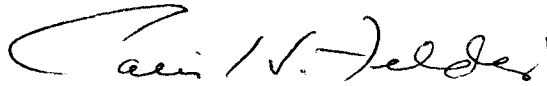GRADUATE SCHOOL
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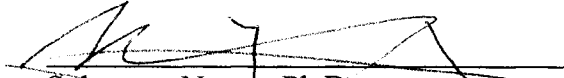
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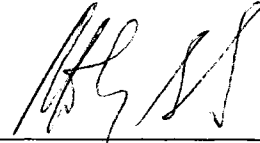Mbye Cham, Ph.D.
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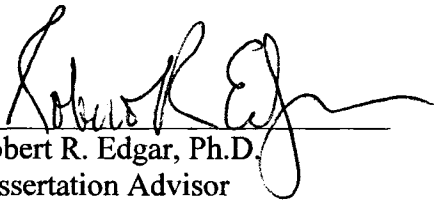
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DEDICATIONS

I dedicate this work to my ancestors. For those who made sacrifices so I could live more free than they. I dedicate this work in memory of Kwame Ture and Bantu Steve Biko. Thank you for expressing black power and clarifying black consciousness. Lastly, I dedicate this work's message and theme to the community. It speaks to those who desire an understanding of their blackness, their spirituality, and their social and ultimate responsibility.

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ABSTRACT

Blacks have been dehumanized and oppressed by the forces of racism and prejudice for hundreds of years. In the 1960s, blacks formalized a liberating and resistant form of thought. This thought, or consciousness, arose from the black masses and societal norms were challenged in a very powerful way. This consciousness was based on an ideology of refusing to allow the oppressor (Western culture and racist ideas) to continue to influence and control the minds and judgment of blacks. The black power and black consciousness movements represented an effort to change the racist system in the United States and the apartheid system in South Africa. These movements focused on conscientization, self-reliance, and social responsibility. Such movements helped blacks to look at their skin color as a source of strength and identity.

These movements not only adopted psychological forms of resistance, but encouraged the masses toward a spiritual understanding of the fundamental nature of their resistance. Thus, an explicit black liberation theology was born. By marrying Christianity with a black culture of protest, resistance, and liberation, this new theology spoke directly to their struggle. The Christian religion spoke to the needs of the oppressed, poor, and broken masses and instilled hope and rejuvenation. The liberating aspects of the religion were relevant to their eternal destiny as well as to their present reality. Black liberation theology confirmed that the struggle against oppression was a righteous one.

The primary objective of this qualitative research is to analyze the relationship between black power and black consciousness philosophies and their

use of Christian religion as a tool for empowerment and social protest. This topic

is examined through the key tenets of these philosophies (affirmation of black

culture and humanity, a holistic ethos of spirituality, political modernization, and

self reliance) and related political and cultural theological themes. The research

includes an in-depth focus on each movement's kindred elements and themes,

examples of abstract and material social protest, and each movement's

overarching social constructs of *ubuntu* and collective empowerment.

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CHAPTER ONE

Nature of the Problem

Since the early seventeenth century, blacks in Africa and America have been consciously and unconsciously, systematically oppressed by Europeans. This oppression has taken place in many unique forms. Colonialism and apartheid subjected blacks in South Africa to unjust treatment, while slavery and discrimination have been the major institutions of injustice and prejudice in America. All of these institutions have been constitutionally abolished but the remnants of these discriminatory practices still linger in today's political, economic, educational, and social systems.

In the major systems of society, blacks in America have been relegated to a position of inferiority. Maulana Karenga argues that whites, for their economic and social interests, promoted a "doctrine of African inferiority" that allowed for the reinterpretation of anthropological, cultural, and religious history."[1] Upon their initial arrival to America in 1619 and subsequent exposure to this doctrine, blacks were treated as property, bought and sold, and forced into involuntary servitude under strenuous, harsh, and often deadly conditions. During this time period, blacks, considered as property and servants for life, were forbidden basic, fundamental rights and privileges such as owning property, the right to vote, or the privilege of an education. In 1863, blacks in America were theoretically released from the bonds of slavery by the Emancipation Proclamation, an edict designed to allow blacks the freedom to exist as regular American citizens. This

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document turned out to have minimal effect in terms of actual societal change. Blacks would continue to suffer through the discriminatory and restrictive practices of Reconstruction and Jim Crow laws, which failed to fulfill their obligation of affording blacks distinct and equal access to all elements essential to the successful pursuit of material happiness in life. Experiences of injustice across America, in addition to many landmark legal cases proved that blacks were still suffering from prejudice and racism and receiving treatment akin to a second-class citizen.

The turn of the twentieth century brought some hope to the black person's plight. Many were able to gain some of the limited access afforded in education, arts, religion, and industrialization, which had developed a need for black workers. The black leaders of this period began to introduce philosophies of black nationalism, economic development, and Pan-African unity. Karenga acknowledges that during this time, either together, "separately and through their ideological struggles with each other, they (black leadership) established political tendencies which even today serve as models and points of debate concerning the future and struggle of blacks in the United States."[2]

There was a growing spirit of black opposition that began to challenge the oppressive institutions in place at the time. The civil rights and black power movements of the 1960s and 1970s represented an intense period of enlightenment, unification, and social change. Civil rights leader Martin Luther King declared that "the time has come for a broad, bold advance of the Southern campaign for equality…Not only will it include a stepped-up campaign of voter

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registration, but a full-scale assault will be made upon discrimination and

segregation in all forms...We must employ new methods of struggle involving the

masses of our people."[3] Blacks began to gain a sense of pride in their heritage

and humanity. Many made sacrifices toward the group's liberation and

advancement in America.

The continent of Africa had to contend with colonial exploration for

hundreds of years. The Berlin Conference in 1884-1885 led to the division of

Africa into various areas governed by European colonizers.

> At the time of the conference, only the coastal areas of Africa were
> colonized by the European powers. At the Berlin Conference the
> European colonial powers scrambled to gain control over the interior of
> the continent. The conference lasted until February 26, 1885 – a three
> month period where colonial powers haggled over geometric boundaries
> in the interior of the continent, disregarding the cultural and linguistic
> boundaries already established by the indigenous African population.[4]

Africa fought to retain its culture and heritage; however, many foreign standards

became a way of existence. After years of colonial rule, the 1950s and 1960s

brought independence for many of the countries in Africa. With each African

country facing its own particular challenges after the era of colonialism, the

situation in South Africa continued to fester.

The oppressive circumstances of South Africa were very similar to those

in the United States, in which citizens were classified by race, and recognized as

either white or non-white. The whites in South Africa successfully instituted a

system of separation or "apartheid" that permitted a minority of individuals to

govern and control the African masses. Black South Africans were treated with

intense cruelty and injustice, holding a status inferior to whites in the land of their

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birth. This apartheid was the most enduring form of African colonization, allowing for the continued existence of oppression and injustice.

Many South Africans gave their lives in the effort to challenge the system of apartheid, leading to its ultimate demise in 1994. With the end of apartheid, South African blacks have become more involved in their political, educational, and social institutions. However, a post-apartheid mindset has remained amongst many South African whites and blacks. After many years under foreign direction, black South Africans, like blacks in America, face challenges regarding the future of their existence. This reality in South Africa has left the majority in the position of reestablishing their identity and culture and determining their own destiny.

Through so much struggle and oppression, it is a wonder that persons of African descent have been able to survive. Many suggest that they have survived only by an ideological and psychological liberation that was not inspired by man, but by God. Gayraud Wilmore's *Black Religion and Balck Radicalism*, David Chidester's *Religions of South Africa*, Dwight Hopkins' *Black Theology: United States and South Africa,* as well as other studies have analyzed the relationship between God and the liberation of blacks. Christianity, which for the purpose of this work was more specifically manifest as black liberation theology, during the years 1966-1977, must be thoroughly analyzed and examined to determine its influence on black liberation efforts in the United States and South Africa.

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Purpose and Objectives

The systems of slavery and Jim Crow in the United States and colonization and apartheid in South Africa were some of the most horrific systems of oppression in global history. The economic, political, and social remnants of these eras linger in their respective countries to this day. Between 1966 and 1977, after years of degradation, a new form of thought, or consciousness, arose from some of the intellectual, religious, and socially critical pockets of the black community. These oppressive systems were contested. This consciousness was based on an ideology of refusal to accept the standards for social thought and the relative worth of blackness. The black power movement in the United States. inspired blacks to take pride in their heritage and realize their rightful political and economic place in society. The black consciousness movement in South Africa also represented this effort and struggled to dismantle the apartheid system. These movements focused on conscientization, self-reliance, and social protest. These movements also helped blacks to look at their skin color as a source of strength and identity.

Not only did such movements serve to develop psychological and physical forms of resistance, they also aided many blacks in becoming aware of and encouraged to probe a spiritual understanding of their resistance. Thus, black liberation theology was born. Black liberation theology was the projection of black people's physical realities onto a spiritual plane. Blacks began to look at Christianity as the religion that spoke directly to their struggle. This religion spoke to the oppressed, poor, and broken masses, instilling rejuvenation,

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responsibility, and hope. The liberating aspects of the religion were to be relevant to their eternal destiny as well as their present situation. Black liberation theology argued that their struggle against oppression was a righteous one.

The purpose of this study is to provide an analysis of the black power and black consciousness philosophies and their reciprocal relationships with Christianity. This research argues that these philosophies challenged the Christian faith through a critique of its Western and white-value standards, seeking its redefinition in the black context. In turn, this redefined theology would serve as a vehicle for the resistance of oppression in the USA and South Africa during the 1960s and 1970s. The research proposes to:

1. explore the ideological discourse generated by the Black Power (B.P.) and Black Consciousness (B.C.) movements from 1966 to 1977, highlighting the key spokesmen and architects of the movements, the associated student organizations, and philosophical influences;

2. articulate and define the three major elements of these movements and their causal relationship to various political and cultural theological themes, including but not limited to:

    (a) the liberation of Eurocentric and Apartheid Christianity,

    (b) the emphasis placed on black culture and humanization,

    (c) the role of separatism or self-reliance within the Christian context;

3. analyze the convergent themes of the movements, highlighting abstract and material forms of social protest and empowerment; and

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4. examine the culminating ethos of the African concept of *ubuntu* and collective empowerment.

Hypothesis

There are many historical, cultural, and social variables that have obstructed blacks' passage to freedom. This study is based on the assumption that Christianity, in recent centuries, was initially used as a religion for the oppression and submission of blacks. The basic hypothesis of this study is that Christian religion, packaged as black theology, was an ideological tool for black conscientization, empowerment, and social protest. The black power and black consciousness philosophy informed this theology through the ideological strands of the affirmation of black culture and humanity, the concepts of self-reliance and separatism and through a challenge to white theological structures.

This study is proposed due to the limited scholarship that highlights the convergent relationship between black power and black consciousness ideological thought and black theological themes of culture and politics. This relationship yields an intellectual and ideological framework that serves as a vehicle for conscientization and black social protest manifesting itself through the value of *ubuntu* and collective power.

Theoretical Framework

In exploring Christianity, black power, and black consciousness in the United States and South Africa, it is important to explore a few defining themes. It would serve one well to identify theoretical constructs in accordance with these themes so that a successful attempt can be made to identify the role that Christian

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religion, as black theology, has played in the area of identity clarification and social change.

Christianity as a liberation theology must first be articulated clearly. Peruvian theologian Gustavo Gutierrez describes liberation theology as: (1) an interpretation of Christian faith out of the suffering, struggle, and hope of the poor, (2) a critique of society and the ideologies sustaining it, and (3) a critique of the activity of the church and of Christians from the angle of the poor.[5] In its earliest stages, this theology of liberation was a response to social, political, and economic oppression in society and not just on issues based on race. Gutierrez states that liberation theology contributed to the "gradual expansion of freedom and actualization of the ability of human beings to take charge of their own destiny".[6] The analysis of this model is the premise of this work. This theology and thought takes shape in various forms and phases that the researcher will interpret through the lens of several theorists.

The first theme to explore is that of consciousness or awareness of one's authentic identity. The work of Paulo Freire is an excellent point of departure for engaging this theme. Freire explores the concept of *conscientizacao*, the word that he uses to define consciousness or awareness. As Freire explains it, it is "the deepening of the attitude of awareness characteristic of all emergence."[7] It is being aware enough to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions and to begin taking action against the oppressive elements of this reality. This concept is in alignment with the philosophy of cultural consciousness espoused by Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture) and Stephen Biko. Their philosophies are

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consistent with Freire's theory in that they encourage the same type of understanding of one's self, one's reality, and the ability to find the power to change those circumstances.

Theorists from previous eras have spoken to the social change that religion can influence. Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind* explores phenomenology and the human psyche outlining many levels of consciousness. Within these numerous stages of consciousness one comes upon what he describes as spiritual consciousness. This spiritual consciousness focuses on an individual with an objective spirit toward society, in which the individual realizes that his ultimate consciousness is not merely individual, but social, and with this realization achieves awareness of his social responsibility.[8] This communal perspective of social responsibility is consistent with traditional African religious characteristics which emphasize a holistic spirituality. Religion, however, which is often an influential factor that precedes this spiritual consciousness, has varying social influences that must first be examined.

Theorists such as Karl Marx identify religion as a tool created by the ruling class to control the masses. Marx would see religion as a tool that "directs the energies of the oppressed away from the causes of their oppression to an illusionary escape from it......it is the opium of the people."[9] Marx was a critic of those who claimed a spiritually liberating religion but would forsake heaven because they refused to challenge the oppressive forces that exploited and demeaned their humanity.

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Marx's theory of historical materialism holds that ideas and institutions only develop as a corollary to society's material and economic base. His analysis of Christianity seeks to remind Christians of their ability to utilize religion as a social function for their material and physical well being. This analysis teaches Christians to take the reality of society seriously. In a society divided by rich and poor, "Christians need to inquire critically whose interests different religious affirmations are serving."[10] This awareness and challenge to religious societal norms should be guided by the premise that the privileged have had autonomy and influence on how religion has been packaged.

A second look at Marxian analysis further clarifies the previous position. Theology must be developed from the ground and body of experiences of the people in order to be relevant to their spirituality and Hegels' concept of social responsibility. "It is experience that determines theology, not theology that determines experience, and because society is divided religious experiences are different. This means that theology is never neutral. It reflects the social location, values and interests of those who are responsible for it."[11]

The third phase of Marxian analysis is the personal and existential components of religion. Marx challenges the utilization of religion as a tool not only for self-introspection but also to seek a fuller understanding of all humanity. It reminds Christians that it is important not merely to understand the world, but to change it. "The heart of the Christian gospel is action oriented with the essential goal of turning this world the right way up."[12] A general assessment of Marx's analysis is that religion does have benefits. Whether for the elite or the

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masses, Marx believed that religion could add legitimacy to ideas by making them sacred, thereby generating individual and communal social consciousness.

For Max Weber, who is considered "religiously unmusical," religion is a patterning of social relationships around a belief in supernatural powers, creating ethical considerations. Weber was of the belief that religion should be used to change and challenge society and not accommodate preexisting orders or structures. "The fundamental problem with institutional religion and organized society……. is that it envelops and ultimately suffocates all possibility of what is new, different and liberating."[13] Opposed to stifling hope in the ideal, religion should be used as a form of social renewal. Weber's creative, change-generating religion cannot be a religion of the powerful and the strong. "Such religion, given its location within dominant society, is rationalized and bureaucratized to reflect the values and interests of the ruling class. It is the religion of the poor which gives expression to the dreams and aspirations of the poor and the afflicted. People intoxicated with the order do not see visions. Vision is born of pain."[14]

The Responsible Self by H. Richard Niebuhr opens a debate that ties morality to social responsibility. Niebuhr saw humans as responsive creatures who seek to find answers to questions of humanity via responsible action.[15] Equally, Paul Tillich's *Love, Power, and Justice* should be used to expand this concept of responsibility to a self-actualization that corresponds with justice. "To be just towards oneself means to actualize as many potentialities as possible without losing oneself in disruption and chaos."[16] Tillich recognized the pain and creativity that comes from oppressed communities in comprehending religion and

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responsibility. Tillich noted that "creative justice does not deny these 'power of being' encounters and the conflicts implicit in them. For this is the price which must be paid for the creativity of life."[17]

It would be appropriate at this juncture to mention W.E.B. Dubois thoughts on double consciousness. Dubois's philosophy of double consciousness recognizes the tension for blacks' as it relates to the "power of being" and social responsibility. He eloquently articulates blacks' problematic identification of their authentic self. In *The Souls of Black Folk* he observed this tension:

> It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness,--an American, a Negro; two warring souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.[18]

This thought informs the internal black identity crisis that exists outside of these Euro-centric philosophies of "being." A theoretical construct that addresses race and oppressed cultures is necessary in contextualizing an understanding of the previously mentioned works.

Frantz Fanon, a prominent third world theorist, engages this study through the framework of culture and oppression that exists within the stages of consciousness from the perspective of race. A review of these stages is necessary for examining black power and black consciousness philosophy in relation to religious and/or spiritual consciousness and social responsibility. His stages also address Dubois' dilemma of double consciousness in relation to theories of being and social responsibility.

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Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* highlights the three stages of racial consciousness for the oppressed class. This first phase looks at the black/African in a state of assimilation. In the assimilation stage, the African seeks to take on the characteristics and embodiment of someone other than himself. This person is usually the oppressor. The second stage usually occurs when the African has an extremely positive encounter with other Africans or an extremely negative encounter with the object of their assimilationist beliefs. In this phase, what Fanon identifies as the pre-combat phase, the African begins to challenge whether dominant values are true. The third phase is what Fanon describes as the combat or the fight phase. In this phase, the individual refuses to accept mainstream or dominant beliefs and displays militant resistance in various forms.[19]

In Fanon's stages of consciousness, the reality of black existence is noted. These stages stress the necessity of blacks' process of self-actualization prior to attaining a level of social responsibility. This consciousness is the focal point of the argued philosophies. Fanon informs black power and black consciousness philosophies through his combat phase which symbolizes the oppressed groupings causal challenge to foreign, dominant, individual, and structural beliefs that materializes subsequent to a process of conscientization.

This overview of theorists with a focus on identity and social change leads us to return to Freire for a summation of the various concepts of conscientization, responsibility, and action resulting in a revolutionary praxis. Freire asserts:

> It is only when the oppressed find the oppressor out and become involved in the organized struggle for their liberation that they begin to believe in themselves. This discovery cannot be purely intellectual but must involve

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action; nor can it be limited to mere activism, but must include serious reflection: only then will it be a praxis.[20]

Through the location of this theoretical framework the reader is able to grasp the concepts of conscientizacao and praxis as they may relate to this study. Through the recognition of one's authentic self one learns for the first time of a true humanity. Within this recognition of existence is freedom. A scholar across many disciplines, Cornel West writes that "the political implication of individual and institutional freedom has been the opportunity to develop individual and political opposition to the social order."[21] Often, the responsibility of being free becomes overwhelming and some even fear what it is to now be free which would lead to another religious dimension, faith.

It is evident that consciousness through religious inspiration is essential. Individuals must realize their inherent value in their own humanity and personhood before they can seek to change their reality. Once one's spirituality has been appropriately channeled and the process of humanization and identification takes place, then a praxis of social responsibility toward liberation can exist. For this work, black power and black consciousness ideology served as a conduit for a secular and spiritual praxis of social protest to exist. This praxis manifests itself in individual as well communal forms leading to resistance of oppressive forces.

The Review of the Related Literature

Many contemporary thinkers have written extensively on the impact of Christianity as black theology and its reciprocal relationship with consciousness emanating in social change. However, the link to black power and black

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consciousness as its impetus has been fragile. This review of literature seeks to highlight works that relate to Christian religion, black theology, and social protest as they illuminate some of objectives and characteristics of black power and black consciousness philosophy.

In the United States and South Africa, Christianity, in regards to blacks, began as a tool of oppression. This religion was used to enforce the will of the white oppressor on the black subject. For instance, an American, George Armstrong, who wrote *The Christian Doctrine of Slavery*, provided insight into the thought process of those who advocated and secured slavery's place in society. His writing supported the common theme of most white American Christians and missionaries of this time period that slavery was indeed permissible and justified. Armstrong's main argument was that with the many principles, codes, and "rules" that the Bible teaches, why was there no mention of slaveholding as a sin?[22] His work influenced many whites to encourage blacks to be obedient because this is what the Bible commanded.

Most whites displayed actions that were consistent with mainstream Christian standards and beliefs. However, a few whites operated from a perspective that Christianity opposed slavery and oppressive conditions. George Keith, a Quaker, argued that blacks should be released from the bonds of slavery. As a white man, his response to blacks' treatment as chattel was atypical. He asserted that according to the golden rule of the Bible, principles such as "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" and the oppression of servants

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should not be ignored.[23] Keith's work causes one to examine Christian theology outside of the dominant perspective.

In *Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race*, Edward Wilmot Blyden spoke to religion's influence on the Negro race. His work inspired blacks to understand that Christianity was a religion used by whites to force servitude upon the Negroes. Blyden noted that the thinking of blacks would begin to change as they witnessed the contradictions of the white man and the religion that he professed. Blyden's work asserted the mysterious influence that the Gospel opened up as a new world of truth and goodness for blacks. He wrote:

> There streamed into the darkness of their surroundings a light from the Cross of Christ, and they saw that, through suffering and affliction, there is a path to perfect rest above this world; and, in the hours of the most degrading and exhausting toil, they sang of the eternal and the unseen; so that while the scrupulous among their masters often with Jefferson "trembled for their country"...the slaves who had gained a new language and new faculties were enjoying themselves in rapturous music-often labouring and suffering all day, and singing, all night, sacred songs, which, in rude but impressive language, set forth their sad fortunes and their hopes for the future.[24]

R.A. Carter wrote an informative article on the historical relevance of the black church. Carter recognized that the black church, also known as the "invisible institution," provided a personal interpretation of Christianity to blacks who felt no connection with the religion of whites. The preachers of these churches used examples that blacks could understand and relate to their everyday experiences. "The church was there, as it is in today's society, to preserve the self-respect of blacks. The black church became the spiritual, moral, and intellectual lighthouse for the race."[25]

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Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture) and Charles Hamilton's *Black Power*,

advocates the need for a personal interpretation of society from the black

perspective. They wrote that those who have the right to define their situation are

the masters of their fate. Carmichael (Ture) and Hamilton were able to push the

identity issue forward acknowledging blacks' need for knowledge of self.[26]

Although this work is strictly a form of secular determinism reflecting on cultural,

political, and economic circumstance, this thought was instrumental in

establishing a formal religious awareness contextualized from the black

experience.

Black Power was a text that broke the mold in its articulation of black

independence and not integration. In this work, Carmichael (Ture) and Hamilton

validated separatism with instances of local black achievement which highlighted

the potential and strength of black political and economic power. This work that

did not emphasize a direct necessity for black religious influence in its activities.

The work and rhetoric of this movement caused the black church to reexamine its

philosophy and role in this developing philosophy.

James Cone's groundbreaking *Black Theology and Black Power*

introduced a formal structure to the black interpretation of Christianity. This

religion, operating from the black context, led to the development of an ideology

that came in the packaged form of black theology. Cone's writing reflects an

understanding of the secular cultural determinism philosophized by Stokely

Carmichael (Kwame Ture), yet he examines it in parallel to the black religious

experience. Cone's work informs the reader of the religious thought of oppressive

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whites and how there was an honest belief that they were faithful servants of God. From this understanding, he makes the correlation that American or European theology cannot deal with the questions of the black experience, even though whites introduced blacks to this form of religion.

Black Theology and Black Power primarily focuses on identity, oppression, and liberation. Cone reasons that religion affirms who God is and who blacks, as people, are meant to be. In essence, liberation is knowledge of self; it is a vocation to affirm who one is created to be.[27] He is clear to mention that this liberating transformation is not to happen in isolation, for in the Christian sense, no one can be truly liberated until all are liberated. Cone's work has often been critiqued for utilizing white theological constructs in his analysis of black theology. His later works would recognize this error, realizing that strict use of these standards relegates the cultural emphasis necessary for an authentic black theology.

Written works on God's place within the black experience are not limited to theologians or clergymen. Marcus Garvey incorporated Christianity into his mission. Garvey enlightens one to yet another point that deals with Christianity, identity, and liberation. Garvey argues for blacks to use Christianity as a builder of human character.[28] He asserts that blacks must gain an understanding of their relationship with God and attempt to understand and emulate Christ's character and example. Garvey suggests that if blacks live a spiritually-charged and righteous life, they will better understand how to command their rightful position in their physical reality.

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Naim Akbar's *Breaking the Chains of Psychological Slavery* touches on another aspect of the religious and cultural debate. His work concretely emphasizes the psychological confusion that often occurs for blacks in terms of their interpretation of the Bible and religious imagery. He attacked the psychology of the matter, asserting that as long as blacks see God as white, then they will always see whites closer to God than they. Akbar states that:

> The most obvious problem which comes from the experience of seeing God in an image of somebody other than yourself is that it creates an idea that the image represented is superior and you are inferior. Once you have a concept that begins to make you believe you are not as good as other people, based on the assumptions we have already established, your actions follow your mind.[29]

Albert Cleage's *Black Christian Nationalism* [30] initiates its discourse from a perspective that sees Jesus as the black Messiah. *Black Christian Nationalism* could be viewed as a work that was in direct alignment with black power ideology. Cleage's theology, an ideological polemic, called for all religious symbols to reflect the black emphasis. He acknowledges confrontation and protest as logical consequences for justice and he calls for blacks to completely separate from white institutions and establish their own black nation.

Cleage's work falls short in that he, just as Cone, often operated from white theological constructs and not from indigenous African religious orientations. Gayraud Wilmore wrote about operating from this cultural perspective. His *Black Religion and Black Radicalism* [31] speaks to the necessity of emphasizing the numerous sources that affect black spirituality. Items such as traditional African religions, oral histories, cultural language, the slave past,

folklore, and non-religious sources are all part of Wilmore's view of how black theology should be constructed.

Dwight Hopkins, one of the premier contemporary theologians, offers in *Black Theology of Liberation* a historical perspective of black Christian religion's evolution to theology. His work is useful because it fully articulates the perspectives of several black theologians and how they define their work from a cultural or political framework. Both aspects of this framework, the cultural and political, are inextricably linked to black power ideological elements reflecting God's spirit within a particular display of being and social protest.[32] Although Hopkins doesn't focus solely on the black power influence, his work is valuable, for he opened doors of inquiry to Third World as well as feminist theologies.

In South Africa, similar societal conditions inspired parallel thoughts of resistance. Black Theology played a major role in the anti-apartheid struggle and the development of a conscious black identity in South Africa. Lyn Graybill's *Religion and Resistance Politics in South Africa* takes a comprehensive look at religion and anti-apartheid activity in South Africa. Through the lens of Albert Luthuli, Robert Sobukwe, Steve Biko, and Desmond Tutu, Graybill approaches resistance not from an organizational perspective but through a fusion of the religious ideals of these freedom fighters. Their role and influence utilizing religion for political resistance is vital to understanding the South African societal dynamics in historical and present contexts. The work looks at how "Christianity for Luthuli, Sobukwe, and Biko provided the ethical critique of apartheid and with it the source of moral anger and hope that is vital to energize an oppressed people

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to take their salvation into their own hands"[33]. The relevance of Graybill's work is recognized in this study as all of these figures have contributed to black consciousness and its religious undertones.

The orthodox style of Christianity evangelized by European missionaries and the distorted apartheid theology served as the framework for oppression in South Africa. South African theologians such as Takatso Mofokeng and Frank Chikane see the work of the missionaries and the oppressive colonizers as working hand in hand. Frank Chikane realized how the Bible has been misused. He states that you cannot leave the Bible with the oppressor. His work reflects a Marxian analysis in that the powerful grossly misappropriate the message of the Gospel. Chikane points out that this misappropriation leads to black Christians' trying to adapt a "twoness" of faith. This attempt to simultaneously become Westernized, as well as African Christians, leads to a schizophrenic identity that would not allow a bond to form between black faith and black existence.[34]

Takatso Mofokeng's essay *"Black Christians, the Bible, and Liberation"* argues that the colonizers used the missionaries (and religion) to make their task easier. The missionaries were well aware that there was enough material in the Bible that would enable them to make better slaves out of the indigenous African peoples. He writes "Africans were incorporated in the mental and cultural universe of their white conquerors through an ideological onslaught".[35] There aren't many in the black academic or religious community that refute that the Bible was initially used as an ideological weapon for the advancement of

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colonization. Mofokeng's essay is unique because it highlights the contemporary

paradox of the Bible as a problem as well as a solution.

Steve Biko, in most instances known for his philosophy of black

consciousness, writes in *I Write What I Like* about the role colonial Christianity

played in the creation of a slave mentality. Using his black consciousness

philosophy as a model, he issued a challenge to black clergy. Biko's work set out

to challenge the clergy to evaluate the "European-ness" of the Christianity they

professed and reevaluate the fact that the liberating communication of Christianity

lies in its contextualization. Biko's writing primarily focuses on black cultural

consciousness and challenging inferiority complexes. However, *I Write What I*

Like declares the "somebodiness" of a people who are taught that they are nothing

on the basis of their skin color as well as re-identifying God as a fighting God, not

a passive God.[36] The principles of black theology emanated from this black

consciousness message and mission.

To his credit, Nyameko Barney Pityana first illustrated how black

consciousness and black theology are intertwined and the cultural connection that

is a result of a self-defined identity. Pityana's "What is Black Consciousness"

clearly articulates a "new frame of reference" that allows blacks to look at

themselves from a framework of equality and uniqueness opposed to the former

feelings of inferiority. Pityana argues that "the coming of Christianity set in

motion a process of social change involving the rapid disintegration of the tribal

set-up and the framework of social norms and values by which people used to

order their lives and relationships".[37] Pityana would articulate black

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consciousness thought as a form of self-love and self-affirmation. Within the

context of loving oneself, blacks became reacquainted with many traditional

values and reestablished the black perspective. His essay transitions at this point

to a discussion of the need for an active praxis within black theology. Pityana

wrote about the church and its' ecclesiological purpose:

> ...the Church needs to be a place, similar to traditional belief systems, where psychological needs of men and women could be met, where there was a sense of oneness and acceptance. Black Theology must be that authentic and positive articulation of the black Christians reflection on God in the light of their experience. It sees Christ as liberating men not only from internal bondage, but also from external enslavement.[38]

Pityana asserts that black theology is not just religious ideology. This theology

promotes self-affirmation and renewed responsibility utilizing the religion of

liberation as an instrument of construction for the masses.

The South African value of *ubuntu* is evident in the work of Bongonjalo

Goba. His work *An Agenda for Black Theology: Hermeneutics for Social Change,*

takes the position that the reality of black identity is an expression of one's

commitment and obedience to the imperatives of the gospel. He argues that black

Christians are therefore defined by their involvement in the struggle. Reflecting

on this, black Christians have a God-given task to challenge racial oppression.

Goba's work reasons that black theology must become communal praxis for true

liberation and social change to occur.

Goba's writing reflects the need for the black Christian community to step

out of the confines of private faith and through their faith become politically

engaged in what is taking place in society. He writes "black theological reflection

becomes praxis as it grapples with the situation of oppression" and the most

important aspect of theological reflection would be faith. This faith is the commitment to social change. This unavoidable task is to "challenge the forces of dehumanization and oppression in our expectation of the Kingdom of God."[39] Goba calls for members of the black community to understand that their situation has for a long time been defined by the oppressor and they must unravel this situation in which they find themselves and promote a new self understanding of who they are and what they ought to be.

In South Africa, many scholars and theologians have continuously opened the doors of inquiry on the current status of black theological thought. Buti Tlhagale wrote a critical analysis that is widely shared in conservative religious circles. Tlhagle's critique is that black theology proponents seek such opposition to white power that they "spend too much time trying to knock whites off of their pedestals instead of playing a creative role in influencing change."[40] Simon Maimela would like to return to the people and the soil to develop black theology. He concurs with Tlhagale that contemporary theologians focus is misdirected toward the oppressor. Simon Maimela argues that black theology is losing its connection to the movement. He asserts that theology is "encompassed by an exclusive club of black intellectuals with little or no organic connection with grassroots Christian groups."[41] Maimela seeks a resurgence of the *ubuntu* African worldview. He seeks a discourse that exists outside of religious elitist circles and brings the mission back to the ground. For it is here where people are concerned with the argument "not how do I get saved but how do I find meaning

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and fulfillment in my life in a society that denies my being?"[42] which is a secular, yet essentially religious question.

Within the calls for protest and empowerment, Allan Boesak's book, *Farewell to Innocence* calls for "self-critical reflection under the Word of God within the situation of blackness."[43] He argues that through this reflection blacks must seek God's divine will or approval in their liberative actions. This would be in direct contrast with theologian James Cone's "by any means necessary" doctrine of black liberation efforts. Boesak's soteriology desires to see liberation outside of the context of race and that "liberation praxis not be judged by the demands of the situation, but by the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ."[44] He writes of the totality of black theology in the same way as the African heritage speaks of the "wholeness of life"….so a black ethic will arise but it will not be confined to the black experience.

Julian Kunnie, an African-American scholar who has written extensively on black theology in the U.S.A. and South Africa, speaks to the cross continental parallels and the dialogue created by black theology. His essay, "Christianity, Black Theology, and Liberating Faith" introduces Christianity as a religion that once was an "ideological instrument of oppression of the indigenous people and indoctrinated non-violent resistance and pacifism."[45] Kunnie argues against the Calvinist ethic developed by European Christians that saw God as one who remained uninvolved in the affairs of humans. Kunnie sees the black power and black consciousness movements as the impetus to changing the thinking of blacks. His work is of importance because of his declaration asserting that these

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two movements took the liberating aspects of the Christian religion and made them part of the renewed and recreated African/black identity. This meant that as individual Christian conversion took place, the responsibility of collective action increased. So the internal rejuvenation and responsibility spawned by Christianity is manifest in an external display of revolution and resistance. Kunnie believes that "When a young man offers his life to fight for freedom he is following Christ's example....Greater love no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."[46]

It is most interesting to observe the varying thoughts on the ideological and liberating thought process influenced by black theology. This review has indeed provided the reader with a glimpse of some of the varying and common perspectives of religion, black theology and societal consciousness. These scholars have all presented different pieces of a puzzle that have allowed a common theme to arise. Instead of crafting themselves in the mold of their oppressor, blacks have redefined Christian religion and are able to realize God's plan in shaping their own destiny.

Methodology and Organization of the Study

This qualitative study uses historical, descriptive, and analytical approaches. The study highlights the historical influences of the era while the articulation of the climate and culture of black power and black consciousness gives notice of the descriptive domain. The analysis of this socio-theological field of investigation with its phenomenological emphasis is substantially

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informed by black power and black consciousness philosophy and their relationships to cultural and political themes.

In South Africa, primary and secondary source material comes from interviews and research at universities and research institutions. In the Johannesburg, Pretoria, and Cape Town areas, the researcher conducted interviews with various scholars, clergy, theologians, and BCM exponents with experiences in the black consciousness movement and/or published works on related topics. The researcher also scoured sources at the historical papers, manuscripts, and archives division at the University of Cape Town, the University of Witswatersrand, and the University of South Africa.

During the researcher's two trips to South Africa, the researcher made initial contact with interviewees through communication established via the internet prior to travel to South Africa. Other interviews were established through referrals. Interview priority for this study focused on those who were aligned with the church or Christian community and the black power and black consciousness philosophies.

The researcher began with an introduction of the proposed topic. Ten interviews were held, each lasting approximately 45-60 minutes in duration. The line of questioning followed the format below:

> 1) What is your background in relation to black consciousness and the anti-apartheid struggle utilizing the tools of Christianity and consciousness?
>
> 2) What role/influence did Christianity have in the black consciousness movement's ideology of consciousness and self-reliance? Explore and examine these components and how Christianity supported them.

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3) In what ways did this theology have and seek to have a practical, communal, and revolutionary impact? Was this system of thought just in the intellectual community or was it on the ground and in the community as well? Explore the value of *ubuntu*.

4) In the modern, post-apartheid era, how did this movement or system of thought relevant in regards to contemporary social change? Where is the movement now? What is the state of black consciousness? Is it still useful for the social, political, and economic development of the country?

5) How is black consciousness and black power related? Do either or both have religious significance?

6) Are there areas regarding this topic that I should explore that still need scholarly research and attention?

In the United States, materials and information also came from interviews and published works of clergy, theologians, scholars, and black power exponents from this period with related experiences. As in South Africa, these formal and informal interviews were 45-60 minutes in duration. Of the six formal interviews conducted in the United States, the line of questioning followed the format below:

1) What is your background in relation to black power and its relationship with Christian religion?

2) How was religion and black power compatible? Please examine the components of black affirmation, separatism, and conflict. How did Christianity support these themes?

3) In what ways did this theology have and seek to have a practical, communal, and revolutionary impact? Was this system of thought just in the intellectual community or was it on the ground and in the community as well? What was the collective action that resulted?

4) How is black power and black consciousness related? Do either or both have religious significance?

5) Was black power useful for the black community? Where is it now?

6) Are there areas regarding this topic that I should explore that still need scholarly research and attention?

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Other resources in the United States were collected from the Library of Congress, Howard University (School of Divinity and Moorland-Spingarn Research Center), and other universities and research institutions in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Internet sources were also used for searches of secondary source information.

This research has been inspired by such figures as Bantu Steve Biko, Allan Boesak, Barney Pityana, Bongonjalo Goba, Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture), James Cone, Dwight Hopkins, Gayraud Wilmore, and Albert Cleage. Their work and experiences in regards to black thought and liberation form the foundation and basis of the research and significantly contributed to the structure and outcome of this project.

Scope and Limitations

This study is a qualitative analysis of the theological themes that emerged as a result of the black power and black consciousness philosophies of 1966 to 1977. From Stokely Carmichael's (Kwame Ture) call for black power to Steve Biko's death served as an intense period of conscientization, empowerment, and social protest in both South Africa and the United States. Although the focal points of the study are restricted to this time period, the spirit of the previous eras of religious and social resistance is reviewed as they influence and inform these philosophies.

This reflective study should primarily be observed for its philosophical and theological examination and not as a comprehensive study of the overall movements. In fact, this study primarily articulates black power and black

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consciousness philosophy through the writings, speeches, and activity of Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture) and Steve Biko. Moreover, it is beyond a researcher's capabilities to measure a level of conscientization or social protest so an attempt at quantifying these outcomes is excluded from this study. Thus, this study adequately considers, but does not categorically explicate, the abstract and tangible contributions of the philosophies.

Importance and Significance of the Study

Across the globe, blacks are still challenged by various forms of exploitation and oppression. For some blacks, hopelessness and despair has determined their existence. From the bleak past to hopeful present, many black academics, thinkers, and religious leaders have taken on the important task of being able to encourage blacks in their quest for political and cultural liberation.

In an effort to change the system of thought in this struggle for emancipation and liberation, blacks must first have an identity and psychological transformation. Black theology's message of liberation inspired a new way of thinking that began with an examination of God's power in relation to oppressed blacks. This new system of thought resulted in a renewed sense of culture and confidence. Blacks began to find strength in their heritage and this religious contribution became most important to their psychological and physical survival.

The researcher seeks to contribute to the furtherance of sociological, phenomenological, and theological schools of thought. Analyzing the key elements of the black power and black consciousness schools of philosophy, the premise of this work is that the Christian religion became a tool for cultural

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awareness and social protest. Many scholars have produced works on the liberating aspects of the Christian religion but the linkage to black power and black consciousness concepts has been examined only minimally. This combined historical examination, phenomenological investigation, and socio-theological study brings clarity to an ever developing framework of black Christianity and cultural consciousness in the United States and South Africa. The researcher acknowledges that this research is also relevant to any discourse that articulates or examines the necessity of a Pan-African theology.

In this study, the hypothesis is that:

(1) black power (bp) and black consciousness (bc) secular philosophy redefined Christian theology;

(2) there was a cohesion of identity expressed through the abstract and material protest of the bp/bc movements;

(3) the bp/bc movements were limited in timeframe, thus not allowing for full political, cultural, and economic transformation; yet

(4) both secular philosophical movements utilized Christian religion as a tool for collective empowerment and social protest.

Contemporary society still reflects the influence of European control and domination. Liberation, from a theological perspective, challenges the psychological and physical realities that may be present as obstacles in the quest for individual or communal independence. A firm understanding and belief in the validity of this perspective is the first stage of blacks being able to relate and act upon their black orientation and reality in a European-controlled political, economic, and definitional orientation and reality.

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Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, these definitions are presented to provide for a common understanding of these frequently used terms.

Black-   During this timeframe, a word of cohesion and empowerment unifying and describing people of African descent, on the continent or throughout the Diaspora. The term replaces the formerly known racial descriptions of colored, Negro, and non-white.

Black Theology- A religious study of God and society which reexamines Christianity from the black and oppressed context.

Christianity- The religion derived from Jesus Christ, based on the Bible as sacred scripture.

Conscientization- the quality or state of being aware of something within oneself. A recognition of one's essential cultural and spiritual character.

Liberation-   Movement for freedom or equal rights from domination by another group. This would include the eradication of all forms of oppression (i.e., apartheid, discrimination, racism, slavery) and the ability to enjoy civil and political liberties.

Ubuntu-   South African concept that expresses the value of humanity, mutual support, and *umntu ngumuntu ngabantu*, the belief that people are people through others.

OUTLINE

Chapter 2:

The second chapter focuses on the origins and philosophy of the black power and black consciousness movements. This review of the B.P. and B.C. movements explores the ideology expressed through the work and writings of the movement's two main proponents, Stokely Carmichael and Bantu Steve Biko. Attention is also given to the work and aims of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and the South African Student Organization. Black power and black consciousness, contemporary and historical, philosophical influences are also examined.

Chapter 3:

Chapter three specifically explores Christianity and black power. The point of departure for this chapter focuses on the primary ideological tenets of black power rhetoric, separation not assimilation, and the challenge to European theological orientations. The cultural and political themes of black theology that have developed as result of these tenets are examined. References to and by Stokely Carmichael, S.N.C.C. members, black power exponents, and theologians are utilized in this chapter.

Chapter 4:

In chapter four, Christianity within the ideology of the black consciousness movement in South Africa is analyzed. The chapter begins by contextualizing South Africa's theology of apartheid and the resurgence of black South African's spiritual conscientization and humanity. The central tenets of the

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holistic ethos of African spirituality, the affirmation of black culture, and self-reliance are paralleled with the resultant political and cultural theological themes. References to and by Steve Biko, S.A.S.O. members, black consciousness exponents, and theologians are utilized.

Chapter 5:

In the fifth chapter the researcher compares and contrasts the two movements through synthesis. First, the basic assumptions of varying contexts and demographics such as land, political climate, economics, etc. are noted. The chapter then weds both movements' key philosophical elements joining them to American and South African black theological perspectives. The conclusion of the chapter calls the reader to the ethos of collective power and *ubuntu* value systems and reviewing them alongside the various acts of cultural consciousness and social protest activity of the time.

NOTES

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[43] Allan Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence: A Socio-Ethical Study on Black Theology and Black Power* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1981). (Original Printing 1976.), p. 121.

[44] Ibid. p.143.

[45] Julian Kunnie, "Christianity, Black Theology and Liberating Faith" cited in I.J. Mosala and Buti Tlhagle. *The Unquestionable Right to Be Free*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1986), p.154.

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CHAPTER TWO

The general hypothesis of this study is that Christianity, redefined as black theology, played a major role in the black power and black consciousness movements as a tool for conscientization, empowerment, and social protest. In order to begin establishing the case for this hypothesis, these two movements' general philosophy, architecture, initial organizational structure, and primary influences must first be articulated. The key purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the black power and black consciousness movements from a foundational perspective.

This chapter begins with a brief introduction and review of the black power and black consciousness eras as movements for self-awareness and social protest. In speaking of the black power movement, Stokely Carmichael, who for the remaining portion of this study will be referred to as Kwame Ture (his adopted name given to him by Kwame Nkrumah and Sekou Toure), is considered by most as the primary spokesman and contributing architect of this philosophy. Steve Biko, respectively, holds the same position in the black consciousness movement. A biographical summary of Kwame Ture and Steve Biko gives the reader the necessary insight and context to begin examining the nature of their philosophies. This section highlights these men, their backgrounds, educational, religious, and political influences, and their ascensions to leadership. The section reveals how their background relates to the development of the philosophies and their contributions to their respective movements.

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Equally important, the structure and organizational ideology of the Student

Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the South African Student

Organization (SASO) are examined, as these were the vehicles through which

these philosophies were initially put into motion. The formation of black power is

elucidated by calling into review the purpose, philosophy, and evolution of

SNCC. In addition, SASO's formation, programme, and aims are discussed as

this was the organization serving as the mother body for black consciousness

organizations.

Lastly, the historical and contemporary influences of the time period that

had an impact on black power and black consciousness are considered. The

philosophies of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X prove influential in this era.

In addition, Pan Africanism and black nationalism are reviewed through the

example of Marcus Garvey while Nat Turner is profiled for religious slave

resistance. Key members of organizations such as the African National Congress

and Pan Africanist Congress are observed for their philosophical aims and their

influence in shaping various protest models for black consciousness. In addition,

the University Christian Movement and its profound influence in initiating and

supporting black student unification also proved timely and relevant.

General Overview of the Philosophies of Black Power

and Black Consciousness

Black Power Philosophy

Although Paul Robeson, Adam Clayton Powell, and Willie Ricks had

previously uttered the words "black" and "power" before a public audience, the

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prophetic call that led to the black power movement was made by Kwame Ture, a student involved in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, at a rally in Greenwood, Mississippi in 1966. In essence, Ture's call for black power was a summons for blacks to wake from their slumber and declare what was rightfully theirs as human beings and citizens of the United States. This call was the slogan for what many blacks in America were already pursuing but did not call it as such. Those who were part of the white power establishment were obviously agitated by these two small words and many attempted to intensify racial abuse because of this invitation to humanity. Many blacks in the civil rights movement also opposed this terminology, including the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King. However, even he started saying almost the same thing that SNCC leaders meant when they talked about black power.

In simplistic terms, black power was primarily about cultural self-definition and political power. The philosophy was about black Americans no longer waiting for the proper discourse to discuss who they were but ultimately making society listen as they identified with their heritage and culture and uncompromisingly declared their purpose and cause. Ture spoke to the political and cultural aspects of definition within black power:

> The political was obvious: the movement's beginning to rethink the goals of and the means of our struggle. To consciously begin to organize among ourselves and find the power to affirm and control our legitimate political rights and our full human dignity. Self-determination--no longer pretending to accept, with a grin and a shuffle, whatever grudging crumbs and concessions the white establishment might feel disposed to toss our way. To assert and demand everything that is ours by right, nothing less. But, of course, you can't divorce politics from culture. The underlying and fundamental notion was that black folks needed to begin openly, and had the right and the duty, to define ourselves, in our own terms, our real

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circumstances, possibilities and interests relative to white America. To determine what the relationship was. Simple as that. To consciously and publicly free ourselves from the heritage of demeaning definitions and limitations imposed on us, over centuries of colonial conditioning by a racist culture. Cultural and psychological self-determination, that's all.[1]

Ture sought to expand the limitations on black's definition of self. Secondly, he wanted to establish a self-sufficient political and economic base. Black power's challenge to social and theological norms would contribute to such a redefinition, which ultimately would lead to a clarification of identity, and most importantly, humanity. Intimately married to the definition of oneself and one's humanity is an understanding of one's social responsibility. Ture explained this fusion through black power:

> Black power was about affirming black humanity; to defend the dignity, integrity, and institutions of our culture; and to collectively organize the political and economic power to begin to control and develop our communities. It was patently not about abandoning our black communities and rejecting our black culture, but about developing the one and embracing the other.[2]

This challenge to white America came through a commonly held white belief that black power was a call for power over or specifically targeting white society. Instead, black power was an internal as well as external phenomenon. Primarily, it was about blacks learning to affirm their culture and heritage; and secondarily, defending themselves in the right to do so. Ture believed that being pro-black does not mean that you were restricted to being anti-white. Black Power was the redevelopment of the black community through conscientization and social protest. This movement sought to challenge societal norms and put the responsibility on blacks to redefine themselves and their roles in society.

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Black Consciousness Philosophy

The black consciousness movement, which began to develop as a philosophical movement in the late 1960s, was influenced by its extended family of black power in the United States. The vacuum created from the banning and jailing of its elders in the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress, profoundly informed this movement as these were the two most recognized anti-apartheid organizations. Similar to the black power movement, Steve Biko, the major proponent of this philosophy, also taught that blacks must reclaim their minds from the grasp of the oppressor. Inferiority complexes and fear ravaged much of the South African landscape and Biko's movement promoted a re-declaration of black culture and humanity. The organizations - South African Student Organization (SASO), Black Community Programs (BCP), and Black People's Convention (BPC) - all served as vehicles to spread the gospel of black consciousness.

Within the movement, blacks (Africans, Coloureds, and Asians) would come to be defined as the oppressed groups of South Africa who became unified in a struggle for equality. Biko elaborates that "being black is not a matter of pigmentation but is a reflection of a mental attitude. Merely by describing yourself as black you have started on a road towards emancipation, you have committed yourself to fight against all forces that seek to use your blackness as a stamp that marks you out as a subservient being."[3] In essence, being black was about experiencing and understanding oppression. Therefore, black South

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Africans as well as Coloureds, Indians, and Asians were able to find common ground under the banner of blackness.

In fully understanding one's role in an oppressive society, one is challenged through the oppression to seek liberation. This movement promoted the consciousness of one's responsibility to self and to the community. Biko desired for blacks to attain an ideal or "envisioned self" which would not permit one to be conscious of self as well as in physical and mental bondage. Black consciousness sought to be self-reliant as a movement to avoid their agenda's being misguided or modified by the unconscious paternalism of white sympathizers. Black Consciousness also challenged Christian theology and worked toward the formulation of Christianity from the black African context. Lastly, all who advocated black consciousness believed that blacks must realize certain commonalities. Biko acknowledges these commonalities:

> These commonalities are expressed as such: (1) We are all oppressed by the same system, (2) that we are oppressed to varying degrees is a deliberate design to stratify us not only socially but also in terms of aspirations, (3) therefore it is to be expected that in terms of the enemy's plan there must be this suspicion and that if we are committed to the problem of emancipation to the same degree it is part of our duty to bring to the attention of the black people the deliberateness of the enemy's subjugation scheme, and lastly, (4) that we should go on with our programme, attracting to it only committed people and not just those eager to see an equitable distribution of groups amongst our ranks. The one criterion that must govern all our action is commitment.[4]

Black consciousness exposed the false realities fostered by an apartheid system of education and religion. Black Consciousness taught the truths of defining and interpreting one's own reality. This philosophy helped to transcend the mis-education and misinterpretations of religion by making it relevant to black

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culture. Biko writes "black consciousness therefore, takes cognizance of the deliberateness of God's plan in creating black people black. It seeks to infuse the black community with a new found pride in themselves, their efforts, their value systems, their culture, their religion, and their outlook to life."[5]

Biographical Summary of Kwame Ture and Steve Biko

Kwame Ture

Although the concept of black power did not develop in isolation, Ture can certainly be considered as the prime architect and advocate of this form of thought. He was influenced by civil rights leaders such as Martin Luther King for his non-violent direct action, but Ture's ideology also sought to blend the essentials of black pride and self-determinism espoused by Malcolm X. The blending of these two ideologies, previous historical influences, and his resistance experience is where black power was born within Ture.

Born in Port of Spain, Trinidad in June 1941, Kwame Ture's family moved to New York where he attended the Bronx High School of Science. It was at this school that Ture took an interest in Marxism and young socialist and communist clubs. This school was unique in that in addition to its scientific-materialist orientation, it also promoted political and philosophical thought. In high school, he read extensively about black history at Harlem's Schomburg Library and was an admirer of the socialist thought of Bayard Rustin and the Pan-Africanist thought of George Padmore. Like most blacks, Ture had a religious upbringing through his family; however, the philosophical and scientific teachings of his school overshadowed his religious beliefs. Later in his career, he realized

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he had to maintain some religious ideals as the black community needed to know the movement was God's work before they would willingly support it. Ture learned early that religion could be used as a vehicle for raising the level of consciousness within the black community.

Graduating from high school in 1960, Ture attended Howard University. He became involved in demonstrations and sit-ins in Washington D.C. and various regions of the southern United States. His initial career aspirations were to become a physician, but his political and social activities eventually led him in another direction and he studied philosophy. He became a part of the Non-Violent Action Group (NAG), where he participated in thought-provoking discussions about philosophy and justice in America and participated in civil rights and social justice activities to support those beliefs. Many in the group took part in the Freedom Rides and other movement activities that led some to be jailed. In jail and on the civil rights battlefield, the young Ture learned from movement veterans and proved his commitment and worthiness.

For the purpose of unifying the many black activist student groups of the time, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was established in 1960 through connections with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Congress of Racial Equality. SNCC brought together many of the young and devoted black students, activists, and seminarians for discussions and organizational planning. Ture considered leaving school to become a full time organizer with SNCC. Ultimately, he decided to keep his promise to his father

that he would finish school, but he spent every summer in the South fighting for the cause of freedom with SNCC.

After graduating from Howard in 1964, Ture worked full time with SNCC. By then, he was considered a young veteran in the movement. He would spend much of his time in Mississippi and Alabama helping to register voters, to start freedom schools, and to evoke cultural and political consciousness. He was instrumental in establishing the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and the Lowndes County Freedom Organization, which would later be called the Black Panther Party. These two organizations were important because they encouraged blacks to analyze the potential of black political and social unification.

Many in SNCC were not satisfied with the gains generated by their activities and desired to take a more aggressive position in the movement. Ture and many SNCC members were fed up with being physically abused. They were becoming reluctant to adhere to nonviolent tactics and leaning toward more progressive action. The tactics of nonviolence and appealing to the moral conscience of white racists had grown very unappealing to Ture, who desired a shift in tactics. Ture wrote:

> There is a spiritual failing on my part with the talk of "soul force," agape, or love force and the moral redemption of the aggressor. According to these principles, disarming the violent impulse by complete nonresistance is the first imperative. You must then seek to establish a moral human contact by looking the aggressor gently in the eye. And, speaking non-aggressively, addressing him as "friend" or "brother," expressing not anger but "reason", a "spirit of love and forgiveness" and your "common humanity". Truthfully I was never into that kind of spiritual evangelism. I never saw my responsibility to be the moral and spiritual reclamation of some racist thug. I would settle for changing his behavior, period. Moral suasion, legal proscription, or even force of arms, whatever ultimately it took, that's what I'd be for.[6]

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Eventually winning the SNCC chairman post from John Lewis, who chose to stay devoted to nonviolent philosophy and tactics, Ture frequently met and dialogued with other prominent heads of black organizations such as Martin Luther King of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Roy Wilkins of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and Floyd McKissick from the Congress of Racial Equality. For purposes of creating a united front, SNCC continued to involve itself in activities such as marches and protest activities that they were beginning to believe were outdated and ineffective. Their experiences led them to believe that non-violence was satisfactory as the initial step, but self-defense should be the next natural step. Former SNCC member Eleanor Holmes Norton notes that they began to believe that "racial abuse was a sin"[7] and SNCC was moving into a position were they vowed to no longer tolerate it.

At a racially charged march in Greensboro, Mississippi in June 1966, Ture was again arrested for demonstrating. After being held for a short time and released, he immediately returned to the march and ignited the crowd with a speech calling for black power. Ture insists "whether anyone was ready for it or not, whether he was the one to call for it or not, the time had come for a new direction in the civil rights movement."[8] Even though King, one of his "mentors," didn't approve of the terminology, he agreed with the purpose. Ture's new direction would led to his becoming the speaker of self-pride and black political and economic unification.

From 1966 on, Ture would be at the forefront of this articulation of the new voice of the oppressed. Ture's Marxist beliefs only allowed him to commit to the struggle in seemingly secular and political ways. He was aware that most blacks were notoriously religious and needed existential assurances. A tone is reflected in his work that expresses his beliefs, yet it also reflects a tension with religion. Philosophically, his message of consciousness, power, and revolution was tantalizing, however many would criticize the lack of clarity in his overall vision. Because of this, Ture became a target of mainstream media and society. Overall, his continual pursuit of social change for oppressed groups led to his involvement in black power organizations such as the Black Panther Party, his denouncing of the Vietnam War, his advocacy of physical self-defense and revolution, and his relocation to Africa to participate in other liberation efforts.

Steve Biko

Steve Bantu Biko was born in King Williamstown, Cape Province, in December 1946. He was educated locally for his primary and secondary education. His formative higher level schooling was at the Roman Catholic Mariannhill School in Natal. He proceeded to medical school at the University of Natal in 1966. Because of his race, he was not permitted to attend the white section of the university and was consigned to attend the Non-European section.

Biko was not content with the conditions of societal inequality on the university campuses and subsequently became involved in the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), a student organization whose objective was to foster a non-racial egalitarian society. Although he was approving of the

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philosophical intent of NUSAS, the paternalism of the white leadership left Biko unsettled. Biko wanted to challenge black students to assemble independently and become more involved in their own mission. In 1968, with the support of the University Christian Movement and other Christian organizations, the South African Student Organization (SASO) was formed. In 1969, he was elected as the first president of the organization. This organization presented an opportunity for black South African college students to become actively engaged in the liberation process. The organization grew beyond its expectations because not only were students active, but many in turn involved their families and communities. This was not only a heightened period of conscientization and humanization for black South Africans, but it also initiated the renewal of communal efforts for apartheid resistance.

In 1972, Biko was dismissed from medical school because his efforts were not directed toward his academic studies but more on his social activities. No longer a student, Biko married and began working for Black Community Programs (BCP) in Durban. BCP was an outgrowth of SASO that transported the political thoughts and activity from the college campus into the community. Biko was very busy with this work until March 1973, when he and several other members of SASO were banned. In this era, bannings could include denial of activities such as admittance to educational institutions, writing for publications, speaking in public, attending gatherings of any kind except a bona-fide church service, having visitors in one's home except clergy or a doctor, as well as confinement to a magisterial district. Restricted to his hometown of King

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Williamstown, Biko began a branch of Black Community Programs staying busy until the government restricted him even further in 1975. Biko made significant contributions to his hometown and "he helped transform King Williamstown from depressed apathy into some semblance of militant solidarity...and it was now a showpiece of community development."[9]

In 1975, Steve was involved in fundraising for the black consciousness organization. He was also involved in the founding of the Zimele Trust Fund, which meant "stand on your own feet." This fund assisted families who had lost family members (by exile, imprisonment, or death) due to their political activity. This fund also served as a way of forging linkages and communication between the young, black consciousness advocates and the older, imprisoned and exiled members of the African National Congress (ANC) and Pan Africanist Congress (PAC).

In 1976, Biko was detained under Section 6 of the Terrorism Act, but was never charged. In 1977, he was appointed Honorary President of the Black People's Convention (BPC), the political arm that grew out of the SASO/BCP organization. In 1977, he was again detained under Section 6 of the Terrorism Act. He was taken to Port Elizabeth where he died from brain damage due to police brutality.

Unlike Kwame Ture, there is documentation from those who communicated with Biko regarding religion and could speak to how it influenced his work. According to Biko's friend, Father Aelred Stubbs of the Community of the Resurrection, Biko always raised very unique and profound questions

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regarding religion. He had a challenging time processing the principals of

Christianity in relation to the sins of those who called themselves Christians.

However, "whatever his spoken criticisms of the Church might be Stephen never

denied being an Anglican, and this was due chiefly to loyalty to his mother, and to

admiration of the quality of her strong Christian faith."[10]

Stubbs recalled initiating dialogues with Biko in which his alleged

drinking and womanizing were discussed. This challenge was an effort to help

Biko consider the potential philosophical and image conflicts that could come

with such activities. Stubbs recalls that Biko was initially defensive but through

later discussions he realized the true intention of the conversations. In a letter to

Stubbs, Biko wrote:

> During that time I learnt to develop a strong faith in God and this was not
> completely unrelated to your role. Your letters to me and my personal
> reflections about things in general. Some things you said to me formed the
> basis of such reflections. As a result I have always held you in high
> esteem as a committed Christian with whom I would like to maintain close
> ties for a long time.[11]

From this section of the letter, one can easily infer that Steve came to appreciate

such dialogues and opportunities for spiritual introspection.

Although there was little discernable clarity between Biko and religion,

Stubbs recounts another religious experience of the father of Black

Consciousness. Biko encouraged a Eucharist for the entire BCP organization.

Biko's promotion of a mass religious activity confirms his belief in Stubbs as a

priest, but more importantly, his desire to receive the Sacrament of the Body and

Blood of Christ. This was a mature step for Biko, as he knew that not everyone

connected to religion could be trusted. Biko's personal or spiritual integrity was

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never conflicted because as few resources as the BCP had, he would refuse to take any money or donations from church organizations that he mistrusted. Stubbs elaborates on Biko's image because of his integrity:

> whatever his non-belief in the Christ of the historic churches in his style of leadership Steve became an authentic (if unconscious) disciple of Jesus of Nazareth. This is why the movement of which he is now the acknowledged "father" will never be destroyed. In fact the more it is crushed under the heel of the system the more it will flower, the more it will proliferate. Herein, supremely, lies the triumph of his death. And at the very heart of this man's life was the quality of compassion-not the emasculated word of white society with its paternalistic connotation of "feeling sorry for" someone in a worse situation than yourself, but the suffering- with that is the words true meaning, the compassion that was the driving force in Christ's ministry to men.[12]

In a letter Biko wrote to his friend Father David Russell, he clarified his thoughts on God, Christ, and the Church. His perspective on spiritual conscience is, in essence, merely an extension of the tenets of black consciousness. Biko wrote:

> God has laid for man certain basic laws that must govern interaction between man and man, man and nature at large. These laws I see as inscribed in the ultimate conscience of each living mortal. I speak of ultimate conscience here because I believe man has enough power to dull his sensitivity to his own conscience and hence become hard, cruel, evil, bad, etc. But intrinsically somewhere in him there is always something that tells him he is wrong. This is then his awareness of the unexpressed and unwritten laws that God has laid down to regulate human behavior.[13]

His belief in man's intrinsic ability to govern his own destiny is reflected in his response to denominationalism and the organized church. Even though Biko never officially rejected being an Anglican, he was very critical of denominationalism and the role of the church. He often questioned whether he was an Anglican for any other reason than that was what his family was and what he had been taught. He questioned why being an Anglican had to be the vehicle

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in which he interacted with God and what made it better or worse than any other

denomination. Biko believed that with denominationalism:

> churches complicate religion and theology and make it a matter to be
> understood only by specialists. Churches have tended to drive away the
> common man by immersing themselves in bureacracy and
> institutionalism. Where does the truth lie-with the Methodists or
> Anglicans, with the Catholics or Jews, with Jehovah's Witnesses of the
> Seventh Day Adventists? In my view the truth lies in my ability to
> incorporate my vertical relationship with God into the horizontal
> relationships with my fellow men; in my ability to pursue my ultimate
> purpose on earth which is to do good.[14]

It is clear that Steve Biko was very deep and insightful in his thought

regarding man and religion. It is also safe to say that Biko was a believer of

Christ but rejected the conservative interpretations of him. So, in his personal

study of God and man, black theological discourse is the route in which he

seemed to follow. Biko saw black theology as "a spirituality for would-be

Christian revolutionaries. To the revolutionary, the Church is anti-progress and

therefore anti-God's wishes because long ago it decided not to obey God but to

obey man; long ago the Church itself decided to accept the motto that white is

value."[15] Steve Biko was a revolutionary who sought to open the closed doors of

spirituality to allow for conscious introspection for all men. He was a

revolutionary that articulated his most personal beliefs into a philosophy that

would ultimately seek liberation not only of the oppressed but also of the

oppressor.

Overview of Student Organizations

SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee)

The ideology of SNCC was without complexity: they were simply a consolidated grouping of black student groups who desired to be active in the civil rights movement. The instincts of civil rights veteran Ella Baker were that students would fight without caution providing a different element to the movement,[16] thus her persistence in initiating a meeting of student activists. In April 1960, the first meeting was organized to try to establish a student group with the Reverend Martin Luther King, Reverend James Lawson, and Ms Ella Baker as the keynote speakers. Although SNCC was birthed out of the womb of those aligned to the church, they would come to employ multiple philosophical approaches.

The strength of SNCC was simply its activities in the struggle. Ture described their activity in this way:

> S.N.C.C. is a collection of mobile organizers. We go wherever there is a need, when we are invited, stay only as long as we are wanted, and serve the people's needs as they tell us. We help the community do as much as they are willing to do, within reason and "S.N.C.C. principles" as long as it serves the struggle of empowering the people to represent themselves and liberate the community. SNCC is not a membership organization trying to organize local chapters or build an institutional membership base. We organize the people to speak in their own interest and try to leave behind us strong leaders and organizations forged in struggle. [17]

One of the slogans or mantras of SNCC was "if not now...when?" These students realized their role and place in time as they were without spouses, children, mortgages, etc. to restrict them from active participation in the struggle. Countering the stereotypes of black apathy and fear, their initial and primary form

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of protest was the sit-in campaigns. Through these efforts, the goal was for peaceful and well-groomed college students to be treated as regular American citizens and patrons or be discriminated against as the media and white sympathizers viewed the hypocrisy of American democracy. SNCC soon grew into an organization that became heavily involved in the freedom rides and helping blacks in the South to register to vote.

SNCC was defined by many as the beloved community. Blacks and whites, men and women would all be part of this organization that was neither hierarchal or leader centered. Ture often commented that there were no whites in SNCC. In conventional American terms, he believed that these comrades stopped being white upon joining and participating in the civil rights movement. He reasoned "these white staffers had at least three particularly attitude-changing experiences that 'white' Americans almost never have: working with blacks in complete equality; being on the receiving end of white racial hostility; and being immersed in the highest expressions of black culture while meeting the black community at its very best."[18] As SNCC moved toward a black power philosophy and aggressions escalated, many black members encouraged their white colleagues to protest in their own neighborhoods due to the increased potential for violence.

Initially, SNCC professed the same philosophy and tactics of nonviolence as the veteran civil rights groups. The training and guidance from veteran groups gave SNCC a true understanding of nonviolence, describing it as a spiritual discipline. Ture agreed that nonviolence was:

a philosophy of life, an ethical principle, a way of being in the world verging on the religious. On another level, it is merely a strategic approach to struggle. But on both levels it is a very stern discipline. And no discipline is ever 'passive'. It offers a way for large numbers of Africans to join the struggle. This nonviolent direct action was directly confrontational, even aggressively so, only in a nonviolent way.[19]

In addition to nonviolence, Ture advocated a counter philosophy learned from the Nonviolent Action Group (NAG) in which he was also involved. The focus of NAG politics was to reform society in a radical way. NAG was "secular and militantly confrontational within the framework of nonviolent activism. Their intention was to push, prod, and pester American social practice into greater conformity with the nation's high-minded, much ignored constitutional rhetoric and its 'democratic' principles."[20] The movement was maturing and students were eager to hold the government to its lofty ideals.

Many members of SNCC were growing weary of physical abuse for what they perceived as uncertain gains. The grievously inadequate system of American justice shifted the thinking of SNCC progressives that it was time to seize power rather than patiently ask for it. In 1966, with Ture as the new chairman, SNCC now saw fit to psychologically, and when necessary, physically defend itself against racial abuse. However, this new philosophy of black power was not received by mainstream society as black self-affirmation. Instead it was perceived as unapologetically separatist, militant, and physically confrontational. At that point, many moderate civil rights groups and white liberals began to sever ties with the SNCC organization.

Many SNCC members believed in the integrity of their struggle. With the call for black power, they saw humanity and self-defense merge. They sought to

redefine themselves, establish themselves politically, and as Ture would say "not get their heads whupped" in the process. Members began to realize that they were not only being physically abused but equally dehumanized. Humanity reflected through non-violence had been a guiding principle, but the group came to experience that there was also humanity in self defense.

Although SNCC had earned respect within the black community and strides were being made in civil rights activity, the objectives of the organization had changed. The growing trend of black power versus the nonviolent, integrated faction of SNCC, coupled with other internal perspectives and issues, proved to be too much to bear and SNCC began to dissolve in 1968. Although fragmented as an organization, an ever evolving black power philosophy continued to thrive in groups such as the Black Panther Party and the All African Peoples' Party.

SASO (South African Student Organization):

In the early 1960s, many students were encouraged by the previous liberation efforts of the African National Congress and the Pan-Africanist Congress. Black college students desired to contribute to liberation efforts by starting organizations on campuses. During this time period, there were many attempts to establish organizations for black South African students. Biko writes:

> In 1961 and 1962 the African Students' Association (ASA) and the African Students' Union of South Africa (ASUSA) were established. The Durban Students' Union and the Cape Peninsular Students' Union, which later merged to form the Progressive National Student's Organization, were fanatically opposed to National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) initially. ASA and ASUSA were divided by ideological loyalties connected with the African National Congress and Pan Africanist Congress. None of these organizations survived. NUSAS was by no means a spent force on the black campuses, but the fact that its own powerbase was on white campuses (Wits-the University of

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Witswatersrand –Rhodes, University of Cape Town, Natal) meant that it was virtually impossible for black students to attain leadership positions. Least of all could NUSAS speak for non-white campuses, though it often assumed that role.[21]

With ASA and ASUSA not capable of standing on their own two feet,

NUSAS became the organization that progressive blacks joined. However, these

students believed that their interests were not adequately represented. The

University Christian Movement (UCM) became the body for the establishment of

a viable black student organization. A University Christian Movement Document

reads:

> the establishment of the University Christian Movement in 1967 opened new avenues for contact. UCM had a special appeal to students at the ethnic institutions that were set up by the Nationalist government best known as the University Colleges (The Nationalist government set up ethnic schools referring to them as University Colleges). The fact that within a year and a half of its existence the UCM had already a black majority in its sessions is indicative of this. Hence with the continued getting together of students from the University Colleges dialogue began again amongst black students. [22]

Comprised of a group of religious students, the University Christian

Movement sought to reform and modernize some of the traditional or antiquated

Christian practices in South Africa. The group exhibited an earnest desire to

provide Christian guidance in an immoral society. The UCM resisted to a large

extent the separation and division that existed in society. Because of

inconsistencies in philosophy and reality, black students often questioned the

leadership of the UCM. However, most felt moderately comfortable with the

direction of the organization's policies and challenge to apartheid theology.

Black students also recognized that clergymen, congregational members, and

church groups were being inspired by this progressive thought and philosophy.

Blacks in higher education would eventually come to articulate the need

for a homogenous black student organization that would be nationally recognized.

The UNB (University of Natal Black), which included Biko, was asked to further

explore student organizations. As a result of a follow up conference in Natal in

1968, SASO was formed and Biko was elected to the position of President.

SASO always represented the overall purpose of the organization as a group of

black students that were striving toward a non-racial, egalitarian society. Biko

highlights the aims of SASO:

> (1) To crystalize the needs and aspirations of the non-white students and to
> seek to make known their grievances.
> (2) Where possible to put into effect programmes designed to meet the
> needs of the non-white students and to act on a collective basis in an effort
> to solve some of the problems which beset the centres individually.
> (3) To heighten the degree of contact not only amongst the non-white
> students but also amongst these and the rest of the South African student
> population, to make the non-white students accepted on their own terms as
> an integral part of the South African student community.
> (4) To establish a solid identity amongst the non-white students and to
> ensure that these students are always treated with the dignity and respect
> they deserve.
> (5) To protect the interests of the member centres and to act as a pressure
> group on all institutions and organizations for the benefit of the non-white
> students.
> (6) To boost up the morale of the non-white students, to heighten their
> own confidence in themselves and to contribute largely to the direction of
> thought taken by the various institutions on social, political, and other
> current topics.[23]

SASO's main objective was to encourage black participation in student

groups and not just black visibility. The racial and ethnic make-up of NUSAS

never truly reflected the reality of the South African population and SASO made

it very clear that NUSAS was inadequate and the UCM relatively adequate in

regards to addressing the needs of black students. As a new organization, Biko

would come to outline the surmountable challenges that SASO faced such as finances and lack of resources, inadequate correspondence and communication, and student fear of involvement in black political student activity and not wanting to attract local or national attention. SASO developed into a powerful student group eventually extending its work in black communities. The black consciousness philosophy that began with SASO ultimately branched out into the formation of social and political community programs such as Black Community Programs and Black Peoples Convention.

Black Power: Overview of Movement Influences

Black Power was in no way developed in isolation of the other activities of the movement. The primary argument in this study is that black power was a critique of white Christian theology and the American power structure. This section of the study argues that black power philosophy, and the accompanying theology, was influenced and developed through the Christian morality of Martin Luther King, the cultural self-determinism of Malcolm X, the black nationalism and Pan-Africanist thoughts of the early twentieth century, and the spirit of slave resistance and religious revolts. These social forces, combined with many other instances of black resistance, would come to symbolize the aims of the black power philosophy.

Kwame Ture realized that black power was not a new philosophy and that many figures had contributed to this place of racial and spiritual consciousness. Cheryl Greenberg writes in *A Circle of Trust* of the continuum of resistance from its historical predecessors to the first sit-in.

Although these sit-ins occurred without coordination, they were the product of a long struggle for civil rights that stretched back to abolition and slave resistance. In this century, the Niagara Movement in 1905 that launched the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the "Dont Buy Where You Cant Work" campaigns of the Great Depression, and the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955-56 are three examples of the persistent efforts of African Americans to gain full citizenship; there are thousands more that are less well known but no less significant. This tradition of activism reminded African Americans frustrated by the slow gains and unfulfilled promises of the Fourteenth Amendment, the 1954 decision of Brown vs. Board of Education, and the Civil Rights Act of 1957 that acquiescence was not the only alternative.[24]

The numerous acts of resistance by blacks served as reminders of the constant struggle for racial equality in the United States. Black power advocates seem to have been profoundly influenced by the contemporary leaders of the civil rights struggle. Contemporaries such as Martin Luther King and Malcolm X will be discussed first and then attention will be given to other influences. Pan-Africanism and Black Nationalist ideals will be examined through the work of Marcus Garvey with Nat Turner serving as the profile to address slave resistance and uprisings.

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Without a doubt, Martin Luther King, Jr. was the most influential figure in the civil rights movement; however, he had an ambivalent role in relation to black power philosophy. His goal was to work with all races and he desired full integration into American society. His ability to motivate and mobilize people with an understanding of Christian forgiveness and social justice was applauded by young freedom fighters. King preached that black suffering through nonviolence would not be in vain for if they continued to persevere God would lead them to the Promised Land. Kwame Ture, who learned from King the

philosophy of nonviolence, had great respect for his courage and leadership. Nonetheless, Ture believed that nonviolence was an incomplete philosophy resulting in dehumanization and suffering .

Many believe that Dr. King was vehemently opposed to black power. Some critiqued and rejected his leadership, his nonviolent philosophy, and his inability to connect to black truths. Black nationalist theologian, Albert Cleage wrote that "Dr. King's entire approach was a mystical kind of idealism which had no roots in objective reality."[25] Cleage's argument assessed Dr. King's leadership as blinded to the truth of society; that integration was not an attainable goal. Ed Brown, SNCC member and brother of black power leader H. Rap Brown, states the differences in thought and tactics between King and SNCC progressives.

> Black Power...even though its' been influenced by Christian philosophy or theology it was also a rejection of that. People felt that the proponents of that particular type of philosophy particularly Dr. King was not sufficiently cognizant of the kind of brutality and the appropriate response for dealing with that brutality. While Dr. King believed in non-violence as a philosophy, people in SNCC did not necessarily accept nonviolence as a philosophy, they accepted it as a tactic. They felt that the tactic had basically come to a point where it had become counterproductive and was no longer useful. So people kind of rejected the moral suasion which was the underpinning in terms of that philosophy and accepted as its objector the pursuit of power.[26]

King was also criticized because he was seen as an accommodating and patient Negro leader. This, however, worked in King's favor in the quest for integration in that he received substantial media coverage. Courtland Cox stated: "They [govt/media] call on 'responsible Negro leadership' to establish a different context for what is to be said...so that King, especially in the early days, gave a

sense that what we are about was trying to be a part of America. And things that picked up on that theme were given high visibility."[27]

Amidst the critics and supporters on both sides of the black power debate, King never publicly denounced the philosophy of black power. He disagreed with the terminology, but agreed with the aims of the philosophy. King understood that the black community must come to terms through cultural unification and solidarity. However, he knew that in order to fulfill his personal philosophical mission of pacifism, nonviolence and Christian brotherly love, he could not be connected to the militant aspects of black power rhetoric. SNCC member Clayborne Carson wrote:

> Martin Luther King was caught in the split between the moderates and the growing numbers of blacks whose allegiance was shifting towards Ture. King criticized the black power slogan on grounds that it connoted anti-white feelings, but when other black leaders issued a statement repudiating black power, King resisted pressures to sign it. He stated that he agreed with the statement but did not want to associate himself with an effort to "excommunicate" black power advocates. King understood and sympathized with SNCC's militancy.[28]

King recognized the frustration experienced in working toward integration that forced people to adopt the more aggressive black power philosophy. The inconsistency and support from the federal government coupled with the increasing racist brutality were valid reasons for a shift in philosophy. John Talmadge McCartney points out that King was cognizant of the fact that:

> Even in the civil rights movement, it seemed that white lives meant more than black lives…Next, King argues that the black power movement represents legitimate disappointment on the part of black America with the failure of the federal government to implement 'the civil rights laws on its statute books'. Also, King says America lost credibility with blacks with the hypocrisy and violence of the Vietnam War.[29]

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King's greatest influence on SNCC progressives was that he had a voice. He chose to stand up and directly confront the racism in America. His courage in the face of danger was admirable and his leadership commendable. Academic theologian, Dwight Hopkins observed: "The theological greatness of King lies in his closely connecting justice and the gospel as well as practically organizing thousands in a massive sign of Christian witness for justice."[30] His ideals of every man being equal and his goals of integration provided a solid plan for democratic participation in society. However, King's temperament of love, patience and forgiveness conflicted with young progressives who believed that humanity must be secured through power and not pleas or requests. With the black power philosophy on the rise, King too evolved and "began to see that integration based on appeals of love and morality was without substance, hypocritical and immoral. Now he saw love linked to the redistribution and equal sharing of political (and economic) power between whites and blacks."[31] Late in his career, King started the poor people's campaign which supported these new aims of economic power for disenfranchised people.

Theologian Gayraud Wilmore spoke to King's civil rights commitment to an ultimate justice in Christian religion and a refusal to position himself with a theology of race. Wilmore recalls:

> At Kings' office in Washington DC during the poor people's march, King would have slogans on the wall that showed that he was not adverse to black power and the emphasis upon ethnicity and the struggle against segregation and racism. He recognized the solidarity of the black community, he saw something valuable in what was being encouraged as black theology but he would not make a statement about it, he could not himself be aligned with that movement.[32]

Such ambivalence of thought defined King's relationship to black power,

although his work definitively connects him to black reality. Even though

nonviolence was no longer at the forefront of the movement, he was aware that

the struggle must and would go forward. "King would say the government has to

give me some victories if I'm gonna keep people nonviolent"[33] because he was

aware of the evolving necessity of black power. No matter what the

circumstance, King chose to remain true to strict Christian ideals. This statement

typifies King's ultimate influence on black power that was exhibited in his

courage, his ability to mobilize blacks in mass, his assertion that nonviolence

should be the first step in responding to racial oppression, and that justice and

integration should be the ultimate goal.

Malcolm X

Within the civil rights struggle there were leaders who were critically

outspoken in their demands for equality. Stern words and a clear oppositional

message to the white power structure was the embodiment of Black Nationalist

leadership. Carson notes the image and role of black power leader, Kwame Ture:

> Ture was not an exceptional prophetic figure. He became a symbol of
> black militancy because he sensed a widespread preparedness among
> blacks to reject previous habits of accommodation. His attitudes, shaped
> by experiences in the southern struggle, coincided with the unarticulated
> feelings of many other blacks, especially in northern urban centers, whose
> hopes were raised but not fulfilled by the civil rights movement...Ture
> joined a line of audacious black leaders-Martin Delaney, Marcus Garvey,
> Malcolm X-whose historical role was to arouse large segments of the
> black populace by reflecting their repressed anger and candidly describing
> previously obscured aspects of their racial oppression.[34]

Of these leaders mentioned, Malcolm X, and his contrasting perspective to Martin Luther King on civil rights activities, had a profound influence on Ture, young civil rights leaders, and the overall movement.

Malcolm X was a leader in the Nation of Islam who taught that America was a vicious oppressor of blacks. Preaching that America was not willing to include blacks on any significant political or economic level was an integral part of Malcolm's discourse. Because of this fact, he instructed blacks not to desire integration into a society that did not in turn desire their involvement. Malcolm learned from the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Mohammed who trained blacks to take pride in their culture and heritage and seek to develop their own political and economic structures. Ture admired Malcolm's confidence and integrity. His personal determination and refusal to be treated as anything less than a man were very influential traits to young SNCC members.

In the early stages of Malcolm X's philosophical development, his rhetoric was very fiery and controversial. His language evoked anger, conflict, and the truth of America's hypocrisy. Historian and activist Howard Zinn commented on how Malcolm X planted a black power seed within the SNCC organization. "The recent calls by Malcolm X and others for Negroes to use self-defense, and even retaliation, against acts of violence by whites have not found approval by the SNCC organization. Yet individual SNCC members have sometimes expressed sympathy for this position."[35] SNCC member Cleve Sellers recalled that Malcolm X influenced the philosophical orientation within SNCC to begin to change from love to revolution and the acquisition of power. Sellers noted that

"in terms of influences inside the organization, we began to shift away from the mood and thought and existentialist thinking and we began to move toward Frantz Fanon and Malcolm X in terms of our thinking, our orientation."[36]

Malcolm X articulated a belief that Christianity was used as a tool to oppress blacks. He believed that non-violent, moderate blacks were praising and singing to a God that was not their own. Malcolm X was teaching that this God was allowing blacks to hate themselves by not responding to injustice in a more culturally specific way. Malcolm X argued:

> All other peoples have their own religion and believe in a God whom they can associate themselves with, a God who looks like one of their own kind. But we picture God with the same blond hair and blue eyes as our murderous slavemaster. The Christian religion teaches us that black is a curse, thus we love everything except black, and can picture God as being anything else but black. We'd rather say God is invisible, before we'll say He is black.[37]

As the rhetoric of cultural self-determinism and the challenge to Euro-Christian theology continued to gain momentum, impatience escalated with tactics such as moral appeals and nonviolent protest. The black community was becoming determined to no longer request but demand power, politically and economically. Malcolm X recognized that before political and economic unification, the black community must first harness their spiritual and psychological power-their conscious self. Albert Cleage wrote:

> Malcolm came to understand the devastating influence of the white man's declaration of black inferiority. In an interview he stated that you cannot organize a sleeping people around specific goals. You must wake the people up first. And the white man asks, "Do you mean to their exploitation?" Malcolm replied, "No, to their humanity, to their own worth."[38]

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Malcolm X's ability to diffuse inferiority complexes and have blacks take pride in their culture and humanity was his primary contribution to the black power philosophy. He spoke with religious authority and his respect in the black community came through that vein. He spoke candidly, advocated a cultural perspective, and challenged the mainstream religion of the times. Over time, Malcolm X's rhetoric moderated due to his own spiritual maturity and desire to seek a more nationally unified perspective. His belief in religious ideals of humanity, knowledge of oneself, cultural identification, and the potential for conflict within the power struggle were his ultimate contributions to the black power philosophy.

Pan-Africanism, Black Nationalism, and Religious Slave Revolts

In addition to the varying philosophies of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, there were other influences on the black power movement. The Pan-Africanist and Black Nationalist thought of the early twentieth century along with the slave uprisings and revolts of the previous century had a significant impact on the movement. In *Stokely Speaks*, Ture writes, "The concept of Black Power is not a recent or isolated phenomenon. It has grown out of ferment, agitation, and activity by different people and organizations in many black communities over the years."[39] Pan-Africanism, black nationalism, and slave resistance and revolts are discussed in this section of the chapter as it relates to their influence on black power philosophy.

Pan-Africanism is defined as a broad array of ideologies that focused on black political and cultural unification and empowerment. Under the umbrella of

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Pan-Africanist thought, black nationalism isolated and localized black intentions. Jeffrey Ogbar defines black nationalism as "the belief that black people, acting independently of whites, should create viable black institutions for their people. Racial pride, dignity, racial separation, and hard work are the staples…as asking for inclusion in a racist white society is derided as the slavish preoccupation of the misled."[40] Black Power advocates realized that the goal of establishing their own political and economic structures already had a model to follow in the work of Marcus Garvey. Through his Nationalist and Pan-Africanist thought an appeal was made for blacks to establish their own nation as they would never be full citizens within the United States. In the 1920s, Garvey's "Back to Africa" movement served as a catalyst for blacks seeking cultural realignment with their mother country of Africa.

Marcus Garvey was confident in the understanding that blacks had to learn to operate independently while living in the United States. Garvey contended that blacks should not make requests of white society but confidently establish their own. In an effort to establish a base for strength and solidarity in the community, Garvey utilized spiritual structures and messages. "While the UNIA (Universal Negro Improvement Association) was largely a secular movement, Garvey established the African Orthodox Church as an adjunct to the UNIA, providing numerous Christian analyses of racial oppression and resistance."[41] Serving as an intercessory for interpreting discrepancies in material and physical realities, the African Orthodox Church stimulated spiritual and cultural consciousness. Ogbar writes:

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Garvey knew the importance of religion to the masses of black people and needed to create a theological base that was in agreement with both their spiritual and material needs. To him, religion can either domesticate or liberate, and so is able to subvert or enhance the economic development of the black race.[42]

Garvey did not believe that God had a divine plan for blacks but God was for all humans. However, he knew that God was not white as such that he would remind oppressed blacks of their oppressor. Garvey informed black power through his nationalist beliefs that God worked on the behalf of those who were self-sufficient and confident in their humanity. His Pan-Africanist emphasis was expressed in his longing for blacks to return to Africa. While in America, he believed that God would permit suffering for those who did not challenge suffering and gave prosperity to those who sought prosperity.

Just as Garvey taught that challenging oppression was God's will, other blacks in the history of black resistance desired to go beyond a mere challenge. In their individual culture, slaves developed means in which to resist submission to the will of their slave masters. Slaves such as Nat Turner, Denmark Vesey and Gabriel Prosser all believed that God bestowed upon them spiritual authority to actively rebel against systems of injustice. These responses, whether fully executed or not, led to a reflection on the dynamics of conflict and spiritual activism.

The most common form of slave resistance was reflected in the invisible institution, the religious home for slaves' adaptation of the white master's religion. This adaptation reinterpreted religion in ways that met the needs of the black slaves. George Gorman explains:

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Slave religion carried with it an inescapable dimension of black radicalism. This radical religion manifested itself in a number of ways. It always sought independence from white control. The development of slave religion itself was a form of spiritual rebellion and autonomy. The founding of the independent black churches in America was an instance of the seizure of institutional freedom. The emergence of black theology in the 1960's was a continuation of this radical tradition in the form of intellectual freedom from the canons of white theological thought. This radicalism was not limited to the black church, but was seen in a variety of social and political expressions in the black community.[43]

Outside of this reinterpretation of Christianity that helped blacks to cope with their place in society was a hermeneutic of Christianity advocating an equally just response. Instances of revolts based on religion were common but none were as influential as the revolt by Nat Turner in 1831. Nat Turner, an enslaved Baptist minister in the early nineteenth century, was a revolutionary in his spiritual vision that man was not meant to be oppressed. His beliefs in Christianity and the brotherhood of humans established through God was his impetus for action. Ogbar explains:

> The most destructive slave insurrection in United States history was led by Nat Turner. The rebellion was not the first act of organized violent resistance to slavery in the United States, nor was it the last. It was, however, the most significant early example of organized black religious nationalism in the country....Nat Turner, like black Christian nationalist leaders who would succeed him in the next century, accepted Christianity as a philosophical vehicle of liberation and resistance.[44]

Turner's brand of religion is an active liberation theology. Turner's beliefs that God was not a God of tyranny led to his belief in conflict and resistance as determinate of God's judgment that is to come. Turner strove to live humbly and according to God's will believing that God would eventually call him to express a physical and psychological response to the current societal maladies. Literature does not reveal specifics regarding his level of cultural consciousness but his

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beliefs in liberation and spiritual responsibility for the oppressed were clear.

Ogbar elaborates further on Turner:

> ....Turner proclaimed himself a Christian prophet. It was through his
> appropriation of a religion given to him by his enslavers that he affirmed
> his right to freedom. Turner extolled Christianity and sought to live as a
> pious Christian should. His religion, too, was suited to serve as a vehicle
> for resistance to slavery on a physical level while simultaneously
> encapsulating a psychological liberation aspect. This aspect affirmed
> blackness. Not only was heaven on the side of the enslaved, but also it
> reflected the image of the enslaved anthropomorphically. This belief
> debased the "plantationized" Christianity that asserted that blackness was
> a cursed mark, forever relegating black people to servility. It dismissed
> the Nordic-like images of Jesus and the heavenly saints in churches
> throughout the Western world and undermined white supremacist
> Christianity.[45]

The effects of Turner's revolts were profound. He and his followers'

actions brought forth a disruption and conflict on a physical and material level,

while advancing a moral challenge on a psychological and spiritual level.

Turner's activity impelled future challenges of oppressive social norms through

religious and secular efforts. The challenge to oppression exhibited by Turner

encompassed many of the same ideals that would be pursued through the black

power movement some 130 years later. Robert Chemokee pointed out:

> The activism of the black protest movement is as old as the horrors of the
> depraved conditions to which black people were subjected. As a matter of
> fact, it takes no difficult effort to substantiate the point of view that the
> depraved conditions during slavery and immediately after it was abolished
> were protested with the same intense vigor as the proponents of the
> contemporary black power movement are exhibiting in their attempt to
> eradicate the ills of the conditions of the black man of today.[46]

The Pan-Africanist and black nationalist thought was equally important as slave

resistance and revolts in its effects on black power philosophy. Pan-Africanism

and Black Nationalism sought to establish a national and international cohesion

amongst blacks. This collective form of resistance was an example of descendants of Africa creating a posture of group identity for the black power model. Due to the lack of basic freedoms and limited means of mass communication, slave resistance should be perceived in a more local and individual manner. Black slaves' acts of refusal for total compliance amidst the threat of physical consequence served to inspire black power advocates to express themselves in an aggressive fashion.

Lastly, Toussant L'Overture in Haiti, Haile Selassie in Ethiopia, and Africans beginning to gain their independence from colonialism in the 1950s and 1960s can be analyzed as influential forms of resistance, revolts, or revolutions. Cleve Sellers emphasized that black power was also set in motion by these concurrent activities: (1) Anti-Vietnam sentiment, (2) Urban rebellion and potentially misdirected energies, (3) the failed challenge to the Democratic Party after all the positive and negative events that took place in Mississippi, and (4) the growth in numbers in SNCC in 1964 and the increase in ideologies, thoughts on direction, etc.[47] These historical moments served as examples of subsidiary causes for the introduction of black power and the pressing obligation of change within the social structure of America.

Black Consciousness: Overview of Movement Influences

In 1960, the two most prominent anti-apartheid organizations, the African National Congress and the Pan-Africanist Congress were banned by the South African government. Many of its members either went into exile or were sent to prison for their political activity, leaving a huge void in the fight against

apartheid. The BCM took advantage of this vacancy to lead the people in the continued struggle. There were several influences, but three, in particular, will be discussed in relation to their role in the development of the black consciousness philosophy. This section of the work begins with a brief look at how black consciousness philosophy was influenced by the civil rights and black power movement in the U.S.A. The research will then move to a focus on the indigenous influences such as the African historical thought of the ANC and PAC and the work and activism of Christian student organizations. The researcher makes no commitment to the order and timing of the influences as it is reasoned that there is no chronological order to their philosophical involvement.

Black Power/Civil Rights

From 1955 through the early 1970s, the struggle for equality in America was at its peak. The Civil Rights Movement, of which the black power philosophy was an extension, was gaining attention across the globe. Black students in the United States played a pivotal role in the civil rights movement as they were just as determined to be treated as equal citizens as their elders. Through media exposure, protest activities such as bus boycotts, sit-ins, and the establishment of political parties in the black community, blacks were challenging the conscience of the national and international community.

This movement in the United States brought together blacks of all classes. South Africans exposed to this struggle witnessed the courage of black Americans. Particularly influential were the students, and the fact that there was a belief that everyone in the community had something to contribute to the struggle.

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These civil rights veterans and students formalized their actions through writing, public speaking, and analyzing progressive theories for social change. Literature such as *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* by Martin Luther King, *Black Ramparts*, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X, Soul on Ice,* and *Black Theology* and *Black Power* were all influential works on liberation thought and praxis. Through civil rights activity, substantial attempts were being made to liberate the black community through social protest and a cohesion of cultural identity. Unlike the civil rights movement, the black power philosophy called for a re-examination of Christian religion. In many cases, the black church, which stood as a symbol of security in the struggle, became a place for discussion of political and cultural activism. Progressive blacks utilized philosophies of nonviolence as well as tactics of self-defense and militancy in the belief that they would rather die on their feet than live on their knees.

Black South Africans reflected upon the numerous examples of black pride, religious rhetoric, nonviolent direct action, militant self-defense, and goals of economic and political empowerment of the civil rights movement and the black power era. These demands for humanity and equality from a minority group in the United States were very influential to African college students who were considering formulating a black consciousness agenda. The trans-Atlantic parallels of oppression and resistance of the civil rights and black power movements served as encouragement and motivation to South African blacks who were redefining themselves through cultural identification and seeking independence from the apartheid power structure.

Africanist Historical Influence

There has always been a history of resistance to European colonization in

South Africa. One must return to the late nineteenth century when an increasing

number of black South Africans were first becoming receptive to Christianity.

African indigenous or independent churches were established that combined a

blending of Christianity with aspects of African traditional religions and cultural

practices. David Chidester writes:

> Often called African indigenous or independent churches, these new
> religious movements began forming at roughly the same time that large
> numbers of black South Africans were turning to Christianity. Although
> several different types might be identified, independent churches are best
> understood in the historical context of their formation. In the new urban
> centers of the 1890's, independent churches emerged to assert black
> equality with whites in matters of religious leadership. Often called
> 'Ethiopian' churches, these new churches tended to be founded by
> educated black Christians who were increasingly excluded from
> economic, social, and political opportunity. During the 1920's and
> 1930's, however, new religious movements emerged that focused on the
> loss of land, economic deprivation, and endemic poverty reinforced by
> South African legislation.[48]

This religious autonomy was not interpreted favorably by colonizers as

they were aware of the need for theological control of the masses. If blacks were

left to interpret the Christian gospel themselves, then a theology of liberation

could occur, opposing the current theology of passivity to foreign influences.

Chidester elaborates further:

> From the perspective of most white missionaries, magistrates, and
> government officials, however the very existence of churches independent
> of white religious control posed a potential threat to white political
> control. Ironically, most leaders of the 'Ethiopian' movement advocated
> political moderation, obedience to government, private ownership of
> property, and equality of blacks and whites in a common society.
> Nevertheless, many white religious and political leaders argued that
> 'Ethiopianism' threatened white political domination in South Africa.[49]

In the early twentieth century, the South African Native National Congress became a prominent group in the fight against colonial occupation. Changing its name to the African National Congress in 1923, this group, which had a number of religious officials as founders, made attempts at appealing to the Christian conscience of the colonizers. Early ANC figures such as Pixley Seme, John Dube, S.M. Makgatho, and A.B. Xuma, offered a moral appeal as a feature of their politics. Other ANC leaders rejected this approach. James Thaele noted that "Christianity was a doctrine good in all its essentials," arguing that "religious resources should support a politics of confrontation".[50] Secretary-General of the ANC from 1936-1949, Rev. James Calata challenged Afrikaner political and religious leader D.F. Malan to "prove to the world that you stand by the principles of Christianity which involve the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man."[51]

In the 1940s, a powerful response and line of questioning regarding religion and politics from an Africanist historical perspective came from ANC Youth League leaders such as Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela, and Anton Lembede. Lembede presented a powerful religious articulation of Africanism or African Nationalism which expressed tenets that were influential to future liberation movements. As interpreted from David Chidester's work, Lembede's tenets of African Nationalism proceeded to: (1) recognize man's worth as body, mind and spirit not just an economic animal, (2) emphasize the importance of recovering the heroic African past, (3) declare socialism as the African economic base, (4) advocate the use of traditional African social values

and political practices, and (5) continue the merging of Ancestral and Christian

religion.[52] "It is only African Nationalism or Africanism, Lembede declared, that

can save the African people. Long live African Nationalism!"[53]

The Youth League would eventually split into two groups: Charterists and

Africanists. From the Africanist faction, the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC)

emerged in 1959, being sufficiently action-oriented and pledging ideals of a new

Africa. PAC founders would include former ANC members Robert Sobukwe and

Potlako Leballo, to name a few. The PAC's militant philosophy was a product of

the expressed fact that "they were disappointed by what they saw as the older

organization's excessive caution and willingness to compromise in its campaign

to overthrow South Africa's apartheid regime."[54] "Africa for the Africans"

became the popular chant of the PAC as they vowed an authentic African

nationalism. They envisioned a liberated South Africa, or as they would say

Azania, and this would only occur through a mental revolution.

Methodist lay preacher and PAC leader Robert Sobukwe advocated a

spirituality drawing on Christian and African religious resources that would:

> deny the significance of the color distinctions that the apartheid regime
> had made on the basis of apartheid...and claim.... for the African majority
> the right to carry on its own struggle for national liberation.[55]

As a group, the PAC realized the immediate impact of their blackness in the

oppressive nature of South Africa. Influenced by the work of Anton Lembede

and Pan-Africanists George Padmore and Marcus Garvey, Sobukwe recognized

that race and identity were inextricably linked in sacred loyalty to the land and

that cultural unification must occur prior to any notions of non-racialism.

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Due to the continued brutality of apartheid and the unyielding response of the South African government and church, the ANC and PAC both moved to armed resistance through the military wings of Umkhonto we Sizwe and Poqo. Beginning in the early 1960s, acts of sabotage, bombings, and killings of whites were planned, but executed in minimal fashion. As Nelson Mandela reasoned, "it was only when all else had failed, when all channels of peaceful protest had been barred to us...that the decision was made to embark upon violent forms of political struggle."[56] In fact, Poqo utilized its church, Qamatha, comprising Xhosa-speaking Christians and adherents of ancestral religion, "to work toward an apocalyptic overthrow of colonial domination."[57]

The ANC and PAC both examined the spiritual element within their actions in the liberation movement. Spirituality in South Africa was deeply ingrained in the soul of the people and the reluctant use of Christianity as a tool in this holistic effort for liberation ceased with the evolving black consciousness philosophy. Mgebwi Levin Snail writes in *The Antecedents and the Emergence of the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa-Its Ideology and Organization* how the BCM fully harnessed and redefined Christianity for a psycho-social liberation experience.

> The black consciousness movement developed directly from the forum offered by the church and the University Christian Movement, unlike the PAC and ANC, which paid very little attention to a theology which was called Black Theology. The ANC and PAC never tried to challenge seriously the effects of Christianity on the black people. The BCM on the other hand worked out a theology, based on Christianity, with the intention of generating hope in the black population.[58]

Black consciousness utilized Christianity as an active theological tool unifying ontology and religion. Lembede's philosophy of African nationalism influenced black consciousness thought primarily through his advocacy of a holistic renewal of African concepts. His ideals sought the merging of Christianity and African traditional religions, and once again reaffirmed the culture of black South Africa. The PAC and its focus on Africa for the Africans yielded a posture of self-reliance later displayed in black consciousness activity. Other instances of resistance such as the philosophies of Negritude, militant labor unions, defiance campaigns, and other African countries' struggles and victories for independence from colonialism in the 1950s and 1960s all contributed to the black consciousness goals of cultural awareness, social protest, and progression towards a multi-racial South Africa.

Christian Organizations

The Africanist influence in the liberation struggle was ingrained in the black communities in South Africa. I open this section with a quote from Colin Collins of the University Christian Movement that ties together some of the influences on black consciousness that we have mentioned thus far. Collins writes:

> The ideology of the black consciousness movement was initially influenced by the black power movement of the United States. Primarily, however, it was the result of a long and continued history of Africanism having its roots in the Pan-Africanism of Garvey and Dubois and later the Ethiopian war with Italy and the liberation of the first African state of Ghana under Nkrumah. It came at the end of a long line of Africanist thought with its religious dimensions in the speeches of Anton Lembede, the Congress Youth League and finally the Pan African Congress. Also what was thought to be communism was no more than the communitarianism of African society as promoted by Tanzania's Julius

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Nyerere and an egalitarianism that was largely influenced by the Christianity of the people in the United Christian Movement.[59]

An activist spirit of Christianity came through the dialogue of religious

consciousness and social inequities that began taking place on college campuses.

These black college students were intellectually astute, politically active, and

increasingly gaining support from Christian student organizations. In *The World*

Student Christian Federation (WSCF) Journal, Colin Collins explains the UCM's

history and its linkages with the South African Student Organization (SASO) and

Steve Biko.[60] He explains that the English speaking leaders within the Student

Christian Association (SCA-high school group of Anglican whites from Dutch

reformed church and English speaking members who were largely Methodists and

Anglicans) and later within the African and Coloured SCA, commenced

conversations with officials in the National Catholic Federation of Students

(NCFS) and the Anglican Federation of Students (AFS). The basic thrust of those

group meetings was the promotion of a fairly simple belief in a multi-racial

society, a desire to bring students together to promote this end, and an acceptance

that the eradication of apartheid could only be done across denominational lines in

an ecumenical movement. Many meetings were held during 1966, culminating in

the December Rossettenville conference and then the first UCM conference held

in Grahamstown in July 1967.

> Thus the original thrust to form the UCM was from a group of white
> English speaking Protestants and Catholics who sought to find a meaning
> to unity and social justice in a racially divided apartheid South
> Africa…There was a need for a united ecumenical movement and so the
> UCM was formed mainly out of the old SCA and members of the NCFS
> (National Catholic Federation of Students) and AFS (Anglican Federation
> of Students). The UCM was formed in 1966. The South African Student

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Association was conceived from the UCM in July 1968. Steve Biko was a founding member of the UCM and SASO-the parent organization of the BCM operation.[61]

Former missionary and personal religious counselor to Desmond Tutu, Bernard Spong echoes the point that the University Christian Movement influenced black consciousness in its Christian values along with personal attributes of self-esteem, values, and worth.

> One of the great movements that helped the black consciousness movement was the University Christian Movement. It began through some students and some of the pastors in the universities. So it was a way in which a lot of the initial thinking about black consciousness arose out of an organization like the UCM and through the teachings of value and worth of people whether they are black, white, or whatever. So when people like Biko and Basil Moore took it they were able to say blackness is worth and I've got to say this because white people are making me less than them.[62]

Another Christian organization that influenced and supported the black consciousness movement was the Christian Institute organized by Beyers Naude. The irony of Beyers Naude's work is that he was a former member of the Broederband, a clandestine group of intellectually elitist Afrikaners who supported apartheid activities. Although Biko remained leery of Naude's transformation, he could not deny the work of the organization.

Projects and publications that helped to promote black theology in South Africa and abroad was one of the aims of Naude's organization. The Institute helped support the African Independent Church's Association (AICA), whose purpose was to give theological training (and consciousness training from SASO) to the ministers of these churches. The Interdenominational African Minister's Association (IDAMASA) worked in the same fashion.

Certainly, Naude's former comrades were not pleased with this activity and the Institute was under tireless scrutiny. "The South African Government's action against the Christian Institute, and the whites involved with it, can only be explained by the fact that the institute was perhaps the most voluble and effective organization, led by whites, which supported the BCM"[63]

In addition to Christian student organizations, Eddie Makue, Director of Justice Ministries for the South African Council of Churches, believes that one of the rarely mentioned influences of black consciousness and religious thought was the role of the missionary schools. Students who were fortunate enough to receive this education often infused the Africanist philosophies with the missionaries' religious education. Makue asserts:

> The growth of the movement was also due to the missionary schools that existed at that time and the type of education that the missionary schools were able to provide. Whereas the formal government education was meant to keep the black man subjugated. The education provided by the missionary schools was of a higher standard and thus we find that the black intelligentsia were developed at that time....they have in one way or another related with the missionary schools. Therefore we find our heroes of today making reference to the missionary schools. Of the political leadership the older generation would praise the missionary schools for the rights the missionary schools allowed them to enjoy.[64]

Within this section, a historical backdrop of the three primary influences of black consciousness is offered. The BCM benefited from the black power ideology and its emphasis on mass mobilization, cultural awareness, and political empowerment. This proved very timely within the legalized South African classification system based on race. The sacrifices of the contributors of Africanist philosophy and the momentum therein were also instrumental in the BCM's being prepared to be propelled into the next phase of the struggle. These

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two influences, integrated with the various Christian organizations, helped to develop and support the themes of cultural awareness, African determinism, political empowerment, and Christian spirituality. These combined forces of the BCM led this righteous struggle.

Within this chapter, an outline for a coherent understanding of the black power and black consciousness philosophies has been established. Black Power and its early beginnings as the beloved community is useful information in looking at the path traveled and transformation of SNCC. From nonviolence to progressive and revolutionary tactics, Black Power's contemporary and historical influences played a vital role in this philosophy's formation. Moreover, black consciousness and its modest beginnings on college campuses grew into a movement that would stimulate the South African landscape. Their ANC and PAC predecessors offered political philosophies and models of resistance which allowed for black consciousness to chart its own course that comprehensively reflected the efforts of both programs as well as other experiences.

An adequate backdrop has been provided in which to move into the next chapter. Theology's current relevance in this era opens the discussion providing a brief contextualization of the religious climate in the United States. This third chapter proceeds by analyzing the ideology of black power which locates itself within the elements of a separatist agenda, black power affirmations and rhetoric, and goals of political modernization.

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NOTES

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[11] Steve Biko, *I Write What I Like.* p. 171.

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CHAPTER THREE

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are not only created equal and endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights among which are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness, but that when this equality and these rights are deliberately and consistently refused, withheld or abnegated, men are bound by self-respect and honor to rise up in righteous indignation to secure them.

> The Black Declaration of Independence
> National Council of Black Churchmen
> July 4, 1970

Struggle was the key concept of the civil rights era. In the United States, where an unspoken white Christian nationalism was the norm, black individuals were attempting to assert their rightful place in society. The civil rights movement seemed to be the mechanism through which this goal was to be successfully achieved. However, many blacks felt disheartened by the moderate position and temperament of the current civil rights leaders. The black populace, manifestly disengaged from both political and economic empowerment, required an aggressive agenda in order to establish a civil rights concord.

This chapter begins by examining Christianity in America during this tumultuous time of the late 1960s. For the purpose of contextualization, it is necessary first to examine America's religious heritage, because the challenge to America's social norms were connected and extracted from a re-visioning of this history. Secondly, the ideological elements of black power are introduced and examined. Chapter two provided the background for an adequate understanding of how the tenets of an affirmation of black culture and humanity, and how political empowerment and separatism were developed. This chapter builds on

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the previous chapter's introduction and fully examines the specifics of black power philosophy. Lastly, the hypothesized dialogue between Christian religion and black power philosophy is introduced. The dialectical relationship between black power ideology and the theological themes emanating from the black context is analyzed in the voice of African American theologians.

Christianity and Power: A Theology of White Christian Nationalism

White Christian nationalism or Euro-centric theology in America existed long before the civil rights era. A strand of Christian thought in early America was one that promoted both white superiority and black inferiority through a denigration of black culture and humanity. By utilizing Christianity as the crux for subservience and obedience to man, socially defining assumptions of white American cultural privilege and dominance were accepted. Enslaved Africans/blacks were exposed to the hypocrisy of this interpretation of Christianity. Slaves were taught that their culture and traditions were pagan, that they were 3/5s human, and that their white masters had autonomy, while they had no self-directing freedoms. In 1786, Jupiter Hammond wrote, "Here is a plain command of God for us to obey our masters. It may seem hard for us, if we think our masters wrong in holding us slaves, to obey in all things, but who of us dare dispute with God!" He has commanded us to obey, and we ought to do it cheerfully, and freely."[1] Such assumptions often reflected a belief that God created this situation, it was predestined, and that blacks should acquiesce.

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There were obvious and distinct discrepancies between the actual Word of God and the religion practiced by many whites. A key distortion of the Christianity observed by enslaved blacks was that white spirituality was often disengaged from the believer. The slaves, having been accustomed to the spirituality of their forefathers and the practice that recognized religion in all aspects of one's existence, were confused by the apparent dual assignment of spiritual value in American Christianity. Deotis Roberts expressed this thought about whites and religion:

> Salvation for many whites has been and still is a partial experience. It is at once individual and otherworldly....The split between soul and body, between the sacred and the secular, and between this life and the next has been highly exploited by white racists. Blacks have always known the inconsistency between spiritual freedom and physical bondage. [2]

Because of the color of their skin, blacks were dehumanized and treated as chattel. The religious passages that spoke of obedience and servitude were used to justify the inequity of the treatment they received from their white Christian counterparts. Their unjust earthly treatment was accepted as the notion of achieving one's heavenly salvation was stressed as the top priority. Albert Raboteau notes how missionaries often, in order to encourage slaves to commit to a spirituality of heavenly salvation while sacrificing earthly freedom, persuaded slaves to take such an oath:

> You declare in the presence of God and before this congregation that you do not ask for the holy baptism out of any design to free yourself from the duty and obedience that you owe to your master while you live, but merely for the good of your soul and to partake of the graces and blessings promised to the members of the church of Jesus Christ. [3]

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The system of slavery restricted and stifled blacks' spiritual freedom. For

a long period, blacks were only allowed to worship under the supervision of the

slave master. Dwight Hopkins writes:

> White theology forced its domination upon black life by maintaining
> ruthless control and rendering slaves subservient to white humanity. First,
> the practice of white slave masters' Christianity restricted African
> Americans' access to an independent encounter with religion.[4]

The Great Awakening, Enlightenment, and American Revolution served

as periods of increased religious insight and reflection. The Great Awakening

(primarily 1730-1770) stressed an experiential and emotional religion and the

Enlightenment, which encompassed much of the same time frame, celebrated

reason and brought forth presumptions of human equality. The American

Revolution revealed the obvious hypocrisy of the colonists as they struggled for

liberty from British authority while simultaneously oppressing Africans held in

slavery. Many acknowledged these societal contradictions and inequities

allowing for free blacks and slaves to worship independently. Religion for blacks

was now open to a new dimension.

Independent black religious leaders preached about morality and

maintaining a soulful alignment with the will of the Lord. Raboteau writes:

> Through their work with moral reform, self-help, and benevolent societies,
> black ministers emphasized the importance or moral behavior and self-
> respect. Moreover, they were well aware that the cause of antislavery was
> linked to the moral respectability of the free black communities...Moral
> behavior, then, became all the more important to free blacks as proof of
> their equality to white people and their ability to succeed when given the
> same opportunity as white people.[5]

This posture of assimilation led some to preach to the contrary. This alternative

message emphasized African traditional religious ideals. These religious

abolitionists reflected on a full humanity recognizing that their oppression was not

God's will. Harnessing the Christian religion as a tool to reexamine their

situation, individuals such as Richard Allen, Nat Turner, and Henry Highland

Garnett served as popular examples of this changing direction in religion.

Although slavery had been constitutionally abolished with the final

ratification of the 13th amendment in 1865, the religious climate remained

relatively unchanged in the twentieth century. Spoken and unspoken ideals of

subservience and inferiority between the black and white races were still

prevalent. The God that the white man had created still existed. Williams and

Dixie would recount black sentiment about God not caring about their woes and

"... about the injustices perpetrated in God's name. Some blacks concluded that

they did not get the answers they needed because they were petitioning the wrong

god."[6] The repetitious imaging of a white Jesus Christ as well as subliminal

messages of whites' God given authority to govern the affairs of all men

supported these societal standards and assumptions.

To achieve integration and the full inclusion of black participation, it

became necessary to confront white Christian nationalism. The civil rights era

acknowledged these unequal standards and assumptions. Subsequently, a trend

had been established in black religion that attempted to persuade the white-

dominated culture of America to think differently in regard to God's role in

society. Protest tactics, tempered with biblical truths such as loving thy neighbor,

unconditional forgiveness, and turning the other cheek, were the methods of

moral suasion commonly utilized in pursuit of achieving integration into

American society. The nonviolence of the civil rights era comprised an appealing

approach in confronting the system by using Christianity to take the moral high

road. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was instrumental in leading such a charge,

arguing that "nonviolence was not simply a political tactic, it is a way of life, the

perfect method for translating Christian love into social action.[7]

In the early years of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

(SNCC), the students developed their mission statement using the social action

that confronted the standards and assumptions of America based on the Christian

faith. James Lawson of SNCC reflected these intentions in the organization's

statement of purpose:

> We affirm the philosophical or religious ideal of nonviolence as the foundation of our purpose, the presupposition of our faith, and the manner of our action. Nonviolence as it grows from Judaic-Christian traditions seeks a social order of justice permeated by love. Integration of human endeavor represents the crucial first step towards such a society.
> Through nonviolence, courage displaces fear; love transforms hate. Acceptance dissipates prejudice; hope ends despair. Peace dominates war; faith reconciles doubt. Mutual regard cancels enmity. Justice for all overthrows injustice. The redemptive community supersedes systems of gross social immorality.
> Love is the central motif of nonviolence. Love is the force by which God binds man to himself and man to man. Such love goes to the extreme; it remains loving and forgiving even in the midst of hostility. It matches the capacity of evil to inflict suffering with an even more enduring capacity to absorb evil, all the while persisting in love.
> By appealing to a conscience and standing on the moral nature of human existence, nonviolence nurtures the atmosphere in which reconciliation and justice become actual possibilities.[8]

Although SNCC members saw their organization as independent of the Southern

Christian Leadership Conference, the National Association for the Advancement

of Colored People, and other moderate nonviolent groups, they were still highly

influenced by the tactics of these groups' leadership. The nonviolent philosophy

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was utilized by most civil rights organizations of the time, as Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had been an exemplar model of the philosophy out of his strong appreciation and admiration of the work of Mahatma Gandhi. As a philosophy, nonviolence challenged white Christians to live true to the ideals of love and justice for all human beings.

In the eyes of the black moderates, nonviolence and integration was the will of God. Through the suffering and the unconditional love displayed in the face of hurt, harm, and danger, nonviolence, as a philosophy, was progressive. However progressive, the philosophy maintained its religious and moral undertones. As a tactic, it was a direct, yet non-confrontational attack on the injustices within society. Students in the movement met injustice head on to display and encourage integration.

To many, nonviolence was perceived as an unspoken, applied act of Christianity. It was regarded by students as a divine mandate for these particular times. SNCC member, Clayborne Carson, writes:

> Nonviolent tactics, particularly when accompanied by a rationale based on Christian principles, offered black students an appealing combination of rewards: a sense of moral superiority, an emotional release through militancy, and a possibility of achieving desegregation.[9]

The students from Nashville and other parts of the South expressed an affinity for the perceived relationship between Godly living and nonviolence. Carson remembers "though coming from varied backgrounds, the Nashville activists shared a commitment not simply to desegregation but also to Gandhiism and to the Christian ideal of the beloved community".[10] SNCC veteran Diane Nash, raised as a Catholic, "viewed the desegregation movement as applied theology

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designed to bring about a climate in which there is appreciation of the dignity of

man and in which each individual is free to grow and produce to his fullest

capacity."[11]

In the face of a racist system that proclaimed Christian religiosity, black

students in SNCC contrasted their Jesus Christ as one who acted, and when

necessary, suffered for that which is right and good. Their selfless acts of

nonviolence would ultimately contribute to the progression of civil rights

legislation and a growing national and international support base for a more

equitable and just society. America's white Christian nationalism was being

challenged to make its actions consistent with its words.

Black Power: Ideological Elements

Some SNCC members would soon grow impatient with the insults,

injuries, and tragedy of this nonviolent philosophy's inability to quell the brutality

of racial oppression. SNCC veteran, Kwame Ture, and others began to believe

that they lost respect and dignity for themselves by continuing to utilize this

approach with such slow and limited progress. The level of frustration escalated

as blacks continued to experience mistreatment and brutality. Such atrocities

were particularly horrific in the traditionally southern United States because

blacks and sympathetic whites were often killed for their participation in civil

rights activities, while those committing the acts were rarely brought to justice.

Many students believed that it was time for blacks to get some power.

Disenchantment within SNCC grew consequent to the lack of progress

coupled with a growing intolerance for the brutality that had to be endured in the

employment of a nonviolent approach. Bernard Conn of Howard University's

Hilltop student newspaper wrote of these times:

> The new sophistication of the movement is for some, frighteningly distant
> from the "moral victory" that they had envisioned. But it has become
> increasingly clear that the problems of hardcore unemployment, inferior
> education and the declining labor market cannot be solved solely in the
> context of moral persuasion. It is with this view that the student
> movement is approaching the task of radically changing our society.[12]

The students began to see the endless possibilities of black power. Blacks' role in

the social order of America was being debated. Not only socially, but in a

religious sense, blacks were once again reexamining their response to white

racism. Milton Sernett writes that "although considerable ambivalence existed

about simply baptizing the secular nationalism"[13], progressive clergy were

coming on board teaching that God was on the side of the oppressed and that the

black man must demand justice. The developing new theology sought to

complement the cause of black power. Subsequently, this philosophy which was

birthed out of select members of SNCC sought to take the civil rights movement

in a totally new direction. This direction led to a realization that God takes care

of those who take care of themselves by realizing their inherent value and

demanding to be treated with nothing less than the respect that any human being

deserves.

Black power began to formulate a secular and religious critique of the

social and theological practices existing within mainstream America and civil

rights moderates. Many advocates of this philosophy challenged the white

theology which often preached that suffering amidst injustice was what God

commanded. Black power, in religious circles, sought to refocus itself on

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developing a culturally confident spiritual consciousness that would dismantle

assumed social preconceptions that emanated from white theology. This black

theology stood in opposition to the seemingly passive and forgiving religion of

the civil rights movement. Cain Hope Felder summarizes this opening section,

having spoken to black power and the new direction of the movement:

> The civil rights movement was taken over by the black consciousness and
> black power movement for better and for worse. For better in the sense
> that it properly introduced a new set of questions in terms of cultural and
> social identity and it reconnected us with Africa. The civil rights
> movement didn't do anything like that. But I think that insofar as the civil
> rights movement did show the effectiveness of strategic nonviolence and
> mass mobilization, making the moral appeal, and then validating that
> moral appeal by self sacrificial acceptance of pain, arrest, and suffering.
> That was an image that was very powerful. However, the goal was very
> limited and I think by the black power movement coming in raising the
> demands on economic equality, adding the cultural identity question,
> (slogans such as I'm black and I'm proud, black power) it did something
> very important in that it challenged the value of the white standard, the
> white identity standard. It made that which was the negative, it gave it a
> new positive, it valorized that which had been despised in white racist
> society. So it was this new valorization or giving of value to black, and
> the darker hue that I think was very important to help people raise their
> self esteem, to help people see that they were really not a slave people,
> that there was a great lie that had been told about them in their history.[14]

This section of the work analyzes the key ideological elements of the

black power movement that emerged from this transitional discourse. These

elements emphasize the secular components of the philosophy. In itself, the

slogan of black power became a powerful weapon against the forces of

oppression. This ideological element was key because it allowed blacks to

question their position within the power structure of America while

simultaneously declaring and progressing toward that goal. The affirmation of

black culture and humanity, through symbolism and rhetoric, was an essential

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tenet of the philosophy. Second was the necessity of black political unification.

In an open, democratic society, however, with questionable equal access for all

people, political modernization was necessary for equitable inclusion. These

progressives recognized their position as the underclass due to racism as well their

own inability to capitalize on their political potential and strength. Lastly, blacks

who advocated for power within their communities desired to operate

independently in their quest to do so. Proponents of black power believed that

this struggle must be developed without white contributions, thus eliminating any

remnant of dependency and recognizing the cultural understanding necessary for

the fulfillment of black power objectives. The combination of these key elements

comprised what some viewed as necessities in the pursuit of black power.

Affirmation of Black Culture and Humanity- Rhetoric and Symbolism

One of the key elements in the conscientization, humanization, and

empowerment of black people and culture existed through the rhetoric and

symbolism of the black power movement. The racist culture of white America

could not tolerate the words black and power in co-existence. Black power as a

philosophy was one thing but repeatedly hearing the statement agitated and

infuriated racist whites, while psychologically empowering many blacks. The

combination of these two words symbolized a call to consciousness of the power

of one's culture and humanity.

Prior to the black power movement, the term "black power" had been used

in civil rights protests and anti-oppression activities. Civil rights figures such as

Richard Wright, Paul Robeson, Jesse Clay, Adam Clayton Powell, and Willie

Ricks all made use of this slogan in their books, speeches and demonstrations. However, on June 16th, 1966 when Ture made the call at a march in Greenwood, Mississippi, both black and white people responded. "Undoubtedly, SNCC workers would have begun to use black power as a political slogan even if the Mississippi march had not occurred, but [Willie] Ricks was the first to sense the impact that could be achieved by publicly combining a racial term that previously held negative connotations with a goal that always had been beyond the reach of black people as a group."[15] The years of patient progress had come to an end and the demand for power was now evident.

Why was there so much furor over the use of this ambiguous slogan of black power? The answer lies in the varying definitions of the black power philosophy and the fact that those who opposed it could not strategically attack it. Definitions of black power were being used in an apparent attempt to extract the common denominators of the experiences of the group. Some would broadly define it as Carson does, essentially "striving to increase black control over the public decisions which affect the lives of black people."[16] Other definitions regarding racial consciousness and pride continued to develop as the movement grew. Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates point out that "the meaning of black power was debated vigorously while the movement was in progress. To some it represented blacks' insistence on racial dignity and self reliance, which was usually interpreted as economic and political independence, as well as freedom from white authority."[17] Not only in philosophical or idealist rhetoric, blacks became interested in learning more about their native land of

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Africa in a formal sense, representing images of their culture and heritage.

Encyclopedia Africana reads:

> ....Black power emphasized the cultural heritage of blacks, especially the African roots of black identity. This view encouraged study and celebration of black history and culture. In the late 1960's black college students requested curricula in black studies that explored their distinctive culture and history....Blacks often expressed a sense of cultural nationalism by wearing loose, bright- colored African garments, called dashikis, and the natural "Afro" hairstyle. [18]

Blacks began to ask themselves for answers to the dilemma of their powerlessness. They began to look at their color as a symbol of their reality. A common identity under blackness began to yield some answers to these questions. Ture believed that "color and culture were, and are, key factors in our oppression. Therefore our analysis of history and our economic analysis are rooted in these concepts."[19] So in a radical way, the words black and power orchestrated a movement of people who are proud of their skin color and desire to express their full culture and humanity. Julius Lester claims:

> The cry for BP has done more to generate black consciousness than anything else......If SNCC had said Negro Power or Colored Power, white folks would've continued sleeping easy every night. But Black Power! Black! That word. Black! Black Power meant accepting yourself as you were. Black people are beautiful, because God wouldn't make anything ugly.[20]

The new spirit adopted by many blacks revealed a pride in their race and culture, issues previously given little attention in efforts toward achieving integration. In addition to the effect on black empowerment created by the newfound cultural focus, the slogan associated with this focus dramatically affected the white population. Much of white America and a biased media perceived and promoted black power philosophy as a form of violent resistance in

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the civil rights struggle. Whites were being challenged to examine their own violent behavior because black power advocates held a commitment to self defense—no longer nonviolence. The *Register-Leader* read:

> But black power is creating a different reaction. Polls indicate a growing white reaction to Negro progress and the increasingly expressed fear that Negroes are demanding and getting too much too soon. Although, there is nothing in the term itself necessarily to suggest it, whites seem to associate black power with violence or black racism or both.[21]

The inability to determine a clear definition gave rise to excessive white caution, while the perceived power of the declaration motivated progressive blacks. For many whites, there was a concern over this philosophical thought because what they heard kept them off balance.[22]

Ture believed that SNCC and the emerging movement members had a responsibility to speak for the people of the community in a genuine, candid way. The true issues that blacks faced were brought to the forefront and expressed in the tone of the people. Ture explains:

> An organization which claims to speak for the needs of a community-as does the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee-must speak in the tone of that community, not as somebody else's buffer zone. This is the significance of Black Power as a slogan. For once black people are going to use the words they want to use-not just the words whites want to hear. And they will do this no matter how often the press tries to stop the use of the slogan by equating it with racism....[23]

Thus not only did some of the students and clergy take hold of this terminology and its ambiguous aims, but the overall black community was becoming involved. Although not all blacks agreed with the philosophy, Carson informed us that the oppressed communities championed the cause simply because they believed that if the establishment was so adamantly against the

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concept of black power, there must be something good about it. This was evident in the way the press beat black power down all the while encouraging more black folk's involvement and giving the discussion more and more exposure.[24]

Black power addressed the brainwashing and inferiority complexes that Malcolm X spoke of as well as the tension of WEB Dubois "double consciousness."[25] Cultural proponents, such as black power advocate Malauna Ron Karenga, claimed that the word "black denoted color, culture, and consciousness. Culture was stressed because it provided identity, purpose, and direction. Culture explained who black people were, what they had to do, and how they had to do it."[26] Karenga emphasized that "going back to tradition is the first step forward" in determining one's present and future and that the outcome of the black power model was dependent on this cultural restoration. Karenga summarizes this section of the chapter:

> Politics flows from culture and not the reverse. There had to be a cultural revolution before the violent revolution. Why the initial struggle for culture? Racist minds created racist institutions. Therefore we must move against racism, not institutions. For even if we tear down the institutions, that same mind will build them up again.[27]

Black Political Modernization

Black power progressives such as Huey Newton took a somewhat disengaged approach from the popular attempt to return to African culture believing instead that blacks should focus strictly on political advancement. He felt that the loss of their own culture, which they associated with being taken captive from Africa, was an evident reality. Finding a way to rise from the Marxist oriented "underclass" of American society was a more pressing need for

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Newton. Newton asked, "How does returning to African culture and focusing on blackness as identity alleviate the political and economic suffering of the majority of the black community, the poor? We believe that culture itself will not liberate us."[28] These progressives looked toward a change in the political system.

Although Kwame Ture recognized American blacks' cultural connections to Africa, he understood that black Americans did benefit from being in a constitutionally driven, open society. With an understanding of democratic ideals, Ture knew that blacks were to be treated justly as American citizens. It would appear that capitalism, as well as racism, contributed to the plight of the black underclass. America dishonored its own Constitution through its systems of inequality and white privilege. Believing that the Constitution existed primarily for whites and the powerful, black progressives were determined to challenge the system through a disruption of the American democratic process.

Black power philosophy exposed the colonial structures that had been established in America. Within colonial systems, there was a belief that the political and governmental structures existed for the benefit of the people. However, the people were essentially powerless. *Black Power* interpreted colonialism in this way:

> Colonial subjects have their political decisions made for them by the colonial masters, and those decisions are handed down directly or through a process of 'indirect rule.' Politically, decisions which affect black lives have always been made by white people-the 'white power structure'.....American pluralism quickly becomes a monolithic structure on issues of race.[29]

As a student of Karl Marx as well as socialist thought, Ture understood that black dehumanization was not only race-based but also class-based. As long

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as blacks held no economic capital, then they held little leverage for economic

inclusion in American society.

> The economic relationship of America's black communities to the larger
> society also reflects their colonial status. The political power exercised
> over those communities goes hand in glove with the economic deprivation
> experienced by the black citizens. Historically, colonies have existed for
> the sole purpose of enriching, in one form or another, the 'colonizer'; the
> consequence is to maintain the economic dependency of the 'colonized'.[30]

Because of this inability to exist in an economic sense provided for their

non-existence in a human sense. It was evident…blacks needed political and

economic power.

As previously discussed, the way to do battle with this colonial mindset

and system was initiated through the conscientization of black culture. The next

step would be for unification toward political objectives, forcing lawmakers to

hold true to the creed of the constitution that "all men are created equal" and have

the right to be equally included in the affairs of the country. Political involvement

could cause the forcing of the hand of lawmakers to recognize the inequalities in

society. Ture believed that if this inequity went unaddressed, then blacks could

respond in mass opposition to this dysfunctional system. The methodology of

their response came in the following ways as explained by Ture:

> After a sense of community is established Ture advocated political
> modernization. Political modernization includes many things, but we
> mean by it three major concepts: (1) questioning old values and
> institutions of the society; (2) searching for new and different forms of
> political structure to solve political and economic problems; and (3)
> broadening the base of political participation to include more people in the
> decision-making process.[31]

Social politics challenged Jim Crow. Matters of unemployment,

healthcare, and housing for the black community needed to be addressed through

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the political process. Ture and Hamilton agree that "the goal of black people must not be to assimilate into middle-class America, for that class-as a whole-is without a viable conscience as regards humanity."[32] The marches for social justice could end if the political wheel included black participation. As such, continued Ture and Hamilton, "the two major political parties in this country have become non-viable entities for the legitimate representation of the real needs of masses."[33] The notion of politically and economically maintaining their own communities grew very appealing to black citizens. Black power advocates saw national and local political involvement as the only way to come to respect integration; hence political efforts such as the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and Lowndes County Freedom Organization.

At times, black power progressives encouraged that the entire American political system be destroyed. A necessary revolution in American politics is how black power advocates would have described their position. Ture writes about black power philosophy and its potential impact on politics:

> ...it presents a political framework and ideology which represents the last reasonable opportunity for this society to work out its racial problems short of prolonged destructive guerilla warfare. That such violent warfare may be unavoidable is not herein denied. But if there is the slightest chance to avoid it, the politics of black power...is seen as the only hope. [34]

From Ture's writing it is evident that there were ever evolving constructs for black political modernization. With governmental requests gone unheard, many blacks came to a place of political awareness that they needed to destroy, disrupt or establish their own system within the United States.

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Separation, Not Assimilation

Black power philosophy also encouraged a discussion of the benefits of racial separation opposed to integration within American society. The trend of the civil rights movement was for integration. Most proponents of black power asserted the need for complete separation within American society. Those coming out of the black power camp realized that there could be no cultural unification if integration, essentially assimilation, were to continue to be the objective. The common thread between the two movements was that, by and large, blacks felt they deserved to be included, without discrimination, in the political, social, educational, and economic activities of American life. Civil rights moderates believed that integration was owed to them and blacks should not retreat into isolation. To them, the prospect of assimilation was not necessarily a negative notion. Carson writes:

> In short, most scholars who studied black protest during the early 1960's insisted that continued assimilation was the only realistic aspiration for blacks. The Negro American judges his living standards, his opportunities, indeed, even judges himself, in the only cultural terms he knows-those of the United States and its people of plenty.[35]

SNCC, prior to the black power philosophy of thought, was a multi-racial organization. The black power progressives within SNCC came to desire the exclusion of all whites from the organization. Others believed that whites would better serve the liberation struggle in their own communities. Ture, who, at the time, was emerging as the leader of black power, still communicated and interacted with white radicals and liberals with the thought that democracy of an interracial blend could be established. Over time, Ture's personal philosophy

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began to change, and he challenged the material conflicts and tensions that existed regarding integration. He reasoned:

> If blacks wanted good housing or good education, integration meant leaving a black neighborhood and finding these institutions. This reinforces, among black and white, he argued, the idea that 'white' is automatically better and 'black' is by definition worse. This is why integration is a subterfuge for the maintenance of white supremacy. If blacks could gain control of their own neighborhood, each community, black and white, could define its own goals and be responsible for achieving its own standards. When both societies built the kind of communities they wanted, meaningful integration between equal, though different, communities could occur.[36]

In essence, integration would only lead to the continued perpetuation of the white societal standards that already existed. It was perceived that through integration, blacks would continually be fighting to find their place in an established society. SNCC saw this as a unique opportunity to empower the black community to fend for themselves. Many in SNCC began to see the discrepancy in working toward integration versus becoming self-reliant. Carson writes:

> We can see no long standing structures created by blacks who are emotionally, socially, politically, and economically dependent upon those individuals who are non-black. The staff hoped to awaken in blacks a sense of pride in their beauty, strength and resourcefulness; and also a meaningful sense of self respect that they can only gain when they see Black people working together accomplishing worthwhile programs- without the guidance and/or direction of non-blacks. Without this, they concluded, black people in this country will know no freedom, but only more subtle forms of slavery.[37]

Blacks had to become unified and self reliant. One of the popular black power acronyms was T.C.B. which meant "taking care of our own business." In order to do this, they could not depend on white involvement. Ture advocated:

> The concept of black power rests on a fundamental premise: Before a group can enter the open society, it must first close ranks. By this we mean that group solidarity is necessary before a group can operate

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effectively from a bargaining position of strength in a pluralistic society. Traditionally, each new ethnic group in this society has found the route to social and political viability through the organization of its own institutions with which to represent its needs within the larger society.[38]

Black power progressives recalled the African struggles for independence as a model to emulate. The leadership of Kwame Nkrumah, Sekou Toure, and Kenneth Kaunda served as the inspiration for radical black leadership in the United States. This point is observed in Ture's *Stokely Speaks*:

> Only black people can convey the revolutionary idea that black people are able to do things themselves. This is one reason Africa has such importance: the reality of black men ruling their own nations gives blacks elsewhere a sense of possibility, of power, which they do not now have.[39]

This coalescence of blackness was not about superiority or inferiority, but merely about cultural solidarity and unification. C. Freeman Sleeper describes this concept of separation:

> ...it was a rejection not of white help but of white leadership. It is a rejection not of white money but of the white control over the way in which that money is used...it is a rejection not of integration per se, but of integration in those ways in which whites have always tended to misunderstand it: integration as tokenism and integration as assimilation.[40]

Others would debate about white liberals' motives. Ture would use a scenario of a black man having a gun pulled on him by a white man to illustrate his thoughts on white liberal involvement.

> The only way a white liberal could help is either to get a gun and shoot the man with the gun, or join the fellow who doesn't have a gun and both of us gang up on the man with the gun. But white liberals never do that. When the man has the gun, they walk around him and they come to the victim, and they say "Can I help you?". And what they mean is 'help you adjust to the situation with the man who has the gun on you'...So that if indeed white liberals are going to help, their only job is to get the gun from the man and talk to him, because he is in fact a sick man.[41]

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Some white liberals and clergy were beginning to understand and sympathize with the new expectations of progressive blacks. However, the capitalist structure and superiority complexes ultimately led to their retreat to paternalist conditions and habits. Nonetheless, the pressure applied by the movement through separation continued to enlighten, stimulate, and agitate the consciousness of people, both black and white.

Through these three elements - the affirmation of black culture and humanity, political modernization, and the call for separate development and solidarity - this philosophy initiated a dialogue and action toward the goals of power attainment. The black power terminology initiated the theme of the movement with the growing response of black theology challenging the thinking of white and black religious communities. Political modernization, equally separation, were essential elements as they sought true democratic inclusion as well as reinforcing mental and physical self-reliance and the ability to operate independently of white leadership or support. In the next section, these ideological elements are examined as a complement and extension of the black religious perspective.

Black Theology: Christian Religion Dialogues with Black Power

With the transition from civil rights to black power, black clergy sought to find their way through the fray of the new social politics. The challenge to white supremacy had begun to emphasize a new set of objectives and clergy needed to ascertain where God stood in this present condition. Clergy were confronted with unique opportunities to theologize black power. Just as the Christian and moral

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imperative of love and suffering co-existed earlier in the civil rights movement,

now black power was expressed through religious ideals. Gayraud Wilmore

explains:

> We as Christians turned toward black power as an expression of God's
> will for justice in American society. Through the implementation of
> responsible power to change the society, to rid the society of segregation
> and discrimination and to open it up to liberate blacks and other oppressed
> minorities........ It gave ministers/the church an extraordinary
> unprecedented role in the struggle to talk to secular people both white and
> black in the midst of an urban crisis.[42]

The progressive clergy brought God into the debate, preaching that God called for

the recognition of black culture and humanity through the black power

philosophy. God was a God of justice and justice in America could only be

established through the acquisition of power. This religious power in humanity

was the necessary power to change society.

Evolving out of the hostile American social climate and the civil rights

movement and its Christian and moral orientation, black power philosophy came

to emphasize some of its own religious undertones. From a spiritual perspective,

this new theology was a belief that God was on the side of the oppressed. Black

power clergy such as James Cone, Deotis Roberts, Gayraud Wilmore, and Albert

Cleage put forth the notion that God sided with the underdog and that suffering to

become human was no longer acceptable.

They contended that humanity must be defended because the preservation

of humanity is existence in itself. From a Biblical perspective, this theology also

perceived Jesus Christ as a fighter for liberation. This theology recognized that

Jesus turned the other cheek and forgave. However, Jesus was seen as one who

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challenged the social norms of his time such as talking with the Samaritan woman or throwing money changers out of the temple. These and other progressive religious beliefs challenged the white theological structures to commit to equality for all human beings or forfeit their own Christianity. Black power clergy used black theology for the creation of a resistance religion. It served as a tool to conscientize the people to affirm their black humanity and work toward the betterment of their lives today—not just their salvation tomorrow.

Redefining their spiritual and cultural consciousness, black power clergy began to put forth a message that interpreted the Bible from the perspective of the black experience. Deotis Roberts professed, "The significance of the present black theological movement is that for the first time black theologians are doing their own thinking. We are searching the scriptures and reflecting upon the faith in light of our heritage, our needs, and our concerns."[43]

The National Council of Negro Churchmen pioneered the religious discussion of black power publishing a statement in the *New York Times* backing the black power concept. The group proclaimed that black power was a reaction to the "assumption that white people are justified in getting what they want through the use of power, but that Negro Americans must, wither by nature or circumstances, make their appeal only through conscience."[44] This group of young ministers and black academic theologians initiated a formal religious discourse, in which Christianity is viewed completely from the black context. This would be the beginning of black theological study.

In this section of the chapter, the researcher reviews the work of various African American theologians.[45] An analysis of their theological perspectives is outlined in relation to the elements of black power that were examined in the previous section. Each theologian's work will be analyzed for the view(s) in which they best articulate the black power/black theology question.

James Cone

With all due respect and fairness, one has to begin a discussion of black theological relevance with the work of James Cone. Cone's *Black Theology and Black Power* initiated a full dialogue that examined the Christian experience and black power secular philosophy. Cone's main premise was to seek political and economic liberation for blacks and reexamine black religion from the position of the oppressed.

Cone's theology spoke to political interventions to eliminate racist and discriminatory activity or the total disruption of societal norms in an effort toward equality. His efforts were geared toward seeing Jesus as one of the oppressed and one who fights to challenge the status quo. Cone recognized the need for power, as opposed to solely love, within black religion. He writes, "the new black man refuses to speak of love without justice and power. Love without the power to guarantee justice in human relations is meaningless."[46] His work was necessary for examination due to its relevance in looking at the Word of God as the model for a more just society. Dwight Hopkins acknowledges this thought in Cone's work:

> Cone subscribed to a black theology that sought power for oppressed
> black people, a rearrangement of power to eliminate racist oppression and

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to enhance black freedom...Cone professed a religion whose primary theological cornerstone undergirded the political eradication of racial discrimination.[47]

Cone's work included a point of view representative of Paul Tillich's work in relation to the "power of being." Cone advocated that God created distinct differences between man and the animals. When a man has no power, he is reduced to the position of a controlled being, or non-being. In *Black Theology and Black Power,* he writes:

> As long as man is a slave to another power, he is not free to serve God with mature responsibility. He is not free to become what he is-human. Freedom is indeed what distinguishes man from animals and plants. In the case of animals and plants nature not only appoints the destiny but it alone carries it out...In the case of man, however, nature provides only the destiny and leaves it to him to carry it out. Black Power means black people carrying out their own destiny.[48]

Tillich's approach examines one's quest for humanity as an individual as well as humanity as social responsibility. This responsibility and right comes through God, who authorizes the privilege of freedom. Hopkins expands on Cone's perspective:

> The freedom of God is 'the source and content of human freedom.' Grounded in divine freedom (meaning God's own free choice to create humans in freedom and to be with them in the realization of freedom and liberation in history), black liberation or black freedom denotes the divine will to execute human emancipation. The imago dei (God who is freedom in being, will, and function) mandates humanity's created state and telos. At the same time, one cannot have divine freedom-and human freedom-without divine justice. Freedom or liberation accompanies justice.[49]

This freedom desired and responsibility required was, according to Cone, the work of the oppressed through their religious beliefs and ideals. "Christian freedom means being a slave for Christ in order to do his will. Again this is no easy life; it is a life of suffering because the world and Christ are in constant

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conflict. To be free in Christ is to be against the world."[50] The three assertions

related to this working freedom are that the (1) work of Christ is about liberation,

(2) the oppressed liberate the oppressor in society, (3) and that this work is

burdensome and risky, producing anxiety and conflict.

Cone sees liberation only through the release of the hold of political and

economic oppression. His work reflects a belief in the necessity of changing the

system by any means necessary to realize true freedom for all God's children. He

writes:

> Christ is black, therefore, not because of some cultural or psychological
> need of black people, but because and only because Christ really enters
> into our world where the poor, the despised, and the black are, disclosing
> that is with them, enduring their humiliation and pain and transforming
> oppressed slaves into liberated servants.[51]

Cone's original thesis saw Jesus Christ as black because of his position in

society. Through Christ's oppression, blacks were able to reflect upon their own

experience. Hopkins writes that Cone believed "Christ is black because of how

Christ was revealed and because of where Christ seeks to be."[52] Christ had a

responsibility to position himself to fight oppression. The Bible's story of Jesus'

oppression is the contemporary story of blacks' oppression. Cone viewed the

recognition of oppression and Christ's blackness as essential for black religion.

He wrote:

> To suggest that Christ has taken on a black skin is not theological
> emotionalism…Black is holy, that is, it is a symbol of God's presence in
> history on behalf of the oppressed man. Where there is black, there is
> oppression; but blacks can be assured that where there is blackness, there
> is Christ who has taken on blackness so that what is evil in men's eyes
> might become good. Therefore Christ is black because he is oppressed,
> and oppressed because he is black.[53]

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Cone's later work shifted so that the focus was on Jesus as oppressed and less on his skin color.

> James Cone...took the brunt of the criticism that blackness which is nothing more than skin color is an unacceptable basis for a Christian theology...Cone develops a response through a reference to Paul Tillich's description of the symbolic nature of all theological discourse. The focus on blackness does not mean that only blacks suffer as victims in a racist society, but that blackness is an ontological symbol and a visible reality which best describes what oppression means in America...Blackness, then, stands for all victims of oppression who realize that their humanity is inseparable from man's liberation from whiteness.[54]

Cone wants to be certain to validate his thoughts on theological grounds of scripture, tradition, and social existence as well as the content of Jesus life. Being in a position of seeing Jesus as a Jew, Cone recognized Jesus was oppressed. In his perception, this once again, signified Jesus' blackness.

This message serves as an affirmation to black culture that Jesus Christ has relevance in their lives because of his continued fight against the forces of oppression and injustice. Being Christ-like, to Cone, meant realizing your place in society and joining in the fight to eradicate the injustices. He added "that until he [one] accepts himself as a being of God in all of its physical blackness, he can love neither God nor his neighbor."[55] Cone did not devote a lot of time to issues of complete separation, however he did recognize that blacks must first become self-reconciled prior to reconciliation with whites. Cone suggested that reconciliation must be driven by black interests and whites forgiveness has to come through the newly liberated. Hopkins summarizes Cone's thoughts:

> In order to yield meaningful and productive reconciliation, only the black community can set the conditions for reconciliation...Cone describes two types of reconciliation-objective and subjective. Because Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose from the dead, the devil and satanic forces

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experienced defeat. The cross-resurrection triumph manifests the objective reconciliation. Now that God has objectively liberated the oppressed from the finality of demonic clutches such as white racism, oppressed humanity (black people) must assume its responsibility to subjectively fight with God in Christ against injustice.[56]

Cone simply sought a decision to side with the oppressed or with the power structure. He posited that "there is no place in this war of liberation for nice white people who want to avoid taking sides and remain friends with both the racists and the Negro. To hear the Word is to decide: Are you with us or against us?...If the hearing of the Word and the encounter with the Spirit do not convict you, then talk will be of little avail."[57]

From the black perspective, Cone understood that the terms of reconciliation, as well as the majority of the action, would have to come from blacks. He wrote that some form of separation was inevitable:

> ...separation is a fact of life. The ghettos of this country are ample proof that white folks intend to keep it that way. Thus it is absurd to talk about reconciliation to people who are determined to separate us for the purpose of oppression. Our task, then, is to begin to develop structures of behavior that do not depend on white folks goodwill. We must recognize that our liberation begins and ends with the decisions we make and the actions we take to implement them. All talk about reconciliation with white oppressors, with mutual dialogue about its meaning, has no place in black power or black theology.[58]

Albert Cleage

Albert Cleage argued for total political, economic, and cultural independence from white America. His primary focus was to establish a black nation as a power base from which blacks could deal with white racism. Cleage had a Marxist orientation. He believed that the blacks' position as the powerless underclass could only be overcome through an existence that was independent of

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the white power structure. Separation under Christianity would be the priority of

his work as he desired the independence and autonomy of a black nation.

Albert Cleage, a self-proclaimed black Christian nationalist, is the most

radical spokesmen with respect to the aims of the progressive black clergy. He

desired racial separation because of the many discrepancies in white American

theology. He asserted that the white theological community believed in God, but

that their actions never reflected their beliefs. Therefore, Cleage contended that

blacks and whites must not be serving the same God or the actions related to

one's beliefs would be consistent. He argued:

> Our theology determines the nature of our commitment. Their theology
> determines the nature of their commitment. We both say that we are
> followers of Jesus but obviously we are not following the same Jesus. We
> follow a black Jesus who was a revolutionary leader fighting for the
> liberation of the black nation, Israel. They follow a white Jesus who was
> used by God to wash mankind in the blood of the Lamb to accomplish
> individual salvation. When we say "committed to Christ," we do not both
> mean the same thing.[59]

He added that continual suffering is not the plan that God has in store for the lives

of black people. However, white theology taught blacks that overcoming

suffering through love is the only way to fight oppression and claim eternal

salvation. Cleage explained further:

> The old theology teaches you that your suffering is redemptive. You feel
> guilty when you fight back, when you try to get up, or when you try to hit
> back. You feel that there is something wrong with you, fighting when you
> ought to be praying. You are bound hand and foot by your slave theology.
> The old (white Christian) theology is an integrationist theology which
> leads Black men to follow the dream of integration wherever it may lead.
> Suffering is redemptive-if the black man can suffer enough, the white
> many may be persuaded to love him. The new (black) theology says that
> this is total absurdity. The black mans acceptance of indignity leads the
> black man to despise and hate him (self) the more. The only possibility of

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redemption for either the powerful or the powerless lies in confrontation and conflict.[60]

Because of such discrepancies, Cleage understood the disenchantment that young revolutionaries had with the Christian faith that "it is a white man's religion, it is counterrevolutionary, and serves to perpetuate the black man's enslavement by teaching otherworldly escapism and distracting his attention from his powerlessness, exploitation and oppression."[61] Cleage expressed that the white theological structures perpetuated this message through their lack of participation in liberation struggles against racial or economic oppression. He asserted that many white clergy are like the young ruler who approached Jesus stating how he had obeyed all his commandments and wanted to be a follower. Jesus responded by telling the young ruler to give up all of his earthly riches and follow him. The young ruler, who had professed his commitment to the gospel, was not prepared to give up his riches and sadly he turned away. This Biblical passage serves as an example of those who are part of the white power structure. These individuals have a professed commitment to liberation for all, but are not willing to exist on the outside of the structure to work toward it. Such is the orientation from which Cleage formed his assumptions. He believed that black people cannot seriously engage in a liberation struggle until they have developed a revolutionary theology stating with authority that "black people cannot worship a white God and white Jesus and fight white people for black liberation."[62]

Along that same vein, Cleage's idea of a separate nation forced blacks to a place of autonomy that opposed reconciliation due to the long term, systematic segregation and denigration of blacks. The development of a black nation that is

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independent of the white power structure must exist before any thoughts of

reconciliation can be entertained. Cleage wrote:

> Upon the foundation of this faith we (the black Church) have undertaken
> to build a 'black nation within a nation,' following the teachings of the
> black Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. We are separatist, convinced that we
> need not be poor, disadvantaged, or exploited if we will but use of
> separation as a power base for political and economic self-determination,
> rather than permit it to be used as an instrument and symbol of our
> enslavement.[63]

Cleage's goal was to move black people from the dream of integration to an

acceptance of the necessity for separatism.

Cleage's work was very appealing to secular black power advocates who

initially criticized Christianity. He advocated a racial separation of the nation and

knew the potential for conflict was great in obtaining freedom and humanity in

America. Black power progressives were also encouraged by the fact that Cleage

re-envisioned the image Jesus Christ. According to Hopkins, "for Cleage, Jesus

was a black revolutionary Zealot, leading the fight against a white Rome in order

to realize a revolution of the black nation of Israel...Cleage hardly displays any

interest in the resurrected Christ. For him the messiahship belongs to Jesus not

because of Good Friday and Easter, but strictly as a result of Jesus' life and

earthly activity in attempting to reconstitute the black nation."[64]

Within this separate nation, Cleage believed the black church allowed for

the sustenance of black culture. Education and action centers were at the

forefront of this community centerpiece. Again, Hopkins comments:

> For Cleage, the black church will initiate liberation, the building of the
> black nation. Our basic task is bringing black people together and
> building a nation. This church (referencing his Shrine of the Black
> Madonna) is the hub of the emerging Black Nation. From it we go out in

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all directions to educate, to set up action centers. The reconstituted black church will serve as the foundation in the task of building an institutional power base.[65]

Cleage's message was also one of an awareness of identity. He believed that the black church should be leading blacks to heaven on earth (meaning establishing the black nation for better conditions) as well as heavenly salvation. Cleage put forth his opinion that too much time, money, and energy is spent in the pursuit of assuring blacks' entry into heaven, while those same souls suffer their entire lives on earth. Cleage's observation of the typical material conditions of the black life when compared to those of other races was at the forefront of his reasoning that such a separate black nation should be established.

> When it comes to political nationhood and power for blacks, Cleage describes an inevitable "disaster course" of conflict and violence between black and white. Black people want their nation, but white people refuse to make changes to allow blacks to experience dignity and justice. So the shrine of Madonna rejects nonviolence practically and philosophically. On the contrary, the black church may be forced to launch young blacks against the white enemy in a holy war for the black nation.[66]

In accordance with the tenets of the black power philosophy, Cleage also placed emphasis on the necessity of political independence. He believed that the only means for blacks to make decisions for their own well being would be through the establishment of not only their own political parties, but in fact their own nation. He argued that the only true salvation for blacks lay in focusing on a black Jesus within a separate black nation. His philosophy epitomized a stereotypical black power disposition, in that his primary care was about the welfare of the black community.

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Gayraud Wilmore

Gayraud Wilmore is considered a theologian who utilizes an African cultural orientation to inform and influence his theology. He seeks to return to what he considers the roots of what a black theology should be, emphasizing the cultural components of black religion. He espouses the belief that the influence of culture precedes political objectives or aspirations as culture dominates the way one thinks and behaves. As with black power, the cultural theological themes (identity, purpose, direction) arguably had to precede advances in politics.

Wilmore argues that black theology should not be restricted and that the black clergy needs to step out of strict religious boxes to examine the varied sources of spiritual and physical liberation. Hopkins noted that the black theology of Wilmore "is not the mere opposite of the dominant Christian theology, a black version of white classical theology. On the contrary, black theology gains its validity in plumbing the meaning of black freedom from specific black theological resources."[67]

Wilmore recognized the importance of returning to one's cultural roots in the formation of religious beliefs and purpose. He asserted that:

> To say that being black in America has little to do with skin color is true, but only a half-truth and capable of gross misunderstanding. It is possible to argue that in a world dominated by white power that is inextricable from white Christianity, being black, or identifiably "Negroid," is a unique experience that has, since the contact of African peoples with the white Christian West, produced a unique religion-closely related to, but not exclusively bound by, the classic Christian tradition. That, in fact, is the reason for the emergence of a black theology. Simply being oppressed, or psychologically and politically in empathy with the dispossessed, does not deliver one into the experience of blackness any more than putting on a blindfold delivers one into the experience of being blind.[68]

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Just as in the traditional religious heritage of Africa, Wilmore argued for the all-encompassing spirituality that included God in every aspect of their black existence. This spirituality was not just applicable to certain areas of one's existence but every aspect as no difference exists between that which is religious and that which is secular. As long as belief in freedom regulates the sources, following Wilmore's line of reasoning, the possibilities of black cultural, theological creativity seem endless. His cultural sources would include (1) lower-class black community's folk religion, (2) writings, sermons, and addresses of the black preachers and public men and women of the past, (3) traditional religions of Africa, and (4) African American life in slavery.[69]

Wilmore saw such secular and non-secular sources within his theology. Within the focus on these sources, just as an aspect of black power, the emphasis on race is not prejudice or racism but a way of fully affirming African American culture. Wilmore wrote that black theology's purpose "was not to glorify black skin color and promote a new form of black racism, but to impel a crisis of identity which could reawaken in black people a belief in their historical individuality as providential and bind the spiritual power generated by that renewed sense of people-hood to the vocation of cultural decolonization and political liberation."[70]

Lastly, with regard to culture, Hopkins provides an illustration of Wilmore's religious themes that he believes survived from Africa to today's black community: 1.) In black life, there exists no sharp dichotomy between the secular and the sacred, religion and life, 2.) Religion is pragmatic. It relates directly to

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food, shelter, economic life, childrearing and recreation, 3) When the black community speaks of the presence of God and the Spirit in its midst, it is referring to the spirit of black ancestors. These themes can be summed up as "Like Africa, the over-all black community places a premium on family and solidarity in communalism as opposed to excessive individualism."[71]

Wilmore saw politics as a secondary, or causal priority, of black liberation efforts. In his eyes, an institutional power base had been established that is controlled by whites. Blacks cannot become involved in redistributing power if they are not clear about their historical past or future objectives. In espousing a religion that allows for a holistic examination of society, Hopkins believes that blacks can begin to recognize and claim their place in this redistribution of power. Hopkins adds "for Wilmore, to see liberation primarily in political terms would narrow black people's religious ontology to political liberation in reaction to that of whites, whereas culture, employed by Wilmore, expresses a total mind-body-spirit religious way of life."[72] In an interview with Wilmore, Hopkins states that Wilmore believes "people have to appreciate and value their own traditions in art and music and literature and family life and childrearing habits and recreation and all the multi-flex aspects of human life."[73] In saying this, he believes the acquisition of politics without cultural integrity would be a one-sided victory.

Wilmore offered an extended perspective on black power's philosophy of racial separation, ethnic groupings, and religion. He maintains that "racial identity should be no bar to full fellowship and participation in the church and in society. That much was made clear by white theologians and ethicists. But, he believes,

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they were in error to suppose that white perceptions of churchmanship and human reality in American society were the only Christian perceptions."[74] There is an emphasis on each culture or ethnicity coming to God in its own way. Wilmore states:

> My own position would not support the idea of separatism...my position would be that the Bible, the revelation that we have in the Old and New testament makes clear that God has created us in families, groups, ethnic groups and in nations. And that much has been revealed to us about who we are and the nature of the life that we live and the promises that we have from God and the goals that we seek, much has been given to us through our culture. So that God met us within our culture and we came to know him and to know ourselves in that context. Therefore, ethnicity, to me and theology speak to one another, they go together and have something to say to one another about the nature of God and the purposes for which we were created.

He added that it was imperative to focus on his blackness in particular, prior to focusing on a global culture and humanity:

> Therefore, I don't have any embarrassment about saying that I am a black liberation theologian and that blackness is a part of my self-understanding and part of my commitment to work with African and African American people to realize those goals God has set before us as a people. This is not contrary to the solidarity of the whole human family-it is a part of that. So it's not separatism in that sense but another way to look at it is that as we search deeper and deeper into our ethnicity, our culture, our context, we come to a subterranean stream that unites us all but it is found and discovered by not moving to the universal too quickly but by going deeper into the particular to reach the universal which lies beneath the surface of human history. So I wouldn't call myself a separatist...I think it looked like separatism to white people because we began to caucus and pull away from and talk to one another about what was good for the African American community. We began to send them as SNCC did back to their own communities to work on the problem of racism rather than come and dominate our movement....that is why we didn't have an integrated movement.[75]

Wilmore agued that black power and black theology merge in the attainment of a fullness or wholeness of self; that there is a freedom from God in

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this self-actualization but an innate, creative, cultural insight must first be established. "For Wilmore, freedom, in the theological sense, is each individual of the community's attaining the height of his or her God-given possibilities. One achieves divine initiated liberation once one exhausts the fullest potential of one's mind and body. Divine freedom results in full human creativity; therefore, blocking human wholeness attacks divine purpose."[76] The *imago dei* is fulfilled when human potential has reached its optimum level.

Vincent Harding

Vincent Harding placed priority in his work on the community and ultimate spirituality. Similar to Wilmore, he believed that blacks must return to their culture in order to understand their objectives in liberation efforts. His approach viewed spirituality not on an individual basis but as a communal effort. Within the community there is an unmentioned or assumed level of responsibility that relates itself to the South African concept of *ubuntu* where humans are humans only through others. Hopkins explains:

> For Harding, the typology of European spirituality brings to light the individualism of the single person. In this mode one achieves a spiritual situation in 'solitude and aloneness.' Harding does not discount the necessity of spiritual nourishment for the individual. But African tradition kindles a spirituality in communal relationships. By this Harding denotes the need to keep faith with others as part of the spirituality of keeping one going. African spirituality glues the individual to the community and vice versa. In the same instance Harding discusses the individual and the community keeping faith with God. One's understanding of God in faith is inextricably woven with one's spiritual bonds to the community.[77]

Although lacking the specificity of Wilmore, Harding reasoned that blacks need to learn to see religion in their own terms. "Black people don't have to speak in Barthian terms. The joy and pain of the black experience supersedes the

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academic connection to religion."[78] In the article, "Black Power and the

American Christ," Harding spoke to the joy of affirming one's culture amidst the

pain of one's oppression.

> Bold young black people...fling out their declaration, 'No white Christ
> shall shame us again. We are glad to be black. We rejoice in the darkness
> of our skin, we celebrate the natural texture of our hair, we extol the
> rhythm and vigor of our songs, shouts and dances. And if your American
> Christ doesn't like that, you know what you can do with him.' That is
> Black Power: a repudiation of the American culture-religion that helped to
> create it and a quest for a religious reality more faithful to our own
> experience. [79]

He argued that with the transition from Africa to America, only some of

the traditional aspects of African religion were lost. The slaves were able

ultimately to take from the slave master the essentials of Christianity that were

relevant to their experience. His equation of black religion with the eclectic

spirituality of black power was the contribution of an academician whose major

interests were outside the sphere of organized religion.[80] Through traditional

aspects of singing, Harding viewed the community as coalescing under the banner

of God. This cultural affirmation expressed its uniqueness to blackness in that it

highlighted the highs and lows of the communities' experiences.

The discrepancies of society and religion were evident. Responding to the

acknowledgment of the social and religious denial of their culture, the intensity of

the progressives escalated. Harding emphasized:

> The angry children of Malcolm X shout fiercely: 'To hell with you and
> your Christ!. If you cannot live where we live, if your children cannot
> grow where we grow, if you cannot suffer what we suffer, if you cannot
> learn what we learn, we have no use for you or your cringing Christ. If we
> must come to where you are to find quality and life, then this nation is no
> good and integration is irrelevant'.[81]

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Harding's theology acknowledged reality and the sins of blind acquiescence, fear, and apathy. In his article, "The Religion of Black Power," a poem expressing the idea of too much love speaks to this affinity and dependence on white society and its theological constructs.

> Too much love,
> Too much love,
> Nothing kills a Nigga,
> Like too much Love.[82]

Inferiority complexes and dependence on whites were blasphemy and sin. Nathan Wright expressed that "if the just creator-father God is indeed alive, and if Jesus of Nazareth was his Christ, then we as Christians are blasphemers. We are the ones who take his name in vain. We are the ones who follow the phony American Christ and in our every act declare our betrayal of the resurrected Lord."[83]

Through religious community activism, Harding's theology is representative of his alliance with King. However, such close community ties kept him connected to the furor of Malcolm X's followers. In whatever setting, he always sought to align individual and spiritual work with an ultimate spirituality in mind. He appreciated the simultaneous linkage of human communal spirituality with human-God spirituality.[84]

Notable Theological Contributions

Cain Hope Felder was one of the many progressive clergy who took Christianity in a new direction. He saw the evolution of the movement change from a quest for integration and inclusion to separation and desired exclusion. For Felder, James Cone's book was the foundation for the black church's initial challenge to the white theology then prevalent in America. He believed that the

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black power movement took a serious Christian turn toward separating from

white/Euro theology when Cone's book came out in 1969. Felder acknowledges

how the community benefited from this discussion:

> This is what young blacks are looking for coming into the church because
> what Cone is doing is giving a critique of European theology and he is
> laying out a theoretical framework for black Christians to challenge the
> white church to recognize how much it has participated in the oppression
> of black people. Therefore we have to change that because you can't be
> authentically Christian unless you empower black people because God is
> on the side of the oppressed.[85]

Acknowledging Cone, Wilmore, and others as mentors[86], Felder

approached the theological debate over the next decade with a recontextualized

biblical text. Although its intensity had slightly diminished, the black theological

thought of this period benefited from the scriptural integrity of Felder's

Africanized progressive angle. Felder troubled "the placid waters of Eurocentric

historiography, exegesis, and hermeneutics on questions of race, class and

family," providing a "critical framework for reassessing the status of blacks and

the question of race in biblical antiquity."[87]

Felder's work analyzed Old and New Testament biblical text. Moving

beyond the common themes of liberation within the Exodus story and Jesus's

ministry and resurrection, he reintroduced race, class, and justice as well as the

African presence throughout biblical traditions. This analysis is necessary in

black theology, because if it is not, the Western influence is readily accepted.

Felder's reinterpretation combats the:

> eurocentric bias that has accentuated the movement of the gospel
> geographically from Jerusalem to points north. This geographical
> progression is then translated into modern maps of New Testament lands
> that de-Africanize the entire new testament. The result is that New

Testament scholarship limits itself to focusing upon the Greco-Roman world. Hence, modern readers of the Bible take it for granted that maps of New Testament lands appropriately eliminate the continent on Africa. Even the modern creation of the so-called Middle East can only be seen as an extension of the Western tendency to de-Africanize this section of the World. Thus it has trivialized the ancient contribution of Africa in the shaping of the people and cultures of the entire region. What we must remember is that this thinking constitutes nothing short of fraudulent historiography on the part of Eurocentric Bible scholars.[88]

Felder's primary contribution to black theology is his recontextualized Bible as the source for continuing the implementation of black theology. His work was vital for the attainment of an African/black hermeneutic. Ultimately, his recontextualization work seeks the same unified and revolutionary community that his mentors spoke of. He envisions a place where there was a sustained "radicalism that could not evaporate" and "an agenda of Black agape within the international African community as the vanguard for "the beloved black community," which thereby becomes a paradigm for the participation of all. In this regard, it seems crucial to "envision liberation as a continual process, like institutionalized revolution, with a perpetual self-critique embodied in its leadership style."[89]

Like Felder, Josiah Young was also influenced by Cone's work by seeking to clarify the relationship between Black and African theologies. Black theology is a theology of liberation. African theology, on the other hand, is a theology of indigenization or, more specifically, africanization. In spite of their similarities, the two theologies differ radically in theological focus. Identifying African theology as primarily a cultural problem and black theology as political, Young's

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work examines those who see the similarities and differences of these religious locations.

African theologians such as John Mbiti noted that Christianity in Africa is different because it grew "out of...joy in the experience of the Christian faith, wheras black [North American] theology emerges from the pains of oppression."[90] According to Mbiti, the challenge of African Christianity has been to sufficiently connect it to African traditional religions. Cone seeks to reconcile the similarities with black and African theology because of the identity crisis of double consciousness as articulated by W.E.B. Dubois.

Others such as Desmond Tutu see blackness as the similarity specifically of the blackness of oppression and skin color opposed to ethnicity. Africa as the ancestral home of all blacks causing an intrinsic African personality would be another commonality for Tutu. For Tutu, the last similarity is the goal of liberating theology from the "white is right" mentality. Other similarities expressed by E.W. Fashole-Luke relate to black and African theologians seeing that the "gospel was from God for everyone...the oppressed and the oppressor." [91]

The relevance of Young's work to black theological thought lies in his suggestion of a Pan African theology that calls for the liberation of all black and oppressed peoples in mental, theological, and physical bondage. An indigenization of both the black and African context is vital for these theologies' liberation. Although criticism is inevitable, taking the literary, cultural, and social traditions of Pan-African discourse, this model could prove relevant to a unified black religious liberation model.

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Recognizing the work of his brother James, Cecil Cone argued that black Christianity experienced its nexus with the conversion experience for slaves. Although the Biblical hermeneutics were flawed, Christian religion offered slaves an opportunity to die for their sins. From this point, Cone argues, they are born again as a new person within a new humanity under only God's authority. This is the relevance of Christianity.

Hopkins suggests that Cone sees "a fundamental contradiction in the eager acceptance of black power and the simultaneous attempts at maintaining connection to the black religious tradition. A theology of black power merely offers a rebel theology. God, not politics, is the starting point in black religion."[92] To Cecil Cone, black reality and black Christian faith have been challenged or motivated by nothing but the word of God. Cone, as interpreted by Hopkins, expressed that "neither black power slogans nor white seminaries determine black theology. Black theology identifies with the faith of the black church-the Almighty Sovereign God of Africa in the conversion experience of black religion."[93] One would agree that black power did not define black theology but it certainly influenced the black religious life of the late 1960s and 1970s.

Charles Long's theology sought to eliminate the unnecessary theological language of the academy. He argued that such language benefits only the white power structure because it is this structure that has established the terms. His theology emphasizes culture through the introduction of a new language of the oppressed community. Being able to personally articulate and define one's

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religious experience is vital to humanity and liberation. This form of *disglossia* allows for a private and contextual experience of religious solidarity.

Long saw the initial period of slavery as an influential time period for black religious development. This redefining moment is specifically related to, as Long would argue, their "ultimate concern." His theology sought an ever constant focus on the pursuit of full humanity through this concern. He wrote, "Religion means orientation-orientation in the ultimate sense, that is, how one comes to terms with the ultimate significance of one's place in the world" [94]

Long attacked the structure of European theology, as opposed to reinterpreting these theological categories, because theology as theology represents a discourse of those [white] people who have the power to define cultural categories. Hopkins further articulated Long's point that "black people and poor people...have not had the privilege of establishing cultural categories."[95] From this, one understands that the cultural affirmations of sermons, spirituals, blues, and folk stories inform this theology as well as the black power secular philosophy. Long's theology expressed that within these cultural expressions there are indicators of highs and lows, valleys and mountaintops, as well as plots and schemes that exist in the Biblical and black sense, that explain the relationship between the oppressed and the oppressor.

The National Council of Black Churchmen recognized the political and cultural relevance of this new theology[96]. The secular debate had opened the doors to a reflection on black culture, understanding the necessity of political empowerment, and an independence and solidarity of aims.

This new vocation to which we are called is political in the sense that it seeks radically to change, by whatever means are necessary, the racist structures which dominate our lives; cultural in the sense that it seeks to identify, recreate, unify and authenticate whatever traditions, values and styles of life are indigenous or distinctive to the black community; and theological in the sense that we believe that it is God-however he chooses to reveal himself today to oppressed peoples in America and in the Third World.[97]

These theologians all presented well considered and clearly articulated perspectives. By and large, they sought to keep the focus on the particular, which simply stated, is blackness. Their thoughts reflected the belief that God made individuals to be part of particular groups and that there should be equality under the banner of God's holy family. The perspective that God works with the underclass identifying with individuals through their culture is the feature of liberation theology. Black theology helped the black community to coalesce under God, yet specifically through their blackness. Utilizing the black power debate's momentum, many black clergy began to help steer the community in a more progressive direction. The consciousness and power through these learned ideals put the black community in a place where they were beginning to know and understand themselves and the challenges that lay ahead in their current reality.

The secular, as well as some of the progressive religious sources, were beginning to see a common vision of the potential of power. Through an attempt to clarify and define their blackness in America, superiority and inferiority complexes were challenged. Black power clergy desired to bring God's presence to provide a sacred and ultimate foundation to the philosophy. With a focus on God's ever present role in oppressed communities, black power clergy extended this message to see God encouraging activism through the work of Jesus Christ.

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Closing ranks to focus on discovering who they were as a culture and people was edifying to God. As blacks defined their relationship with God in the midst of their American-ness; across the Atlantic, South African blacks would also be moving towards a similar position. This position of black consciousness and Christianity will be explored in the following chapter.

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CHAPTER FOUR

True justice, God's justice demands a radical change of structures. This can only come from below, from the oppressed themselves. God will bring about change through the oppressed as he did through the oppressed Hebrew slaves in Egypt. God does not bring his justice through reforms introduced by the Pharaoh's of this world.

-Kairos Document

In this chapter, the researcher exclusively examines black theology and the black consciousness movement through the use of various literary works, newspaper articles, organizational notes, and interviews. The first section of the chapter examines Christianity in South Africa in the context of racial oppression, which is often referred to as a theology of apartheid. The second section of the chapter analyzes the key ideological components of the black consciousness movement. Lastly, South African black theologians' religious insight into the black consciousness debate is provided and reflected upon. These theologians analyze the debate from the African traditional perspective emphasizing a reflective discussion merging black consciousness philosophy with a Christianity that developed from the liberation struggle and context.

Christianity and Consciousness: A Theology of Apartheid

In South Africa, Christianity represented the most commonly practiced religion. The architects of the apartheid system made strategic use of this fact. At its inception in South Africa, this religion was used as an instrument to validate white superiority and perpetuate an image of backwardness and lack of civility in the African social and religious traditions and customs. The questioning by South African blacks, regarding the validity of their Creator, was the goal of this

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conscious misinterpretation of the Bible. David Chidester noted: "Throughout South African history, religion has provided an open set of resources for justifying various economic, social, or political interests. In particular, religious legitimation has been drawn into justifying political power, the power to dominate, control, and exploit human and material resources."[1] Christianity in South Africa was a vital, theological construct in the promotion of apartheid.

Christianity, as it was first introduced, presented many challenges for South African blacks. In the apartheid program, Christian religion was used to play a role in the promotion of racial separation. Afrikaner leaders as far back as the 1830s sought to use Christianity as a tool of social authority and privilege. To Afrikaners, this privilege was justified through the Blood River defeat of the Zulus, the resistance of British cultural dominance through the effective use of neo-Calvinism within the Dutch Reformed Church, as well as biblical justification (Deuteronomy: 7, Genesis: 11, Acts: 2) of authority and separation between the people of Israel and their neighbors.[2]

White South African political leadership, such as the National and United Parties, ultimately guided the South African government toward a program of racial separation. The Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) also actively promoted this separation. Religious and political figures such as D.F. Malan helped move the separation agenda forward. David Chidester observed:

> In response to the church's call for total racial separation, D.F. Malan restated his policy of 'practical' apartheid. He agreed with the church that total and complete territorial separation of races would be an 'ideal state of affairs.' Against the 'pure' apartheid advocated by the church, however, Malan argued that 'total separation was impractical under present

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circumstances in South Africa, where our whole economic structure is to a large extent based on Native labour.[3]

This apartheid program was established in the religious, societal, and political fabric of South Africa. Chidester notes that "by 1953, therefore, the DRC had not only produced an apartheid theology but had in effect rewritten the Bible as an apartheid Bible."[4] This form of Christian religion, which was initiated by Afrikaner settlers and British missionaries, opened the doors to a foreign societal structure that contrasted with that of the traditional African value system. South Africa's communalistic society was being dominated by a European superstructure of technological progression, conquest, and greed. The Christian religion of the Dutch Reformed Church and European missionaries helped open the doors to South African hearts and society, thus leading to the infiltration of foreign ideals.

Apartheid was an economic policy for select societal advantage. Through the vein of religion, the apartheid system enabled whites to establish superiority in a land where they were, in fact, the minority. Through apartheid, whites would come to possess 87% of South Africa's land and wealth, leaving the black African population a diminutive 13%. The apartheid system of classification proved economically beneficial for whites. A Black Consciousness essay, "Unity in the Liberation Struggle" observed:

> Apartheid has been advocated on grounds of scripture, intelligence, ability, colour, race, civilization, and political expediency but it is crucial to discern that the true heart of apartheid has always been economic. Because it is essentially an economic matter, government is not greatly disturbed by those who attack it on racial, political, theological, judicial, or humanitarian grounds.[5]

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These views maintain that the true demise of apartheid must begin with the challenge to the government for a redistribution of wealth. However, Steve Biko and members of the black consciousness movement promoted a philosophy that sought to first conscientize the minds of the people, therefore developing the will to challenge societal norms and political and economic inequities.

The use of Christianity within the apartheid structure upset the norms of traditional South African society. In the article, "What is Black Consciousness and how is Black Theology related to it?" Nyameko Barney Pityana writes:

> The coming about of Christianity brought about a real upheaval in African norms and values, a disintegration of families and tribes and the cancerous money economy. The effect was to prepare blacks, psychologically, for the onslaught that was coming from the colonial rulers. They were dehumanised and had to accept their inferior status in the land of their birth....It is a realization of this great myth designed to rob the black man of his soul and his human dignity. It was brought about by the white settlers with the able assistance of his able handmaiden, the Church, through blood and tears, in suppression and humiliation, through dishonest means, by force and by subjugation of the sons of the soil. It is the liberating effect of this self-knowledge and awareness that we refer to as black consciousness.[6]

Pityana understood that the thinking and awareness of black South Africans on issues of culture and religion had to change in order for physical liberation to take place.

The whites thought process also required a challenge in order that societal change take place. Whether one espoused extremist apartheid beliefs or a white liberal philosophy, certain cultural myths had to be dispelled. Bernard Spong, a white missionary from England who would later become a black consciousness advocate and Desmond Tutu's personal religious counselor, spoke of his initial mentality and mission as a white man coming to South Africa.

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I was in the habit of saying things like the color of our skin doesn't matter. We are all the same was the message that some of us were giving against apartheid. But the color of our skin did matter because apartheid was separating. I came as a missionary to tell my story, I came to make people not into little Englishmen and Englishwomen - but not far off. I came as the usual missionary who came to give their lives to uplifting other people and looking upon blacks as inferior needing to be lifted up, to be helped, to be civilized. All the things we say about the old missionary movement was what I was brought up in, what I was sent here for.[7]

Weli Mazamisa, Professor of Religious Studies at University of Cape Town and a BCM exponent, expressed his views about the contrasting uses of the messages and images in Christianity that were prevalent in South Africa.

When one looks at the history of struggle in South Africa and the role of Christianity, one will come to the conclusion that Christianity has played an ambivalent role in our history. First as the tool of the oppressor, second, as an instrument of liberation from the oppressed. So both used Christianity to liberate or to oppress. So we have that schizophrenic in our history of struggle. Christianity was used by the colonizer to win the hearts and minds of the indigenous people and to use the modernity that undergirded that Christianity in order to deculturalize or detraditionalize black people. In many ways the colonizers were successful. So when one encounters these tragedies throughout the history of struggle in South Africa….so when there was instances of resistance… they were characterized as instances of consciousness-black, self, spiritual.[8]

Mazamisa specified the role of the church in promoting a theology of racial separation and detachment from indigenous culture. He saw the European church using denominationalism to restrict the consciousness of black people.

A false consciousness and false identity was generated where people [South African blacks] thought it was important to identify with the religion of the master instead of identifying with the spirituality of the people that was responsible for black consciousness. So denominationalism was used not only as a religious or theological weapon but also as a political weapon to restrict the people from growing in their self-consciousness. One could say that it played a positive and negative role in South Africa. At no point were black people not conscious of who they were but at every point black consciousness was beaten down by the colonizer. The colonizer also used the minister and the missionary to accomplish that. At the level of consciousness, Christianity contributed to

what was there already in terms of consciousness or self consciousness. Black people were not disconnected, they knew who they were, from whence they came, and where they were going. But colonialism was a period of disruption of that process. The more indigenous people were oppressed, the better the quality of consciousness became.[9]

With a population that was nearly eighty percent Christian, South Africa was the most Christianity-oriented country on the African continent. However, black Christianity in Soweto and Christianity in the Afrikaners' Dutch Reformed Church was not emanating from the same Bible. Allan Boesak, academic theologian, DRC minister, and former BCM exponent, reflects on his personal challenge and desire to resist the apartheid theology.

> I grew up in the reformed churches where apartheid theology existed. The Dutch Reformed Church gave theological justification to apartheid. The theology of apartheid and practices of church preceded political, economic and social apartheid. This made one think about one's relationship with God, one's understanding of the gospel, one's understanding of the church's traditions. The other dimension was division not only between black and whites but other races in the middle such as Coloureds, Indians from India, Malaysia, the division of all the groups was a very strategic, tactical attack. As a young boy, age five, I knew I wanted to preach the gospel but as I grew older I knew it was not right to preach that apartheid was the will of God.[10]

Boesak believed that there had to be a realization that apartheid was a sin and any of its teachings were sinful. From this belief, the question arises "Does one discard the gospel as a useless tool of oppression?" Boesak explained that the true gospel of Jesus Christ stood in direct opposition of all that apartheid represented. He stated that using the gospel of Jesus Christ as a theological justification for apartheid was fundamentally flawed and in the end, could not prevail. Boesak's theology expressed that black Christians reading the Bible had to operate with a hermeneutic of suspicion.

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This means that the way you interpret the Bible and the message is influenced from the context in which you live and by your own self-awareness. If you are aware that your context is one of oppression and that is wrong you have to find a way to deal with that oppression. It is a realization that your dehumanization can never be the will of God. Those trying to use it as a tool against that is straight blasphemous, not acceptable. So when you read the gospel, the hermeneutic of suspicion would inform you that the easy identification in which whites understand the gospel from their position of power and privilege must be suspect....a large amount of suspicion. Their reading is through the glasses of the rich, powerful, and elite. In reading the Bible from the underside of history, the poor, the Bible reads differently and causes you to respond differently.[11]

Boesak stated that the people of his era were not the first to discover this.

He believed that such thought had been present from the beginning of the missionary movement and the establishment of African independent churches.

Thus, people ultimately looked at the Bible from two distinct perspectives; that of the oppressor and that of the oppressed. He echoed the sentiments of his African-American colleague, Gayraud Wilmore, saying "there is something fundamentally wrong with white Christianity."[12] Blacks in both the United States and South Africa understood that the trans-continental religious perspectives were similar.

Christianity was being dealt with from the lens of the rich and the lens of the poor supporting and affirming superiority and inferiority complexes. The symbiotic link between the struggle in South Africa and the United States was the recognition that the gospel had to be liberated from the grip of white Christianity just as blacks had to be liberated from oppression.

Black Consciousness: Ideological Elements

As part of the governing and political structure of the state, the theology of apartheid was alive and well. The banned, jailed, and exiled ANC and PAC members had essentially left the torch of resistance in the hands of the youth.

With ample groundwork laid, the black consciousness movement rose from the college campuses not only with intellectual challenges, but with moral and religious conflicts of interest.

Following the lead of Biko, Barney Pityana, Malusi Mplumwana and others in the South African Student Organization (SASO), college students found substance in redefining black South African culture as an identifiable and embraceable tool of psychological liberation. This psychological liberation, like its counterpart in the United States, constituted an original form of resistance to the repressive apartheid government. Preceding any material or tangible resistance, this changing of the thinking of blacks allowed for an internal revolution prior to the perceived revolution necessary for the eradication of apartheid. Dwight Hopkins has asserted that "the interrelationship between the consciousness of the self and the emancipatory programme is of paramount importance. Blacks no longer seek to reform the system because so doing implies acceptance of the major points around which the system revolves."[13]

SASO's involvement in social and political programs, such as Black Community Programs and Black People's Convention, was indicative of the message of consciousness emanating through the social fabric of South Africa. A level of morality, based on culture and tradition, led to the mission of these programs and the movement. Biko wrote, "over the years we have attained moral superiority over the white man: we shall watch as time destroys his paper castles and know that all these little pranks were but the frantic attempts of frightened

little people to convince each other that they can control the minds and bodies of the indigenous peoples of Africa indefinitely."[14]

Ironically, the South African government initially supported a black consciousness message that promoted a self-reliant racial separation. Willa Boesak stated: "The South African government at first encouraged the BCM and tried to absorb it into their existing structure of 'separate development.' Soon, however, it began to perceive BC as a threat."[15] Black consciousness became a challenge because not only was a psychological transformation taking root, but a cohesion of black cultural identity ensued, which stood to alter the economic and social hierarchy enforced through apartheid. The *Southern African News Agency (SANA) Bulletin* quotes Robert Fatton:

> This is precisely where the BCM began; for the ideology it developed rejected the status quo to produce a new Christian paradigm bent on revolutionizing both the material structure and cultural super-structure of South Africa. Indeed, in opposition to the Africanists, in search for an exclusively African culture, the BCM sought to develop a culture of the oppressed, as a means of transforming the whole society into a new and superior ethical order.[16]

This movement of thought expressed itself not only through a political, social, and religious philosophy, but also included creative expressions that described their existence and aims. T. Molewa articulated this in a poem:

> Conscientisation is my mission,
> Black Theology is my Sweetheart,
> Community Projects are my Weapons,
> Relevant Black Education is what I'm fighting for,
> Black liberation is surely my goal,
> Free and just society will be the end product.
> That clenched fist, you ask, what's it mean?
> Unity of all Azanians,
> Solidarity, Determination in Will and Resolve,
> Courage to fight to the bitter end,

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Power to all black people.
Dig it?[17]

With a righteous determination, the ideals of black consciousness had begun to take form. In contrasting the theology of apartheid that existed with the influences of Africanist thought, black power philosophy, and student Christian organizational support, a spiritual self-awareness began to develop for those black South Africans with this exposure. This awareness called black consciousness, was established and able to flourish due to three primary ideological dimensions that allowed for its emphasis as a tool for liberation. This section of the study will focus on three essential tenets of the black consciousness philosophy: the holistic spirituality of South African life, the redefinition and value placed on black culture and humanity, and an emphasis on self- reliance as a means of reclaiming one's humanity.

Holistic Ethos of African Life and Spirituality

First, it is important to note the holistic ethos of black South African spirituality in society. Spirituality played a role in every aspect and on every level of society in South Africa. Its presence is ingrained in the fabric of black South African life and cannot be ignored. Spirituality crosses every spectrum in society from the living to the dead, from the past to the present, and the tangible to the intangible. Recognition of this important aspect of society was important to understanding Christianity and liberation in the South African context. Eddie Makue of the South African Council of Churches explains further:

> Now an important point to bear in mind is that African people view life holistically. Therefore there is no rigid demarcation or compartmentalization between that which is faith and that which is social,

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between that which is material and that which is spiritual. This holistic African approach made it very easy for black consciousness ideology to become integrated into the Christian theology.[18]

Thus, with no firm boundaries to separate the spiritual and the secular, this personal awareness encouraged societal awareness. Christianity was being reconfigured to holistically address the needs of the oppressed. Bernard Spong expounds:

> First, in Africa, faith, spiritual acknowledgement, or spiritual being affects everything. Black consciousness in African philosophy was an innate understanding of personhood as being full and being something that covers everything we do so that you are not a worker on Monday and churchgoer on Sunday and the choir member on Tuesday, you are a person and in that way faith, religious thought, whether its Christianity or African traditional religious thought. It was able to take such a rooting in Africa because of the innate African spiritual faiths. Secondly, this ideology of consciousness could root itself in the black community because it was already in the community at large. It was not necessary to change the religion merely the message.[19]

Steve Biko understood the holistic nature of spirituality in South African society and that a westernized Christianity that emphasized partial or select aspects of Christianity was not consistent with the more holistic and complete belief system of black South African religious life. He elaborated:

> It cannot be denied that in this situation many blacks, especially the young blacks, have begun to question Christianity. The question they ask is whether the necessary decolonization of Africans also requires the dechristianizing of Africa. The most positive facet of this questioning is the development of 'black' theology in the context of black consciousness. For black theology does not challenge Christianity itself, but its western package in order to discover what the Christian faith means to our continent.[20]

The questioning of Christianity by these young blacks led to an examination of its usefulness. This religious contextualization process in South Africa was necessary to assess the appropriate emphasis on what Christianity

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meant for blacks. Blacks could no longer afford to accept the western packaged

religion, as it conflicted with their instinctive cultural character. The redirection

of religion was the way for blacks to reclaim their humanity in its most genuine

form. Nyameko Barney Pityana concurs, "Black people are notoriously religious.

Religion permeates into all the depths of life so fully that it is not easy or possible

always to isolate it. It must be accepted then that a study of black theology is a

study of black consciousness, or self-awareness."[21]

The campus and the churches were the perfect outlets for this new

message. Pityana, former secretary-general of SASO, knew the importance of

changing the message.

> We [SASO/BCP/BPC] really got into studying a lot of religion and
> theology because one of the thrusts of black consciousness was to take on
> culture as well. So culture and religion together became important vehicles
> for accessing certain people in our country but at the same time for
> radicalizing a whole constituency that was rooted in the Bible but had not
> interpreted the Bible in a radical way. So the thinking was that we could
> actually access with thought a large percentage of the black community if
> we took the churches seriously. There was also a critique that there was
> not sufficient, especially in the latter days of the liberation struggle, there
> was not a sufficient acknowledgement of the pervasive presence of
> Christianity in black community particularly outside of the mainline
> Christianity.[22]

Although Biko was not an outspoken advocate of religion, he understood that

most South African blacks made Christianity their choice. He was aware that it

would be impossible to change the religious thinking of South African blacks.

Biko realized that an approach had to be utilized that redefined Christianity as a

religion of holistic liberation. He explained his belief that religion was

uncompromisingly integrated into South African life. "We thanked God through

our ancestors before we drank beer, married, worked, etc. We would obviously

find it artificial to create special occasions for worship. Neither did we see it logical to have a particular building in which all worship would be conducted. We believed that God was always in communication with us and therefore merited attention everywhere and anywhere."[23]

The thought of the movement was that South African blacks must be released from the psychological chains of a foreign religious culture. In order to be a religion of restoration, Christianity needed to encapsulate the complete spiritual existence of South African blacks, effectively leading them toward psychological *and* physical liberation. Mgwebi Snail concludes this section with these words:

> The BCM did not seek to develop a new religion which was exclusively for Africans. They realized that the problem was not Christianity but the method in which it was spread amongst the oppressed. They also observed that eighty percent of the black population was Christian, and that to convert it into a new religion was impossible. The only option left for them was to find a method to make Christianity rhyme with black experience in South Africa.[24]

Affirmation of Black Culture and Humanity

The term *black* was essential for reinvigorating South African black culture. The apartheid system classified individuals who were not white as non-white. With white being established as the standard for humanity, the black consciousness philosophy looked toward taking ownership and pride in their race. Biko declared that "the use of the term 'black' in place of 'non-white' was central to the philosophy of black consciousness and reflected the view that 'people must be referred to in a positive manner and not as negatives of others'."[25] He reasoned that "...since the thesis is white racism, there can only be one valid

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antithesis, i.e. a solid black unity to counter–balance the scale"[26]. Apartheid advocates encouraged this distinction and separation of races as these adherents sought to extend their position of white privilege through the apartheid program. However, mass mobilization around blackness provided the greatest challenge to the apartheid structure.

The value of blackness that was perpetuated through black consciousness ideology, led to a renewal of the value of black South Africans' skin color, physical attributes, and self-worth. This focus on humanization and one's inherent value was important in the effort to reverse the previous psychological conditioning of inferiority that the apartheid racial structure promoted. Addressing the need for a return to the equality of the community, Biko wrote that "we regard our living together not as an unfortunate mishap warranting endless competition among us but as a deliberate act of God to make us a community of brothers and sisters jointly involved in the quest for a composite answer to the varied problems of life."[27]

The message of blackness was essential, just as the message of Jesus to the oppressed was essential. Njatmuu Dan Habedi, current Secretary-General of Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO) and a former BCM exponent, talked about how religion and humanity played a very important role for South African blacks.

> There was this thing of being made to feel like half human beings and we had to search for the truth. Some of us, I remember, would ask questions like what does it mean to have been made in the image of God? Does it mean that God has a flat nose like mine? Is God talking about physical attributes? As we grappled with those questions it became clear that it was not just a question of physical attributes but about spirituality. It was

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about moral sense of right and wrong. It was about a lot of other such things and we ultimately thought this is where to start. Once people started associating their value with the value of the creator they felt that there was something important in this philosophy.[28]

The inferiority of black humanity, perpetuated through the apartheid structure, led to a subservient mindset and apathy toward life. One of Biko's most popular sayings was "the most potent weapon in the hand of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed."[29] Black consciousness ideology helped to challenge the apartheid ideology that was being officially forced upon blacks emphasizing a learned inferiority. Therefore, black academics and clergy promoted black consciousness thought because it was liberating both in terms of ideology and in terms of the black soul. Interestingly, Bernard Spong, although a white missionary from England, believed deeply in black consciousness ideology. So intense was his belief in freedom of consciousness that a stage in his growth was marked by the longing to be black. Spong recalls:

> I worked in Soweto as much as I could, I began the Bridgeman Communication Center in the middle seventies....I would spend as much of my time as I could in Soweto. I did my work amongst all the different groups but my bias was black. It was eventually my black consciousness friends people like Rose Parsley who was in exile in Britain, Basil Moore was also in exile, and Fanyane Makabuku they helped me to be happy being white. My colleagues would say "our blackness does matter because it's who we are and the world puts us here. We have to take it and recognize the dignity in it so that others will recognize the dignity so we can begin to work as equals. That for me during the 1980's was a really good step for my own contentment because for many years I was frustrated that I couldn't belong to where I wanted to belong. And it's interesting how my black consciousness friends helped me realize that being this white guy was okay.[30]

Theoretically, this new consciousness and theology that emerged represented the force responsible for the addition of intrinsic and moral legitimacy

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to liberation ideals. This ideology helped create social relationships believing in

the supernatural and utilizing faith to adopt individual and social responsibilities

based on freedom from oppression and dehumanization. Japie Lapoorta, pastor in

the Apostolic Faith Mission and former BCM exponent, knew that religious

ideology was needed to fight apartheid. Lapoorta viewed Christianity as

something that grounded the people in the struggle through reading and

interpreting scripture. He considered Biko's essays to be about blacks leading

their own struggle with this new interpretation. Lapoorta spoke about white and

non-white meaning human being and non-being, and how Biko spoke of starting

from the black premise. There was deliberate meaning in calling oneself black.

Lapoorta declared:

> At this time, being black meant that you were saying I am somebody....I
> am not a non-human. God didn't make a mistake in making me black, and
> I am proud of this. One must look at the Exodus Model and Nazareth
> Manifesto for the connections to blackness in the scriptures. There was
> Jesus, Jethro, Simon, people from Ethiopia. From these passages you
> realize that blacks are not here to learn only but to contribute and share
> their experience, to bring to the whole debate. Passages like "love your
> neighbor as you love yourself" cannot be followed until you learn to love
> yourself. Being black is God ordained.[31]

The revolutionary and radical thought that this ideology brought to society

could not be denied. Many people were resisting apartheid based on their

spiritual belief that they deserved better in the country of their birth. Blacks were

beginning to understand Christianity in a way that allowed them to feel liberated

and not oppressed. The infusion of Christianity, consciousness, and blackness

was the basis for a theology of liberation. Mgwebi Snail notes:

> It was in the same spirit in South Africa that BCM called for black
> theology. The purpose was to save the church from unwittingly becoming

a tool to further oppression. Like the black clergy in America, black theology propounders in South Africa realized that as long as the church was dominated by whites it was impossible for the black clergy to be instruments of liberation, and hence a similar call for liberation was seen to be the only possible solution.[32]

It was this revolutionary method, which focused on the development of black identity, that comprised the only way to defeat apartheid. Since the apartheid structure was built on race, then a message of conscientization, culture, and Christianity was the force to lead to its ultimate demise. In the *African Communist*, African American black power advocate Angela Davis summed up this section speaking to identity and liberation:

> First of all, we should be absolutely clear that it is extremely important for black people to attain a self-confidence and identity, something which the ruling class has attempted to take away from us...and it is extremely important for us to reassert our identity...But at the same time we have to realize that that in itself cannot provide a strategy for liberation.... Revolutionary consciousness means not only consciousness of the position that the black oppressed occupy in racist South Africa, but also of the interests and aims of the black masses expressed through their own ideology which will provide a scientific understanding of the course to be adopted towards the achievement of defined aims.[33]

Self- Reliance

The philosophical movement of black consciousness did garner support from white liberal sympathizers. Groups such as the University Christian Movement, the Christian Institute, and other student organizations were all present in the beginning stages of the black consciousness movement. Moreover, through financial support from groups such as the Society of Friends, many white sympathizers contributed in various ways to the movement. Although this support was valued it did not come without consequences. Many perceived the liberal whites as overly involved and paternalistic in their thought processes.

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Biko saw this type of involvement as crippling to the psyche of many blacks who had learned to depend on white participation. He commented that "this is the major danger that I see facing the black community at the present moment, to be so conditioned by the system as to make even our most well-considered resistance to fit within the system, both in terms of the means and the goals."[34] Because the apartheid system was organized by race, Biko sought to organize resistance through blackness. Biko longed for blacks to be psychologically and culturally self-sufficient in the quest for liberation. In the famous words of his comrade Pityana, it was evident that the "black man was on his own."[35]

Self-reliance was not a form of racism but a means by which blacks could independently analyze their position and agenda in South Africa. The South African Student Organization (SASO) branched off from National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) and distanced themselves from the University Christian Movement (UCM) in an effort to define themselves. SASO evolved as:

> a student organization which has adopted the term black because it has positive implications which non-white lacks. As such as it appeals to all segments of the South African student population who have been excluded by law from full participation in the privileges enjoyed by white students. It realises that this under privileged position may not be a permanent one and the leaders of the movement have repeatedly stated that they will disband once all students share equal rights and opportunities.[36]

Even though the group had broken away to a certain extent from its dependence upon white liberal sympathizers, many were not aware of the allegiance they had to white contributions and participation. Many blacks subconsciously desired approval of whites. Biko acknowledged that:

> The limitations that have accompanied the involvement of liberals in the black man's struggle have been mostly responsible for the arrest of

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progress. Because of their inferiority complex, blacks have tended to listen seriously to what the liberals had to say. With their characteristic arrogance of assuming a monopoly on intelligence and moral judgement, these self-appointed trustees of black interests have gone on to set the pattern and pace for the realisation of the black man's aspirations.[37]

Aware of the superiority and inferiority complexes that existed between whites and blacks, Biko was very strategic in making the connection between the realization of one's full humanity and pride in one's culture. Biko knew that when blacks' energies were channeled and they witnessed their own potential, a greater level of self-confidence would be gained, resulting in the dismantling of an apartheid mentality. At a conference at the Abe Bailey Institute of Inter-Racial Studies, Biko presented the argument that "the blacks will help themselves to achieve a deeper realisation of their potential and work as a self-respecting people. The confidence thus generated will give them a sense of pride and self-awareness. This is all we need in South Africa for a meaningful change of the status quo."[38]

This quest for independent and self-reliant thinking was not just for the blacks. Blackness had become a symbol of clarification of one's self-worth for all oppressed groups (Blacks, Coloureds, Indians) in South Africa. This common identification of black as a heterogeneous grouping of the oppressed became recognized and began to pose legitimate challenges to the apartheid system. In an interview for the South African News Agency, Randwezi "Harry" Nengwekhulu spoke of the differences in the BCM philosophy of separatism versus their ANC and PAC forefathers' notions of this topic.

> Q.) How does your movement (BCM) actually differ ideologically from on the one hand the ANC, and on the other hand the PAC?

A.) I find it difficult to define. We are all essentially nationalist movements, we are geared towards the liberation of the country. We all have our sort of ideological weaknesses. I always find it difficult to differentiate between two or more nationalist movements on the basis of ideology; except that the ANC and we differ on the grounds that the ANC allows whites within their organization and we feel that we cannot have whites as members. At the same time some people think that we are an offshoot of the PAC or almost because the PAC also says that it does not want whites. This might be as a result of the fact that we all originate from the same circumstances. But we do have our differences also in the sense that we talk of "Blacks" meaning Indians, Africans and so-called Coloureds. But the PAC 's position has for a long time been that the struggle is essentially that of the Africans, rather than communist sympathizers. These are the differences that exist.

Q.) How can you constantly allow Coloureds and Indians as partners in the struggle but not whites? Isn't the PAC more consistent here?

A.) We are not using the fact that we are indigenous to Africa as a basis of unity, we are using the question of exploitation; the fact both the Coloureds and Indians are being exploited.[39]

This unification of oppressed and exploited blacks was a form of resistance that did not aspire toward equality with the white man but rather strive to determine their own worth as God-created beings. Within this theme of common exploitation and oppression, there lies the realization that some conditions are self-inflicted. This ideological element of self-reliance was based on the premise of refusal to recognize the white race as a whole to be the standard for humanity thus helping blacks to empower blacks.

The establishment of the movement ideology was important in that it served to encourage blacks to take responsibility for establishing their own humanity during this oppressive period. The holistic ethos of South African spirituality, the challenge to inferiority conditioning through reaffirming black culture and humanity, and taking strides to remain independent and self-reliant to

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their own progress represent the key elements that helped to establish black

consciousness ideology. To South African black clergy, such reflection was key

in examining the social and political trends of the time. Their congregations'

existence and relationship to God was critical to cementing this ideology and

converting minds and souls to the struggle against apartheid.

Black Theology: Christian Religion Dialogues with Black Consciousness

The message of black consciousness had taken root in pockets of the

country. Through this philosophy, the use of Christianity within the apartheid

program was again being called into question. Blacks were, once again, just as

their forefathers had experienced, at a point where Christianity had to either the

meet the spiritual, cultural, and physical needs of the people or be discarded from

the South African religious context. The culture and context of Christianity had

to change in order for it to be a viable tool for liberation. This was not only true

for those in South Africa but for all blacks who struggled with the singularity of

Judeo-Christian concepts.

Similar to the National Committee of Black Churchmen in the United

States, the young leaders of black theology in South Africa came to the

conclusion that:

> a) the white man was not the norm or yardstick to humanness;
> b) the church had itself helped the black to realize he was a man; but
> c) it was white-controlled Church institution that refuted the equality of humans before God;
> d) black consciousness meant blacks' being aware of all that stood in the way of freedom;
> e) black consciousness was not necessarily a whip-back against whites, although whites had to realize the harm they had meted out against blacks;
> f) there could be no talk of black consciousness in any form without its being in reference to white racism;

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g) blacks were rejecting white ethical values and learning to do things for themselves instead of waiting for white handouts;

h) blacks had to come into a new relationship with whites-one based on love and mutual respect; but

i) that mutual respect could come only when blacks had taken the power to demand their rights and then move from a strong position;

j) blacks were waking up and working toward a solidarity that would support and sustain them. Therefore, whites had to take suggestions from blacks-not vice-versa.[40]

A formal theology, a black theology, was on the horizon to provide this re-interpretation of Christianity from the black context.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s a number of scholarly works came forth to address these religious questions.

One of the early signs of this process was 'A Message to the People of South Africa', a document issued jointly by the Christian Institute and South African Council of Churches. It rejected apartheid on biblical grounds, recognized God's kingdom as incipient within history and called on Christians to struggle for 'the salvation of the world and human existence in its entirety.[41]

Although these groupings were diverse in race, multi-racialism within the theological discussions would still have its downfalls. "It is important to notice," Peter Walshe wrote, "that while espousing a social gospel, the document [Message to the People of South Africa] was still essentially paternalistic-a call to white South Africans to establish justice for the poor. This tentative step towards a theology of liberation was not a call for the empowerment of the oppressed; nor was it a call to the poor to liberate themselves."[42]

Theologians such as Sabelo Ntwasa, Manas Buthelezi, and Basil Moore were some of the first South Africans to speak and write in an independent fashion regarding this new theology of liberation. Around 1972, they imported the work of James Cone, as it proved useful in addressing some of the similarities

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of black identity and religion that were taking place with African Americans. In 1977, Allan Boesak produced the first scholarly work, *Farewell to Innocence,* a study on black theology and power coming out of South Africa[43]. Simultaneously, the Black Theology Project had begun as a component of the University Christian Movement with the theologians of this group having a close relationship with SASO and BCP.

South African black theologians exposed the lies behind the theological basis for apartheid. The truth was being restated in a way that was informed through a theology of religious consciousness. In this next section of the chapter, some of the prominent theologians of South Africa speak on theology and consciousness.[44] Many of these individuals are exponents of this movement so their practical experience, as well as their academic scholarship, is reflected in their work. The researcher focuses on these perspectives as they align themselves with the tenets of black consciousness thought.

Bongonjalo Goba

Bongonjalo Goba's work spans the entire ideology of black consciousness. His theology is reflective of his having worked closely with Biko. His theology put emphasis on the black consciousness tenets of black cultural affirmation, the holistic ethos of African spirituality, and self-reliance. Goba's theological sources are in the African tradition of a corporate personality, the Bible for its liberation motifs, and the overall black experience through songs, poetry, radical faith, and struggle.[45] His awareness of how black theology and black consciousness had an ability to change South Africa is evident throughout his writing.

Goba's theology is informed by sources that encapsulate African culture in its historical fullness. He situated theology at the center of African culture, similarly to the manner in which all religions are shaped by their cultural context. The unique cultural perspectives of traditions, stories, and songs enhance the personal understanding of victory and defeat, struggle and determination within the religious context. Thus, African traditions, Christian religion, and liberation became the ideals that Goba meshed together. He explained that the theology and religion of missionaries cannot be included in this re-examination of spirituality as it was not born of indigenous African tradition and is therefore tainted.

African traditions lead one to recognize the individual in relation to his community. One component of Goba's work is a focus on corporate personality. To Goba, "corporate personality means the embodiment of the community in the individual. The individual represents the community to which he belongs. What the individual does affects the community, and vice versa."[46] Through the processes of life, one's life symbolizes the intentions of the community. These intentions are expressed and attained because through community relations, value is placed on the individual. Goba adds "what is significant is that behind the concept of kinship everybody is related to everybody else. This unique relationship extends vertically to include the departed and those yet to be born. This gives a sense of profundity, historical belongingness, and deep-rootedness."[47] Maturing into an awareness of self; one is tuned into one's own social awareness and, equally, social responsibility. Kinship, and not

individualism, is an attribute of African culture. So this brotherhood of

personality, the corporate personality, maintains community unification.

The holistic ethos of African spirituality is evident in Goba's critique of

western theology for what he refers to as its compartmentalized and selfish

religion. The belief that Eurocentric religion focused on God in a way that was

individual as well as inconsistent and hypocritical was part of Goba's theology. In

contrast, Goba would describe his belief of the African theological worldview

through a quote by John Mbiti:

> Because traditional religions permeate all departments of life, there is no
> formal distinction between the sacred and the secular, the religious and the
> nonreligious, between the spiritual and material areas of life. Wherever
> the African is, there is his religion.[48]

Through black consciousness, Goba was able to see the necessity of the challenge

to white theological constructs. These constructs were incomplete and altered the

community sustainability causing confusion because of the differences in

traditions, customs, and languages. He explained:

> Many current names used by African Christians for God do not reflect
> their traditional meaning because these were given by Western
> missionaries who had very little knowledge of the African Religious
> worldview. For example, the current name for God we use in Zulu is
> Unkulunkulu, 'the greatest one,' and is felt to be inadequate; yet the
> traditional name "Umvelinqangi" which means the one who is the
> beginning of everything, the source of life or to use Tillich' phrase, "the
> ground of our being, " is hardly used with the African Christian
> community.[49]

Such inconsistencies, Goba asserted, exist due to the fact that the traditional

community ethos that was present no longer exists. For that reason he called for

complete black solidarity.

> To discover our rightful place in this country, we need a deeply rooted
> sense of solidarity, a sense of a dynamic, relevant black community. For

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this we need to rediscover the meaning of this concept with all its practical implications; we need to look back at what we have lost and re-examine our present strategies. The black consciousness movement will be impoverished without this basic tenet of solidarity, of social consciousness......for it rejects and transcends individualism.[50]

Goba recognized the benefits of self-reliance. He saw white racism in the form of apartheid adherents and white liberals. Racism was colonial with two positions: white missionary theology (which perpetuated false myths and religious beliefs) and the white liberal element (which symbolized a multi-racial church of hypocrisy and paternalism).[51] He charged racism as a sin against humanity and in direct violation of God's will. With a paternal liberal element involved in the black theological structures, a message for accommodation, and not justice, will prevail. During this time period, Goba believed a multi-racial approach was not yet useful.

Goba spoke to liberation as the focus of blacks' self-reliance. "A liberation ethic must revive a sense of solidarity amongst the black oppressed people so as to remain vigilant and aware of the hidden agenda [of the nationalist party]."[52] Hidden agendas are able to flourish in a community that is not unified. A liberation ethic must seek to revive a sense of mutual destiny amongst the black oppressed as part of the larger struggle for a democratic society. "What this implies is the oppressed must put their house in order and forge a united strategy to finally dismantle the system of apartheid."[53] Goba saw the community church as having a responsibility in self-reliance. Some of the basic tenets of the church would include a focus on man's being made in God's image, emphasizing *eendrag* "unity through teamwork," citizen involvement in responsible government, and children having the right to secure the best education.[54]

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Takatso Mofokeng

As a contributor to the Black Theology Project and *Journal of Black Theology* in South Africa, Takatso Mofokeng's theology empowered black Christians through the cross of Jesus Christ. Mofokeng viewed black culture, a holistic spiritual ethos, and self-reliance from such a perspective. Mofokeng's work focused on humanization as the primary aspect of culture in his theology. He saw blacks as eternal sufferers, as they have suffered through the loss of their land, history, and most other aspects of their culture. Mofokeng's reexamination of self-suffering is closely related to Biko's ideals that advocate a will to no longer allow the oppressor to control one's thought process. He saw Christian conversion as an opportunity to be recreated and liberated. This conversion allowed for a new being for which blacks could "accept the negativity of their situation, face it, and transform it into a positive instrument of liberation. This means accepting the cross and the history of the cross, bearing it and moving toward the future that is made different from the present by engagement."[55] With such religious and cultural emphasis being placed on blacks becoming active subjects in their own history, Dwight Hopkins observed that for Mofokeng, Christology is black consciousness and black consciousness is Christology.[56]

Christology for Africans focused on the symbolic life of Jesus Christ. Mofokeng drew a connection to Jesus Christ hanging on a cross-poor, suffering, broken, hungry, and falsely vilified-very much like the story of black South Africans. "When the story of Jesus of Nazareth is told, black culture provides the background against which that story is heard." The people who are eager for

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liberation are quick to hear and recognize the voice of the Messiah through the filter of their culture."[57]

When referring to culture, Mofokeng found it difficult to reconnect without the land because of the physical and emotional connection to one's land. As far as the black cultural condition is concerned, land is the mother and black people are "sons and daughters of the soil. It gives black people an identity and receives an identity back from them."[58] He recognized that land is not just a means of production but that it also serves religious significance and has sacred places in which to communicate with the forefathers. The sacrilegious stripping of land tears away at the roots of black culture.

With relevance to culture and community, Hopkins noted Mofokeng's analyses of land as theologically important because it is "the basis for their God given self-respect and creativity."[59] Mofokeng's thoughts were elaborated by Hopkins in that "in South Africa black people's expression of love for themselves...includes a struggle to recover their land. This is the theme that recurs incessantly in different form right through the entire history of black South Africans. Why is land included in the realization of the black people's humanity? It is the vital and essential part of the being of black people."[60] Hopkins espouses the belief that the apartheid program's refusal to restore indigenous land is heresy and blasphemy against God.

Re-visioning history is also an important element of empowering and liberating sustenance in Mofokeng's theology.

> In other words, Jesus Christ the Crucified was there as the liberative undercurrent in our African past, creating, evoking, and empowering a

corresponding liberative undercurrent in our African history. Anthropologically, this liberative undercurrent in our African history is represented by certain names of the 'founding fathers' of African existence and resistance who are heroes because they were martyred in struggles for their humanity and land as well as for the survival and future of their posterity-you and I. This is where the names of Chaka, Moshoeshoe, Sekhukhuni and others of yesterday come in as the carriers of a liberation tradition in our black history.[61]

Another form of culture within the religious resistance involves songs and dance. Mofokeng returned to the heart of the community and highlighted activities therein. He saw "the singing of freedom songs to the rhythm of modified African *toyi toyi* dance movements which come from the depths of the black ghettos of our land, as an integral part of the new liturgy."[62]

As a strict adherent of black consciousness philosophy, Mofokeng only saw blacks as capable of promoting humanity in South Africa. He advocated a theology that blacks must initiate a new society that is not based on race or class. "He saw no contextual theology; either you do theology of the black oppressed or theology of the white oppressor. Black consciousness, in Mofokeng's lens, acts as black theology's dialogical partner, epistemological informant, philosophical framework and programmatic praxis."[63]

To institute this new society and humanity, blacks first had to have a psychological renewal, which had to take place independently of white participation. He argued that the black oppressed culture must reach into the darkest corner of its subconscious and come up with a culture of resistance and struggle.[64] He focused on individuals in the community and their role in initiating this type of thought. He informed us that priests and clergy are the religious police because they have the ability to control the message of the Bible. With this

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authority, they have the ability to control the behaviors of a Christian-dominated society. "In a situation of very limited ideological options, black theologians who are committed to the struggle for liberation and are organically connected to struggling Christian people, have chosen to honestly do their best to shape the Bible into a formidable weapon in the hands of the oppressed instead of just leaving it to confuse, frustrate, or even destroy our people."[65]

Mofokeng's theology highlighted the misinterpretation of Jesus Christ's suffering on the cross and lack of recognition of his resurrection as to how blacks have come to pattern their being as constant sufferers.[66] In typical black consciousness fashion, Mofokeng sought religion's use as a tool of empowerment of black people through Jesus Christ, and reversing black acquiescence to suffering. He believed in this pronounced self-determination that can create a new society.

Itumeleng Mosala

A member of the Black Theology Project, Itumeleng Mosala saw black theology as best approached from a historical-materialist approach. The idealism of white liberal or missionary theology is incompatible with black reality. Mosala viewed these discrepancies in a historical context and related South Africa's plight to the changes in material reality, viewing them as necessary for developing theology.

Mosala supported cultural affirmations in Christianity through his denunciation of contextual theologies. He spoke against contextual theology because (1) it can be harmlessly applied to any situation, (2) lacks specificity,

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giving only general aspects of black theology, and it (3) sanitizes white

oppressors' theology.[67] He saw contextual theology as devoid of theoretical

content, because every form of social analysis operates from context. In his view,

blackness and oppression need to be fully recognized when dealing with black

theology. In congruence with this thought, he stated contextual theology

prematurely absolves the oppressor of his theological misinterpretations and

channels of exploitation. Mosala argued that blacks must initiate theology from

the position of the oppressed as well as from a position that affirms their position

as equal human beings under God.

In a return to culture through history and religion, Mosala saw the

restoration and utilization of these traditional entities as paramount to liberation.

> In fact, to understand the relevance of African traditional religion one
> must comprehend the significance of culture. To speak of a people's
> religion is to speak of their history, and to speak of their history is to speak
> of their culture. African traditional religions reflect the point at which the
> historical development of the Africans was arrested and halted. And since
> the subjugation of a people requires the suppression of their culture to be
> successful, an attempt to liberate a people requires the negation of the
> oppressor culture as an important starting point. Culture is not only the
> outcome of a people's history. It is a determinant of that history. To want
> to liberate people is to desire to restore them to the centre of the historical
> process. Commitment to a people's liberation is reflected by commitment
> to their culture. It is here where African traditional religion can make a
> lasting contribution. [68]

Traditional African religions, as culture, support Mosala's historical-materialist

approach. Seeing theology from a historically oppressed perspective, instead of a

reactionary position, allows for its use as a revolutionary theology. Hopkins

asserted the point of Mosala that "African traditional religions teach today's black

theology the importance of functioning communally in the struggle. In particular,

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communalism mandates a collective lifestyle among members of the black community and not an individualistic way of life."[69] Mosala saw Christianity as socialism where there is equality and all are involved in the development of society. It was his belief that there has to be morality to have had or now have this type of socialism or communalism.

> Morality is the fundamental strength of this (communalistic) mode of production, or economic system. And this morality is not abstract, not tagged on from the outside. The ethics of the communal mode of economic production is its condition of existence. It consists in the fact that production is for meeting perceived human needs. The starting point and the goal of production is human beings and their well-being. People are the basis and the content for the morality of this economic system.[70]

Other cultural sources included the historical influence of African independent churches as a development for the poor and peasant classes in South Africa. Mosala advocated in Hopkins that "to ascertain and appropriate the specific biblical God, then, requires a double meditation, that is, a dialectical interplay between the historical experience of the oppressed classes in the Bible and the historical experience of the black working class and peasants in South Africa. The God found in both historical experiences will be the biblical God of liberation."[71]

Mosala chose to utilize the historical-materialist approach to liberation. He saw the return to culture as the solution for the political and economic ramifications of apartheid. He spoke briefly to self-reliance through this materialist approach, believing there is no liberation until there was a redistribution or return of the land which is essential to South Africans culture. This would start the process of black-white reconciliation.

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Mosala defines reconciliation-liberation in light of reversing black alienation, which is not primarily from white people, but foremost from black people's land, other instruments and means of production, black history, culture, religious traditions and institutions. Therefore liberation from alienation accrues land, and so forth, for black reconciliation, first, and second, for black reconciliation with whites.[72]

Frank Chikane

Frank Chikane has been involved in antiapartheid efforts in numerous ways. Chikane's religious contributions led him to serve as General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches. He was heavily involved in the Institute of Contextual Theology and he was instrumental in drafting the *Kairos Document*. Chikane's theology sought to return to the community for solutions to racial injustice. Hopkins described Chikane as one who "goes to the people (black and white) for his theology, concentrating on building a contextual people's theology over and against the dominant theologies inherited in South Africa."[73]

Chikane spoke to black culture primarily through a focus on community centeredness. The value in the oppressed community was equally vital to Biko's work as it was to Chikane's mission. Biko sought to unite and mobilize the community based on common oppression, i.e., blackness. Chikane yearned to do the same under God's authority, establishing a liberation motif for the disadvantaged community.

Chikane's theology spoke out against those who used the Word of God and talked above the congregation. Using western and academic ideals, their interpretation of the Bible did not allow for a common message to be delivered through to the people. Similar to a Marxian analysis of religion, Chikane saw the

apartheid power structure as having theological dominion, thus societal control

over the masses.

Chikane noted that the discrepancies in theology flourished in South

Africa. The domination of theology resulted in power for whites and oppression

for blacks. He gave an example of such white interpretations and discrepancies of

religion:

> Historical evidence was advanced to back up this analysis, especially the
> event where the Boers prayed before they waged war against the
> aborigines of this country, and declared that if God would help them win
> the war they would build a church for God. They fulfilled their
> "covenant" with their God-which students at the time called the "white
> god," and laid a gun on top of the Bible to signify this gross distortion of
> the grace and covenant of God.[74]

Chikane argued that acknowledgement by the community of these discrepancies

and misinterpretation resulted in a spirit of resistance in the community. Protest

songs spoke to the communities' frustration with the denial of their humanity:

> *Senzenina senzenina* (four times).
> *Sono sethu ubumnyama* (four times)
> *Amabhuna izinja.*[75]

In English, this song meant: "What have we done, What have we done? Our sin is

our blackness. The Boers are dogs." The protest and seeds of revolution were

ready to burst forth from the community. It is evident that Chikane desired to see

the "attack on the legitimacy and morality of the established order"[76] but aimed

for the community to have an internal, as opposed to external, revolution.

> My usage in speeches and writings has to do with the concept of radical
> change as opposed to conservative or liberal models of change. My basis
> for this conception lies in my understanding of "sin" in theological terms.
> Confronted with the Gospel of Jesus Christ one has to radically turn away
> by changing radically from the old sinful nature into a new creature in

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Christ. There is nothing as radical (or as revolutionary) to me as conversion and reconciliation with God.[77]

From that position, Chikane advocated a change for all, the oppressed, the disadvantaged--black and white. He reasoned that theologians had to come off their pedestals and deal with the necessary liberation of the oppressed. Chikane professed that theology is demanding because it challenged theologians to forfeit power and status to align with God's disadvantaged. The people and the community must become the centerpiece of theological discussion. Hopkins interpreted Chikane's beliefs that:

> Christian witness, then, is motivated by the quest to approximate on earth the kingdom of God. To this end Christians gear their "doing theology" for a full humanity wherever the people endure death by hunger and disease-in squatter camps, the bantustans' arid lands, and the ghettoes. In sum, Chikane groups together Christian witness (a radical social change), theodicy (the context of the people's suffering) and liberation (justice for the people in the kingdom).[78]

Operating from the political theological trend, Chikane was aware of the interconnectedness between race and class struggle. Chikane's theology held that oppression should not come from black or white. True justice under God allows for the exploitation of no race or class. A return to the holistic ethos of spirituality allows for this completeness in justice. "Some think you can lead a spiritual life outside your experience. That's why people continue to oppress others. Some Christians don't see anything wrong in exploiting farm workers, because that is not spirituality, and they can still go to church on Sunday and do their spiritual thing."[79] For South Africans, Chikane was fully aware that liberation for the race would come through liberation of the underclass community. Chikane believed in a non-racialism that sought justice for all South

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Africans. Chikane's perspective was that non-racialism can occur only through reconciliation, and will occur only after a legitimate repentance and the departure from oppressive activity.

Desmond Tutu

Desmond Tutu, an accomplished contributor of black theology, served as the first black Secretary of SACC and the first black Archbishop of Cape Town. This Nobel Peace Prize winner offered a demanding yet reconciliatory approach to black theology. In regard to the affirmation of black culture and humanity, Tutu saw the Exodus story as an example of an oppressed class that parallels the situation of apartheid and colonial exploitation. During this process of societal flux, due to colonial influence, God, Jesus, and the angels were all being presented as white. He stated that a movement such as the black consciousness movement had to come along in order to restore some of the values inherent to African culture.

Tutu examined the land issue and the fact that religion in traditional aspects was a part of the soil. The denial of this religious and communal tradition disrupted the cycle of human togetherness in African society. Western religion promoted a religion that allowed for individualism. Tutu claimed that whites had a "cerebral religion"[80]; and he advocated a return to *ubuntu*. Tutu advocated. "I lay great stress on humanness and being truly human. In our African understanding, part of *ubuntu*-being human-is the rare gift of sharing....blacks are beginning to lose this wonderful attribute, because we are being inveigled by the

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excessive individualism of the West. I loathe capitalism because it gives far too great play to our inherent selfishness."[81]

Tutu saw self-reliance as deterministic. He viewed blacks having the right to coalesce as a group and then make the determination whether or not to interact with whites on an equal basis. This was consistent with black consciousness philosophy in that the philosophy ultimately sought to encourage cultural awareness and then destroy itself, recognizing a global humanity. This determination is important because "black consciousness' separation policy must succeed," Hopkins claimed about Tutu, "because it actualizes the worth of a black person as a 'child of God' who can live without white tutelage."[82] Another interesting point in this regard is that he advocated blacks being self-reliant so that ultimately whites can be liberated upon their return to one another. Tutu argued that no one in South Africa can achieve liberation until blacks were emancipated.

Notable Theological Perspectives

Manas Buthelezi saw love as the premise of his theology. He believed reconciliation to be necessary as "a theology that blocks black-white contact in society reflects not a mere skewed political policy, but a sacrilegious attack on agape, God's love. God's love provides the cornerstone for racial fellowship." [83] Buthelezi maintained that blacks should initiate this reconciliation and fellowship and be the leading and guiding force in re-establishing national and global humanity.

Buthelezi believed that Christian conversion could change South Africans to a consciousness of forgiveness. He described it this way:

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The gospel will save black people from the effects of white rejection, Buthelezi asserts, and thus empower them with their own sense of God given worth and potential. Freed from this rejection, blackness becomes God's grace instead of the "biological scourge" concocted by the white power structure and internalized by blacks. Concomitantly, white people will remove their chains of unrealized love and injustice between the races. Blacks will appreciate that they are not less than human; white will accept that they are no more than human." [84]

Simon Maimela put emphasis on the church's role in South African social relations. He focused on human dynamics and relationships. Emphasizing that sin (selfishness, lovelessness) caused the disruption of human relationships, he reflected a perspective that viewed the Christ event as allowing for the atonement of these sins between God and human and human and human. He stated that the church had failed in reconciling and establishing this link.

He believed the church had to be instrumental in black liberation. The church cannot have a beggar mentality that aligned "its hopes and ambitions with those of the dominant classes in society, the church began to accept the pessimistic view that equality, social justice and healthy human interrelationships are not possible this side of the grave."[85] The church must see the light from the word of God and help lead the community to a place of cultural and spiritual liberation.

Lastly, Allan Boesak focused on the Word of God as a source of liberation. Boesak believed that "neither blackness or whiteness conditions the word."[86] His focus on the holistic ethos of spirituality is evident in how black theology "seeks to take seriously the biblical emphasis on the wholeness of life, which has always had its counterpart in the African heritage, trying to transform the departmentalized theology blacks have inherited from the western world into a

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biblical, holistic theology. It is part of the black struggle toward liberation from religious, economic, psychological, and cultural dependency."[87]

Black religion strove for an independent self-reliance that perceived Christ as an example of the suffering that precedes reconciliation. Acknowledging that reconciliation implied suffering and death, Hopkins stated that Boesak insisted that "Christ had to die. Likewise we too must prepare to sacrifice our lives for the sake of the other."[88] Such self-reliance and fearlessness allowed for a democracy of equality.

Community reconciliation was also part of self-reliance. Reconciliation required affirmation of black humanity and culture by blacks themselves. Boesak added that "To ask blacks to love themselves is to ask them to hate oppression, dehumanization, and the cultivation of a slave mentality. It is to ask them to know that they are of infinite worth before God, that they have a precious human personality worthy of manifestation."[89] He ended by reflecting on the fact that man's infinite worth based on the Word of God was the focus of any cultural and political theological program.

The black consciousness movement of the 1970s began, in a philosophical sense, as a holistic critique of the system of apartheid. Initially attacking the apartheid structure with the tools of psychological revolution presented for a more solidified model or course of action to follow. Although this philosophy did not reach every corner of South Africa, the college students, as well those with religious interests, disseminated the challenge and conscientization when and where they could.

The students with a resounding chant of "freedom first" realized that this mission/ideology would have ultimate political and personal rewards, consequences, and implications. The focus of using their blackness as a weapon was powerful not only in numbers but because of what blackness came to mean individually. It was a way to liberate and relate to a suppressed culture of unity and humanity. Veils of inferiority were being removed and the boundaries of one's respect and dignity were being established by the people themselves and not the apartheid state. With this self-reliant return to traditional culture, a holistic ethos of spirituality was recaptured that would allow them to envision the morality and righteousness of their existence.

Clergy and seminarians equally recognized and subsequently promoted the usefulness of Christianity as a religion for South African blacks. An emphasis on how God perceives an individual's place of equality amongst all humanity was a popular thought. Furthermore, the way God chose to identify with man through his community and community through each man is worthy of note particularly in the South African context. Black consciousness clergy brought to the pulpit God's ability to identify with the oppressed through his son, Jesus Christ and his message and acts of liberation.

The next chapter continues to examine black consciousness philosophy, as well as black power, and the ways in which these thoughts were translated into community praxis and social protest.

NOTES

[1] David Chidester, *Religions of South Africa* (London and New York: Routledge Publishing, 1992), p. 187.

[2] Ibid. p. 200.

[3] Ibid. p.199.

[4] Ibid. p. 200.

[5] Unity in the Liberation Struggle. This document was collected at the Historical Papers and Manuscript Division at the University of Cape Town.

[6] Nyameko Pityana, *"What is Black Consciousness and How is Black Theology Related to It?"* as cited in Basil Moore, ed. *The Challenge of Black Theology in South Africa* (Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1973), p. 60.

[7] Bernard Spong, Personal interview. 2 August 2004.

[8] Weli Mazamisa, Personal interview. 30 July 2004.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Allan Boesak, Personal interview. 29 July 2004.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Dwight Hopkins, *Black Theology-USA and South Africa* (New York: Orbis,1989), p. 116.

[14] *Evening Post*, "White Support for Blacks Rejected", January 23, 1971.

[15] Willa Boesak, *God's Wrathful Children-Political Oppression and Christian Ethics*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Errdmans Publishing Company, 1995). p. 50.

[16] Fatton, Robert. *Black Consciousness in South Africa: The Dialectics of Ideological Resistance to White Supremacy.* (1986, p. 67) as cited in *Southern African News Agency (SANA) Bulletin, #11(8/1979).*

[17] T. Molewa, Poem "On Black Consciousness". This document was collected at the Historical Papers and Manuscript Division at the University of Cape Town.

[18] Eddie Makue, Personal interview. 3 August 2004.

[19] Bernard Spong, Personal interview. 2 August 2004.

[20] Mgebwi Levin Snail. *The Antecedents and the Emergence of the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa: It's Ideology and Organization.* (German Publication: Akademischer Verlag Munchen, 1993), p. 255.

[21] Nyameko Pityana, "What is Black Consciousness", p. 58.

[22] Barney Pityana, Personal interview. 5 August 2004.

[23] Steve Biko, *I Write What I Like* (London: Bowerdean Publishing Company, 1978), p. 45.

[24] Snail, *The Antecedents and the Emergence of the Black Consciousness,* p. 255.

[25] *United Nations Centre against Apartheid-Department of Political and Security Council Affairs-October 1977.* "Steve Biko (1948-1977) Fighter against apartheid and apostle for black consciousness."

[26] Ibid.

[27] Biko, *I Write What I Like,* p. 42.

[28] Ntjamuu Dan Habedi, Personal interview. 4 August 2004.

[29] Biko, *I Write What I Like,* p. 92.

[30] Bernard Spong, Personal interview. 2 August 2004.

[31] Japie Lapoorta, Personal interview. 28 July 2004.

[32] Snail, *The Antecedents and the Emergence of the Black Consciousness,* p. 256.

[33] *African Communist.* This document was collected at the Historical Papers and Manuscript Division at the University of Cape Town.

[34] Biko, *I Write What I Like,* p. 36.

[35] Paraphrase from Barney Pityana's popular statement "Black man, you are on your own" emphasizing the need for African self reliance in the apartheid struggle.

[36] *Varsity Reporter,* "Blacks Come to Fore at Leaders Workshop," March 3, 1971.

[37] *Evening Post,* "White Support of Blacks Rejected-Not the way to attain our aspirations, says Biko," January 23, 1971.

[38] *Sunday Tribune,* "Black Power Pleas Rock Cape," January 24, 1971.

[39] *South African News Agency (SANA Bulletin) August 1979 #11.* P.O. Box 1076, Gaborone, Botswana. Interview with Randwezi "Harry" Nengwekhulu.

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[41] Peter Walshe, *Prophetic Christianity and Liberation Movement in South Africa.* Pietermaritzburg (South Africa: Cluster Publications, 1995), p. 54.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid. p. x.

[44] *Black Theology-USA and South Africa: Politics, Culture, and Liberation* by Dwight Hopkins highly informs this section of my research. His personal referral to this text has been incredibly useful as a source for supporting and complementing my methodology.

[45] Dwight N. Hopkins, *Black Theology- USA and South Africa: Politics, Culture, and Liberation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1989), p. 126.

[46] Bongonjalo Goba, "Corporate Personality: Ancient Israel and Africa" as cited in Basil Moore, ed. *The Challenge of Black Theology in South Africa* (Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1973), p. 65.

[47] Ibid. p. 67.

[48] John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New York: Anchor Books Doubleday and Co, 1970), p. 2. as cited in Bongonjalo Goba, "Towards a Quest for Christian Identity: A Third World Perspective," *Journal of Black Theology,* 2, 2, (1988), p. 32.

[49] Bongonjalo Goba, "Towards a Quest for Christian Identity: A Third World Perspective," *Journal of Black Theology,* 2, 2, (1988), p. 33.

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[50] Bongonjalo Goba, "Corporate Personality: Ancient Israel and Africa" as cited in Basil Moore, ed. *The Challenge of Black Theology in South Africa* Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1973), p. 67.

[51] Hopkins, *Black Theology- USA and South Africa,* p. 126.

[52] Bongonjalo Goba, "Searching for a Liberating Ethic," *Journal of Black Theology,* 6, 2, (1992), p.56.

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[55] Takatso Mofokeng, "The Crucified and Permanent Crossbearing: A Christology for Comprehensive Liberation," *Journal of Black Theology,* 7, 1, (1993), p. 25.

[56] Hopkins, *Black Theology- USA and South Africa,* p. 134.

[57] Takatso Mofokeng, "The Crucified and Permanent Crossbearing", p. 24.

[58] Takatso Mofokeng, "A Black Christology: A New Beginning," *Journal of Black Theology,* 1, 1, (1987), p. 11.

[59] Hopkins, *Black Theology- USA and South Africa,* p. 137.

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[61] Takatso Mofokeng, "A Black Christology", p. 8.

[62] Takatso Mofokeng, "Popular Religiosity: A Liberative Resource and a Terrain of Struggle," *Journal of Black Theology,* 4, 2, (1990), p. 18.

[63] Hopkins, *Black Theology- USA and South Africa,* p. 135.

[64] Mofokeng, "A Black Christology", p. 9.

[65] Takatso Mofokeng, "Black Christians, the Bible, and Liberation,: *Journal of Black Theology,* 2, 1, (1988), p. 40.

[66] Dwight N. Hopkins, *Black Theology- USA and South Africa,* p. 134.

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[68] Mosala Itumeleng, *Biblical Hermeneutics and Black Theology in South Africa* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), p. 98.

[69] Hopkins, *Black Theology- USA and South Africa,* p. 130.

[70] Mosala, *Biblical Hermeneutics and Black Theology in South Africa,* p. 72.

[71] Hopkins, *Black Theology- USA and South Africa,* p. 131.

[72] Ibid. p.133.

[73] Ibid. p. 115.

[74] Frank Chikane. *No Life of my Own* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1988), p.120.

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[76] Frierro, *The Militant Gospel,* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1977) as cited in Chikane, *No Life of my Own,* p. 126.

[77] Ibid. p. 119.

[78] Hopkins, *Black Theology- USA and South Africa,* p. 117.

[79] Chikane, *No Life of my Own,* p. 126.

[80] Bongonjalo Goba, "Towards a Quest for Christian Identity", p. 33.

[81] Hopkins, *Black Theology- USA and South Africa,* p. 142.

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[83] Ibid. p. 98.

[84] Ibid. p. 100.

[85] Simon Maimela, "Theological Dilemmas and Options for the Black Church," *Journal of Black Theology,* 2, 1, (1988), p. 19.

[86] Allan Boesak, Personal interview. 29 July 2004.

[87] Allan Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence: A Socio-Ethical Study on Black Theology and Black Power* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1981). (Original Printing 1976.), p. 14.

[88] Hopkins, *Black Theology- USA and South Africa,* p. 107.

[89] Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 29.

CHAPTER FIVE

Spirituality has proven to be an important component of black political thought. This study has examined the convergent discourse between philosophy and religious thought. It is acknowledged that, from the secular and religious perspective, black power and black consciousness philosophy had similar ideological tenets. An affirmation of black culture and humanity as well as a self-reliant or separatist agenda were the most recognized aspects of both these philosophies. The philosophies differed in one major respect. Political modernization was a major element of the black power program, while reclaiming a holistic spirituality through Christianity was a more significant component for black consciousness. This conclusion reflects on the ideological components and the tangible impact of both philosophies, culminating into an analysis of the social constructs of black empowerment and *ubuntu*.

In South Africa and the United States, the affirmation of black culture was the major priority of black power and black consciousness philosophy. Focusing on an emblematic blackness, these movements were able to reclaim and revise what had come to be known as negative. This affirmation of blackness validated African culture and standards. There was a growing awareness of what Africa symbolized from an indigenous as well from a foreign perspective that reunited blacks with their roots. In addition to the resurgence of blackness in the social and psychological aspects of existence, God was introduced from the black perspective. Being able to recognize Jesus Christ as the liberator, as opposed to a

biased spiritual authority, was important for making these philosophical ideals sacred. Through blackness, both South African and American blacks found dignity and respect for their culture and humanity while demanding the same from their oppressors.

In South Africa, black consciousness philosophy found the transformation of this Christian message imperative. Traditional religious influences informed the morality of the daily existence of South African blacks. This holistic spirituality adopted the Christian message. The challenge for Africans to redefine and transform Christianity has been constant since its introduction by foreign colonizers and missionaries. Black consciousness theologians found success in culturally packaging Christianity to meet the needs of the South African masses.

In the United States, there was particular black power focus on political modernization or unification. Structural and institutional racism could not be eradicated merely through social protest but also had to occur by successful maneuvers in the political arena. Representing the lower class in America, black power advocates saw politics as a vehicle to broaden their participation in the decision-making process to realize a better America. This fight for justice was indeed a holy one. Black power clergy, as well as their militant secular brethren, fought for justice and equality of black humanity asserting such to the point of political, theological, and physical conflict.

These movements shared notions of empowerment and independence which allowed for a recognition of self worth. In both countries, they incorporated slogans emphasizing the fact that "they were on their own" and

prepared "to take care of business"[1]. Each group attempted to steer clear of the

myths of coalitions and false alliances with white liberal sympathizers. The

clergy of these movements encouraged varying levels of multiracialism,

integration, and reconciliation. However, this harmony of races could only occur

after blacks were no longer in an oppressed position. The prevailing thought was

that God made men in individual families and groups and each group had to be

respected for their unique differences. Only then could these individual groups

unify as part of a larger human family.

This concluding chapter presents a sketch of the similar as well as

differing aspects of these philosophies. It relates some of the actions (social

responsibility) that emanated from this thought process (conscientization). First,

in both the USA and South Africa, the role of student organizations in originating

these thoughts is highlighted. The chapter then analyzes the methods of praxis

that emanated from these philosophical forces. In South Africa, the churches and

community programs are explored and in the United States, the quest for political

empowerment and the potential of self defense and rebellion is noted.[2] Thus, the

conclusion yields the hypothesized outcome of these philosophical periods as

being a period of renewal of the value of *ubuntu* and a time of collective black

empowerment.

Action: Black Consciousness and Black Power

Although the names "black power" and "black consciousness" define their

respective philosophies, much of the action of these movements began at the

student level prior to the ex post facto naming of the eras. The SASO and SNCC

student groups were intelligent, articulate, and fearless in the resistance efforts of

the 1960s and 1970s. SNCC's focus on education and political modernization were their main priorities. In an open American society, they felt this was the only way to attain their full rights as citizens. SASO chose to focus on community enlightenment and cohesion. This focus directed African masses towards an effort to dismantle the apartheid system. Collectively, students were having an active impact on the landscape of their respective political and social realities.

Student Activity

In the early days of SNCC, the student's philosophical mission of encouraging the black community toward action took form in many ways. Direct action was the most commonly expressed form of protest activity. This form of nonviolent confrontation was the tool that intimately involved students in civil rights activity. Greenberg highlights the five stages of direct action:

> There is so much about the philosophy that people as a whole never knew, because what was reported in the newspapers was just the fact that the demonstrators were not hitting back or not creating violence. But there were five steps in the process that we took a community through. The first step was investigation, where we did all the necessary research and analysis to totally understand the problem. The second phase was education, where we educated our own constituency to what we had found out in our research. The third stage was negotiation, where you approach the opposition, let them know your position, and try to come to a solution. The fourth stage was demonstration, where the purpose was to focus the attention of the community on the issue and on the injustice. And the last stage was resistance, where you withdraw your support from the oppressive system, and during this stage would take place things such as boycotts, work stoppages, and nonsupport of the system.[3]

Students in SNCC were rarely intimidated and as youngsters were very mature for their ages, their positions, and their purpose. Former SNCC Chairman John Lewis believes that SNCC leaders came out of the church since "they were

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individuals who were in seminary and those who had been deeply influenced by their Sunday school teaching and growing up in a religious home or religious community."[4] With the church as a breeding ground for activism, Lewis observes that their resistance was highly militant. For Lewis, SNCC expressed a "militant nonviolence and a desire to love the hell out of their enemies. Marches and protest were considered holy and we believed that God was on our side. We knew with God we would always prevail."[5]

SNCC blended their practical civil rights experiences with their knowledge acquired through academics to make a difference particularly in the communities of the South. The Southern United States was viciously racist; yet these students continued to fight for those in the community who needed their assistance in establishing their own means of protest. Howard Zinn writes that "by day they [SNCC] went out canvassing, door to door, in the Negro neighborhood,....talking to fearful, friendly, curious people about registering to vote, or about sending their children to something called freedom school"[6] In these schools, SNCC members engaged community adults and youngsters in discussions of politics and Negro history.

Encouraging self pride, cultural awareness, and political involvement, Ture wrote that "SNCC had black power in mind long before the phrase was used."[7] They worked to convince Southern blacks of the fallacy that "voting and politics is white folks business."[8] To a great extent, the students' role in the community had to be credited as they initiated a new brand of civil rights resistance. Through their intellectual debates and practical activism, whether

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operating from a spiritual premise or from a posture of cultural determinism, these students were offering challenges to the American power structure.

In South Africa, college students were cognizant of the history of various liberation movements and realized through the banning of the ANC and PAC that it was their time to challenge the apartheid system. Apartheid had become more than a governmental institution. It was a psychology and way of life that blacks be treated as non-beings in the country of their birth. Through exposure to various theories and philosophies, these black college students realized their responsibility in helping to conscietize the community.

As a student leader during this era, Barney Pityana, former Secretary-General of the SASO, gives an account of this time:

> The truth of the matter is that the genesis of black consciousness was in the universities and we were all university students at the time. Therefore our immediate locus was the university...therefore the well being of the university student was very, very important. We took the view that students, especially black students, are never separated from the community and environment in which they come from. So SASO's view was that every student we touched was going back to the village, to the township where they came from and has a responsibility through those structures to influence a wider circle of thinking. So we paid a lot of attention in training students in community action, community engagement, etc. So community development therefore was a very, very important political tool because we were equipping our students with an understanding of what their role was in the community in terms of leadership, in terms of accessing resources, in terms of training others, in terms of consciousness raising. [9]

SASO sought to take their university education back to their homes to share so the information could be further disseminated. Through such dialogue, the student organization grew into community organizations which provided outlets for people's growth, consciousness, education, and development of skills. Individual

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and communal responsibility repeated itself as the defining force for momentum

in the South African liberation struggle. Pityana elaborates further:

> We started the community development projects by saying we actually
> have some skills as students. We want to assist for our own growth and
> development in imparting some of these skills to the communities. That
> was a way of saying on our part, to the students who were members of
> SASO, that we can never be educated all alone. We have a duty and
> responsibility to engage with our societies and communities. And what
> that did, I think, uniquely those days, what that did was get students out
> there in communities. Every holiday we had work camps in different parts
> of the country. In other places there were medical students for example
> who worked camps in Durban every weekend. We were organizing and
> running clinics, assisting in clinics, and building schools within the
> communities. We were not just building schools all by ourselves. We
> actually created in the communities where we were a linkage between the
> students and community. So, in essence ubuntu was a very key concept
> because we were saying to our people that however educated you were
> you had certain obligations to your communities and places where you
> come from. You need to serve, you must actually give back, you must
> actually walk alongside your people. We were saying that students are the
> vehicle towards reforming and redeveloping communities.[10]

Students took the lead as the central locus of control and responsibility of

the apartheid struggle. They believed not only in consciousness raising but in

tangible efforts as well. An understanding existed that God did not make a

mistake in making them black and that God would help those who helped

themselves. The article, "Practical Application of the Ideology of Black

Consciousness," spoke to this important revelation:

> In vocalising and popularising the idea of black consciousness your aim is
> to give people a faith in themselves and their struggle. That hope must be
> sustained as an active hope. It must compel them to do things for
> themselves in the belief that we all share ie. that so doing is the initial step
> in self rediscovery and the drive towards attainment of our goals. We
> must never allow people to cultivate a passive hope that God will one day
> come down to solve problems. God is not in the habit of coming down to
> earth and solving people's problems.[11]

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The Church

Members of the South African Council of Churches (such as the South African independent church and the separate Dutch Reformed body) all professed that liberation theology played a pivotal role in community action. These churches were used as organizing locations for meetings, workshops, and community gatherings as well as spreading the gospel of black consciousness through its numerous events and activities. A healing and congealing of identity had begun to take place in the churches. DeGruchy and Villa-Vicencio write that "African Christians are torn apart and seek wholeness. They have an identity crisis. They are torn apart by loyalty to the Christian faith on the one hand, and loyalty to African culture and history, on the other. A change of perception about the Bible and African cultural expressions could make a significant contribution to African Christian identity".[12] The church was an essential ingredient in this cultural restoration.

Eddie Makue, current Director of Justice Ministries of the South African Council of Churches (SACC), spoke of the SACC and how it was challenged to respond to apartheid. He stated that "the Council of Churches had to begin to play a role that would not ordinarily be played by a Council of Churches - the role of social responsibility and political activity".[13] In addition, Bernard Spong believed the role of students in seminary and universities was invaluable. He asserted that the black consciousness people who were working in the theological seminaries and universities were obvious leaders. It was understood that they were going to put these ideas into practice not just at an academic level, but they

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would infiltrate a liberation theology through the institutions such as the churches, unions, South African Council of Churches, and the Institute of Contextual Theology.

Church denominationalism often stifled liberation activity because it stood as another form of separation. Many people closely connected to the church began to loosen their ties to orthodox standards in order to be more active in the community. The fact that active communication would often be suppressed in the church caused some to promote spirituality in their own consciousness raising and community development programs. Many theologians and academics believed they had a responsibility to serve the community in the way they best saw fit. In whatever capacity, the results of their reflection were always to be brought back to the community. Theologians were responsible for moving centrifugally between reflection and the community.

Some have argued that this dialogue between the intellectuals/clergy and the community rarely took place. They maintain that this type of thought was formed in the halls of academia and never made it beyond campus discussion and intellectual rhetoric to blossom in the communities. Allan Boesak reasons that this communication of reflection was not as difficult as it sounds. Boesak was always aware that his theology could not just be an academic theology in the sense that it would only serve his academic interests or just be a tool for discussion. What Boesak desired to do from the outset was to translate his theological and biblical thought and discovery into an understandable language for preaching to people. He reasoned that "if it is a gospel of liberation then a

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theology based on that gospel should be a theology of liberation and blackness."[14]

He took the biblical themes of liberation and preached so ordinary folk could

understand the message affirming their humanity and blackness. To his

congregations, Boesak spoke that the mere creation of people by God meant that

there is no shame in blackness. He explained that if they accepted the definition

of apartheid, and believed that they are less of a human being because they are not

white, their fundamental denial of their humanness is a sin. Boesak stated:

> It is sinful to say "o we poor colored people" or "the white man has been
> given the authority over us". It would be sinful to not assert your dignity
> as a human being because it is an insult to God. Once the people
> understood this at a fundamental level it made easier to take the next step.
> All the progressive churches began to catch on and the world churches to
> accept it as well. Some joined the struggle based on their Christian
> convictions and their discipleship... if you were a true Christian you had to
> be part of the struggle for liberation.[15]

Within such sermons, the messages were clear about the equality of all

people. The gospel of black consciousness was having an affect. It was

beginning to change and challenge the thinking of South African blacks and

whites alike. In *Pro Veritate*, a Christian Institute sponsored journal, Ernest

Baartman writes:

> The church through its preaching and work has helped the black man
> realize that he is a man. Not all streams of the church have done that in
> this country. Yet it is no lie to say that the church has made her
> contribution. When she preaches and teaches about God, as our Father,
> then it implies a sharing in the common sonship for all men in this
> country. When she preaches about Jesus nailed to a cross for the sin of the
> world, then it suggests a common brotherhood in sin for all people, black
> and white. When she teaches about the God who provides, then surely He
> provides for all. The church has taught these lessons.[16]

Japie Lapoorta stressed the importance of the church as a place for the

transfer of information and theological message of liberation. He mentioned that

the only legal gatherings of blacks during this time were in a church. The churches were used to propagate the story of blackness and somebodiness. They portrayed the heroes of the struggle and look at their culture with fresh eyes.

Lapoorta believed the church also preached collective action and morality opposed to individual morality. This message of humanness and *ubuntu* in the church developed into many small projects such as clinics, schools, and information pools. People were taught community and leadership development and political theory. Since it happened at all levels, it became a very powerful movement. Lapoorta stated that "black consciousness was there in the townships, the villages, everywhere that a person went there would be someone in the community saying this is how it has to be done, the black consciousness way".[17] It appears that in South Africa the message of black theology was moved from the campuses and pulpits into the community.

Black Political Modernization

In the United States, an aspect of this black power era was the desire to attain complete access to the political process and opportunities for economic advancement. There were constitutional guarantees for every citizen of the United States; however, there was little government protection for those who were denied these guarantees. SNCC initially fought their battles through social protest. They could now see the necessity in moving towards political power. SNCC veteran Timothy Jenkins described their politics in this way:

> One of the things that some of us feared if the student movement continued in the direction it was headed of direct action in integrating public accommodations, kneel ins at churches, sit ins at lunch counters, wait ins at recreational places, freedom rides for interstate commerce, that

at the end of the day there was no residual change in power relationships. So some of us started to push for a more political thrust in what was going on. In connection with that, we urged that the same energy be applied to voter registration that was being devoted to the social integration efforts. That precipitated quite a clash because many of the students who had gotten involved with primarily a religious motivation and orientation were more concerned with the social aspects of direct action and really not only interested but estranged from or even hostile to the political which they considered to be corrupting of the objectives. They thought that would lend us to being used politically by one party or another. They thought that it was more important to be pure and what they considered to be giving a religious witness that would ultimately lead to the inspiration of what they called the beloved community. [18]

The prevailing notion of SNCC progressives was that this residual change in power relationships needed to occur. Social integration would prove to be a fruitless effort if blacks had no political control in local or national government. The absence of political participation in the black community needed immediate attention.

Particularly in the South, blacks were denied the right to vote at a depressingly high rate. They were threatened, harassed, and demeaned at every attempt at participation. Blacks would often be given literacy tests and questionnaires to complete before they would be allowed to vote. Due to the poor educational system for blacks, many were not able to complete such tasks. Ture was of the mind that if there could be a individual as well as group understanding and acknowledgement of their constitutional rights, then a desire for participation and ownership of these rights could take place. SNCC would soon become helpful in such areas.

The SNCC progressive's trend towards political involvement took form in Mississippi and Alabama. The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and the

Lowndes County Freedom Organization served as examples of this goal of

political modernization. SNCC encouraged blacks in these communities to

realize their rights as citizens, establish their own political parties, and challenge

the existing governmental powers.

> The black people of Lowndes County were ready and made themselves
> even readier. Workshops were held, with SNCC's assistance, on the
> duties of sheriff, the coroner, the tax assessor, tax collector and members
> of the Board of Education-the offices up for election. Booklets, frequently
> in the form of picture books, were prepared by SNCC and distributed over
> the county. People began to see and understand that no college education
> or special training was needed to perform these functions. ...these
> functions called for primarily determination and common sense.[19]

These blacks were being empowered by the process and gaining an individual and

collective sense of being. Asserting their humanity through the ballot, these

communities served as models for political inclusion. Within the confines of

political modernization there also had to be a call for black economic unification.

The black dollar was powerful when withheld or when used to pool resources for

civil rights activity. Although this increased political awareness and challenge led

to group empowerment and social advancement, a secondary lesson was learned.

To truly access power, it was necessary that the unified black vote go hand in

hand with the unification of black resources.

Community Programs and Outreach

In South Africa, moving from the campus and the church and into the

community, the black consciousness philosophy made its way into the minds and

hearts of South African blacks. Cultural awareness and psychological liberation

was recognizable, but the ultimate goal of black consciousness had not yet been

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realized. The movement sought to breed independence and self-worth in a tangible form.

The article "Practical Application of the Ideology of Black Consciousness," proclaimed that black consciousness must be tackled by its advocates as a religion. "We believe in it, we think it is right, and we envisage it carrying us forwards toward the realization of our goals".[20] An example of practical application is that within the movement's organizations, each individual was responsible for meeting five people at a time, speaking to them about black consciousness in great detail and sending them off to do the same thing with another five. This practical application of black consciousness was a form of evangelism that was working to convert people to the truth.

The two main organizations that were to develop out of SASO were Black Community Programs (BCP) and Black Peoples' Convention (BPC). BCP was a community-based organization whose purpose was to jumpstart the community and put programs into action. BCP was formed in 1970 by Steve Biko with its main objective being the development and advancement of the black community particularly in rural areas. The organization would soon prove to be active in health programs, leadership training, home industries, research and publications, and other related fields.

The BPC was the political wheel of the movement which sought to challenge and change the political system of the time. It was formed in 1971 for the purpose of articulating the interests of all black people under a political banner of black consciousness. In *Black People's Convention* Vol.1, some of the

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foundational characteristics of the organization are noted. The inaugural convention of the BPC was held at the Edendale Lay Ecumenical Centre, Pietermaritzburg in July 1972. BPC projects are listed as literacy, leadership training, youth camps, conscientization (publications, rallies, seminars and symposiums), legal aid, and trade unionism. The program detailed literacy as a priority, motivation days, youth programmes such as mental alertness, physical preparedness, community development, and training for facilitators as opportunities to advance black consciousness philosophy.[21]

Both organizations had policies which members were encouraged to follow. Many of the principles and aims of the organizations were based on culture, consciousness, and communalism. The South African government's attempts to ban and eradicate the ideals of black liberation as espoused by these BCM organizations was " a futile task because, although activities and organizations may be eliminated by brutal action, ideals live on and gather strength. The ideals which inspired the individuals and organizations who were repressed in the 1950s and 1960s lived on to inspire the BCM in the 1970s. These ideals will live on to inspire others in the future"[22]

The principles and aims of the black community organizations were useful and consistent with the religious constructs associated with liberation theology. Biko saw this community focus as an attempt to empower blacks to think, create, and provide for themselves. A conversion of individual and collective thought would nullify fear and eliminate inferiority complexes ultimately dismantling the apartheid program. Nyameko Barney Pityana sums up this section by

acknowledging how BCP/BPC saw religion's role in developing character and initiating action.

> And there was a sense and desire that if we wanted to understand black society and its politics, we also needed to confront two things. First we need to confront the religiosity that was prevalent in black communities. Secondly, we needed to confront the fear that many in our communities have felt and therefore was paralyzing any future actions.....So religion was important for us therefore because if we are going to get into the conscience of many of the people we wanted to address- we needed to understand their religious character.[23]

Self-Defense, Violence, and Rebellion

One important aspect of the black power movement in regards to material action was its position on the role of self defense, violence, and rebellion. The media and society in general stressed the belief that black power symbolized violence. This question has been argued and contested by black power advocates, black moderates, and white liberals alike. The latter two believe that activity that could possibly erupt into societal chaos should be avoided as the potential to destroy previously earned gains could be destroyed. The black power progressives and clergy understood that in order to even the inequitable scales of politics and economics, conflict was inevitable.

Zinn discussed how SNCC initially started as a group that worked toward a beloved community through nonviolent direct action.[24] As the philosophy of black power grew out of that organization, many progressives believed that a beloved community could only be achieved through a period of agitation and conflict. Blacks had long accepted appealing to the conscience of racist whites, but their increasing cultural awareness led them to a point of asserting their humanity through a reciprocal physical response.

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Black power advocates were not completely opposed to nonviolence. Most believed in nonviolence if individuals were nonviolent with them. Ture and other black power advocates believed in attempting to be diplomatic, but if that measure proved unsuccessful, they would resort to other means to exercise their rightful humanity. The progressive belief was that nonviolence as a protest tactic no longer put pressure on people to change. Whites had become desensitized to the brutality of blacks as they were left bleeding and pleading for equality. Jean Genet stated that it seemed that "however Christian the whites are, they don't feel guilty about using guns: that is violence. Asking blacks in America to be nonviolent means that whites are demanding a Christian value which they themselves do not possess." [25] By defending themselves when necessary, black power advocates affirmed their humanity and applied direct pressure to the federal government to intervene. The result of federal inaction could be riots, rebellions and violence across the nation.

In a situation where the powerless challenged the powerful, conflict is unavoidable. The only way conflict will not occur is when the powerless are willing to accept whatever the powerful decides to offer them. Lewis Killian wrote that "an appeal to the white man's fear rather than to his love or his guilt is the underlying theme of black power. This theme is couched in terms of self-defense, but included in it is a total rejection of the white man's law." [26] Black power advocates were not satisfied with blacks, as constitutionally equal human beings in the United States, suffering at the bottom of the capitalist wheel in poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment. Major Jones wrote that black power

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understood that "the truth of the matter is that in any struggle, whether violent or non-violent, there will be possible loss of life; casualties are to be expected whenever one confronts the enemy as the oppressor".[27] No matter the consequences, the philosophy of black power was advancing the notion that the only way to life was through the direct confrontation of the oppressor and the willingness to confront one's own humanity through death.

A component of this application of pressure to the power establishment was fear. As discussed earlier, the concept of black power was unique in its ability to articulate the demands of a homogenous grouping of black thought so the talk of societal change by a minority group was unsettling for whites but empowering for blacks. *Black Power, Black Nationalism, Black Rebellion* notes how "talk of resistance, rebellion, and revolution is partly rhetoric, partly the necessary vocabulary of creating a new psychological state, and partly related to the actual upheavals in black ghettoes across the country."[28] So whether these claims for societal upheaval and disruption of norms was empty talk, or a strategic plan, it encouraged both groups to plan for and against resistance. Killian sums up this thought by stating "open talk of violence by black power leaders and a limited measure of actual violence against white persons and property gave rise to the vision of a black population that would neither mask its discontent nor submit to beatings but, pushed far enough, would fight back".[29]

Even black power theologians understood, as Nathan Wright stated, that "life gets better through conflict and promotes change as there is never in the broadest sense an enduring peace.[30] This "courage to be" is the ethical question

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that must be answered when asserting one's humanity, ie. one's God given

undeniable existence. These theologians believed that there could be justice and

fair play within conflict. There was a theory of just war in regards to fighting the

oppressor that the oppressed had to keep in mind. Major Jones explains this

theory:

> The theologians theory of a just war to the use of violence as a methodology in the struggle for social change....The criteria being (1) the cause fought for itself must be just, (2) the purpose of those who seek liberation must remain just while the struggles for liberation go on, (3) violence must be truly the last resort, while all other peaceful means of achieving liberation must have been exhausted; the methods and measures of violence employed during the struggle to vanquish the oppressor must themselves be just; (5) the benefits which the use of violence can reasonably be expected to bring for humanity must be greater than the evils provoked by the violent struggle itself; (6) relief must be assured for those who are in bondage; (7) the liberation and ultimate freedom achieved at the end of the struggle must be extended to all, even to those who were the prior oppressors.[31]

Black power clergy considered these aspects of a just war through their work in

the community. These clergy were ostracized by their moderate colleagues as

advocating violence and disconnecting the community from realistic goals. Black

power clergy refused to be swayed towards assimilation and false hopes of

integration. They were there to help the community to understand their anger,

frustration, and direct that energy toward group identity and power. Gayraud

Wilmore said this of his role:

> We (BP clergy) were there supporting those affected by the riots, giving food, shelter, etc. and also to bring peace with justice. Not to sell out the rioters by any means but to try and work with them and the police and the city councils to bring about a just reconciliation. This was possible in some places and not possible in others. It gave ministers/the church an extraordinary unprecedented role in the struggle to talk to secular people both white and black in the midst of an urban crisis.[32]

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In totality one would argue that the riots and violence (Red Hot Summer, Detroit, Newark, Watts) that occurred during this time period was an attempt to confront and exist. Existence is a necessary part of one's being under God. The importance of belonging whether in one's community or on a national scale is essential to the psyche of all humanity. The nonviolent tactics of love led one's humanity to be crushed by the weight of oppression. Black power would argue against acquiescence in white promises. There had to be a response. Robert Brisbane would say that "a riot is the language of the unheard."[33] Black frustrations led to discontent with being underestimated and marginalized and they moved towards resistance to this position. Ture exhorted "I'm tired of hearing people say, "I'm ready to die for my freedom", instead of saying, "I'm ready to organize and kill for my freedom."[34] Black power progressives sought a nationalist position by any means necessary whereas black power clergy channeled black furor with God's justice in mind. "The Black Power Revolution", a sermon preached in March Chapel, Boston University, Jan 15, 1967, sums up this section noting the cause and effect of blacks' actions:

> This is all why black power is a revolution: a cultural revolution which seeks to destroy the psychosis of white supremacy; political revolution which seeks to broaden the base of representative democracy; an economic revolution which seeks to expand democracy to encompass the distribution of wealth. Black power is not violence-unless violence is the only way the mute ghetto can communicate. Black power is not "racism in reverse"-unless white supremacy forces an over-statement of the legitimacy of being black. Black power is not black nationalism -unless there is no room in American for blacks. Black power is the next logical step from the civil rights movement. It is racist America being informed that those who have been excluded are now including themselves in.[35]

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Analysis of Action: Empowerment and *Ubuntu*

Through the various displays of philosophy in action a culminating ethos

has been established. Conscientization did not only manifest itself in social

protest; but also called for the power of black existence in the United States while

a renewed concentration on *ubuntu* was apparent in South Africa. A reflection on

this question of power within the black context is addressed in "The Black Power

Revolution" sermon:

> Why the notion of power? Because the white society is not going to yield
> anything of its privileged position. History makes clear over and over
> again in every kind of situation that unless power is met and balanced by
> power, those with power take unjust and unfair advantage of those without
> it. The domination of one life by another is avoided most successfully by
> an equilibrium of power and vitalities, so that weakness does not invite
> enslavement by the strong.[36]

In the United States, power was not merely a slogan of the movement but more

importantly a goal and objective. From the secular or the spiritual perspective,

power meant access to a new definition of black humanity in the social, political,

and religious dimensions of America. Reconstructed as a tool for resistance,

power was the necessary response to the inequitable distribution of political,

economic, and social resources. The *Black Power Statement* written by the

National Committee of Negro Churchmen emphasizes that "the fundamental

distortion facing us in the controversy about black power is rooted in a gross

imbalance of power and conscience between Negroes and white Americans....

We are faced now with a situation where conscienceless power meets powerless

conscience, threatening the very foundation of our nation."[37]

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It was from this perspective that black clergy began to draw the necessary parallels between God's presence and self-empowerment. Gayraud Wilmore insists that the need for black theological analysis of power was a necessity because many church people were afraid to talk about power and restricted their focus to matters of the spirit:

> One thing that we have not analyzed carefully enough in the black theology movement, which was the religious wing of the black power movement, is an analysis of power itself. When we began the National Committee of Negro Churchmen, we began to talk about the nature of power itself. I think further down the line we were aware that power, the greek term "dudimus" in the new testament relates to God's work in the world. God works through the Holy Spirit which is the instrument or vehicle by which God's power forms into institutions, communities, churches, and into secular humanist organizations. So it is very important to analyze power. What is the nature of it? Where does it come from? I think we said it came from God and it has to be used responsibly but it has to be used. In other words, it does not back away from confrontation and conflict and struggle in the interest of love but it becomes the means by which love is possible in a violent situation. Power is inevitably the instrument through which a good community is created and the instrument through which justice is delivered to those who live under oppression.[38]

Unique opportunities were presented to clergy to theologize black power. Just as the Christian and moral imperative of love and suffering existed earlier in the civil rights movement now black power could be expressed through religious ideals. Wilmore explained, "We as Christians turned toward black power as an expression of God's will for justice in American society through the implementation of responsible power to change the society, to rid the society of segregation and discrimination, and to open it up to liberate blacks and other oppressed minorities.[39]

White theological structures lacked a conection with black reality. Blacks operating within Western religious constructs soon realized the power of their own theological orientations. Ed Brown of SNCC asserted:

> You have to be careful in making one understand that yes, there were influences of a Christian philosophy or theology that shaped the movement in the beginning. As time proceeded, the results from that particular philosophy and its actions began to wane out of its own frustration. Its own different analysis came to the position that we are out here talking about turn the other cheek and these guys are bombing our churches, bombing our schools, and killing our leaders. So the attitude began to change and turn towards the pursuit of power opposed to the change in the society as a whole to a more morally based society. People began to look at power as the instrument to change the attitude and behavior of whites as it related to blacks.[40]

Many clergy broke ranks from the more orthodox or traditional teachings of black religion to advocate this new theology. This theology of resistance was a major part of the black power construct. Power came to be recognized through a fusion with religion giving birth to black theological themes such as Wilmore's cultural awareness, Cleage's black nationalism, and Cone's focus on Jesus as the almighty liberator of the oppressed.

As a result, the power of Christianity's integration with cultural identity presumed a level of social responsibility. Hegel's theory of social responsibility gathers like minds behind a common cause who feel the responsibility to improve particular societal conditions.[41] This togetherness and responsibility is the nexus of the South African ethos of *ubuntu*. *Ubuntu* and its reference to communal responsibility is essential for examination as people united behind the philosophies and action that were coming from the campus, the church, and the community.

Although not necessarily an action-oriented concept but more of a moral value, *ubuntu* is extremely relevant to the action phase of the black consciousness movement. South African black society depended on one another and the highest application of this concept is essential to organizing thought within the community. The inherent linkage of the value of *ubuntu* with this new black consciousness theology provided a holistic and revolutionary spirituality in which to resist apartheid. Dirk Louw explains this South African value system.

> The central concept "Ubuntu" means "humanity", "humanness", or even "humaneness". In short, it is "The principal of caring for each other's well being…and a spirit of mutual support… Each individual's humanity is ideally expressed through his or her relationship with others and theirs in turn through a recognition of the individual's humanity. Ubuntu means that people are people through other people. It acknowledges both the rights and the responsibilities of every citizen in promoting individual and societal well-being.[42]

Bernard Spong endorses *ubuntu* for its relevance to communication. His belief is that *ubuntu* was about communication for the community. He describes the community in South African society as communication between two people and not just a "stand back" discussion that one will give the other. Spong sees communication as something that unites people together in community with one another. Spong reflected on an experience when he offered religious group-experiential learning activities in the community. Once understanding the purpose of group-experiential learning, the participants responded: "In Africa there is no point in this activity because we come as a group and not as individuals. We come as people who belong. You're taking someone who belongs and saying become an individual so you can belong."[43]

The general definition of *ubuntu* also contains aspects of communalism.

The mechanism of communal society is always in a reciprocal dialogue with the

community with the focus on the individual. This inherent responsibility for the

individuals to take care of one another is actualized from the youth to the elders,

women to men, citizenry to the government, and living to the dead. In the *African*

Communist, R.S. Nyameko and G. Singh noted:

> Communalism is the philosophy of our fathers in which the sacred value
> of the individual is the basis of the community. The black man does not
> exist in isolation; he belongs to a family, extended family, tribe, and
> nation. Everyone and society itself is under obligation to ensure that every
> member shall be provided for. The content of black communalism is
> populist/ace. The state belongs to the people, the government exists for
> the welfare of all its people, land belongs to the people as a whole and
> they may not be alienated. The state has a duty to provide its members
> with opportunities to engage in productive efforts, to be able to contribute
> to effective production and making a living for their personal and national
> good.[44]

Kairos theologians saw *ubuntu* and moral values as interconnected. Morality and

communalism work together reflecting a Christian ethic:

> We have to rediscover that value of ubuntu, which entails a sense of
> mutual respect, harmonious social and interpersonal relations, stability
> kindness, humility, openness, benevolence, gentleness, communal justice,
> and a tradition of resistance. All of which enhance our authentic identity
> and humanity. These core moral values find expression in the life of the
> liberating Christ. For it is in him that we discover the meaning and
> abundance of life.[45]

Weli Mazamisa poses a direct analysis of *ubuntu* in regards to Christianity

and consciousness. Mazamisa sees *ubuntu* as ethics, or as a consciousness, with

its cultural religious consciousness always embedded in the common psyche and

practice of the ordinary people of the community. *Ubuntu* is at no point ever

foreign to the local community.... it is a birthright. Mazamisa states that black

theologians were the first generation of this communal property because *ubuntu* is

born of *abantu* (people) and *abantu* is the plural of *umntu* (person).

He continues by outlining the various levels in which *ubuntu* and

Christianity correlate and interwine:

> Black theology was indeed a reflection on what was there concretely as
> whatever lived in the people. Black theology is God talk and black
> theology was always based on the communal God talk of abantu...the
> people. Whenever one talked about God that is theology/theoslogia. This
> God talk happens on various levels. There is a spontaneous God talk
> when two people walk on the street and talk about their religious
> experience that is God talk/theology on the spontaneous, when two people
> attend church service and worship and participate in the collective God
> talk with the congregation, that is a different level of God talk theoslogia.
> One can say that is a liturgical level and the same two people go to
> seminary to study that is a God talk/theoslogia on another level...the
> mega-level. I see theology as a third level study on the mega-level and as
> such it needs the primary level. It needs a community that has black God
> talk/black theology and we have that community and the cause in an
> African setting. God talk is not only spiritual or religious, it is cultural,
> social, it is everything.[46]

So within this thought one begins to understand the African community

body as a life source. God's interaction with that life source came through his son

taking human form and teaching humans how to live. This is deeply embedded in

the culture of South African blacks. Mazamisa elaborates on this history of

religion and being:

> Theology operates centrifugally on what is abstract and what is
> concrete/material. You discover that in that context of the African ubuntu
> the body is a very important segment of being because the body represents
> relative life, it encapsulates the spirit... so without the body there is no
> reality, no history, no consciousness. There's no personal ubuntu without
> the body. Even God realized that. God became umntu/person in order to
> be God. Otherwise he would have remained a ghost but God is no ghost
> because he was incarnated in umntu, a human person therefore God is God
> and we can relate to God because he became human. There is no other
> God who became umntu. He is the God who ubuntufied divinity and that
> was the first level of consciousness....realizing just that.[47]

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The last phase of Mazamisa's thoughts on *ubuntu* is the notion of the body

and the community being sacred. The people are the spiritual and guiding force

of the community through their relationship with the divine. He states:

> Ubuntu is embedded in the divine. Divinity is not outside me it is
> embedded in me because of that I have the potential to be conscious about
> whatever happens to me and whoever dehumanizes me. So consciousness
> is engrained in my being. So whoever wastes that or fidgets with that,
> fidgets with the very heart of God who is the source of consciousness
> whose presence in that community ubuntufies that community and makes
> that community to resist anyone who defies it, who dehumanizes it. So
> consciousness is such a religious act it encapsulates divinity. You cannot
> trash somebody without trashing the very heart of their being. So black
> people were not objects who were meant to be objectified and around this
> time apartheid began to be declared a crime against humanity. Any form
> of racism remains a crime against humanity.[48]

Through this analysis, the many ways in which *ubuntu* is classified helps

the reader to understand the importance of this value within the South African

community as it relates to black consciousness philosophy. The theological

themes of Goba's corporate personality, Mosala's historical materialism, the

sacred value of land, and the overall togetherness of the human family is

expressed through *ubuntu*. This value developed the substance of what it would

take to endure the struggle in the apartheid era. The return to this community

ethos was essential in implementing the psychological and tangible aspects of the

black consciousness program.

CONCLUSION

In essence, oppression and liberation meant the same thing for blacks in

the United States as well as for their extended family in South Africa . South

African blacks were an oppressed majority under oppressive apartheid legislation

and the American blacks had constitutional rights but were an oppressed minority. Their resistance efforts were married chartering similar paths of action, from their student beginnings to their culminating philosophical frameworks.

As leaders in their respective movements, neither Kwame Ture nor Steve Biko were outspoken on the topic of Christianity and its influence on social politics. Originally in school to study medicine, their courage, intellect, and philosophical insights would lead them to become freedom fighters in their respective countries. Ture's student leadership helped organize voter registration efforts, freedom schools, and medical services for the disadvantaged. Likewise, Biko had significant influence in the establishment of community schools and clinics in various parts of South Africa through black consciousness programs. With programs and activities, the parallel of ideological influences was evident. During their student years it appears as though there was a moderate and integrationist (moral conscience) influence passed on to SASO from the ANC and to SNCC from Martin Luther King. As the movements evolved and matured, both black consciousness and black power incorporated a more militant and separatist (nationalist) perspective espoused by the PAC and Malcolm X. Because of the glaring similarities in ideology and methodology, the theoretical framework of this study was also born of the same sources.

Revisiting the theories and notions of Paulo Friere, W.E.B. Dubois, and Frantz Fanon, their work is readily reflected in this analysis of black power and black consciousness philosophy. Friere's emphasis on "conscitizacao" or individual awareness was the initial step for both of these movements. In a

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repressive apartheid state, Biko's black consciousness sought racial pride and dignity before all other forms of resistance. He was cognizant of the fact that if this consciousness materialized then as the majority population other tactics would follow. Similarily, Ture encouraged a new secular (and spiritual) awareness from the previously moderate civil rights position. This stage of awareness for American blacks was a period for declaring the value of black worth. This philosophy proved to be bold, forceful, and violent to some, yet encouraging, unifying, and beautiful to others. This awareness released the tension of W.E.B. Dubois's double consciousness.

In connection with Fanon's pre-combat position, these eras were in alignment with his notion of identity affirmation and challenge. Black Power recognized this moment as an opportunity to claim one's humanity. Not only from an earthly perspective, but also in a soteriological sense, the movement allowed blacks to see their infinite worth through a God who understood their struggles. Black power clergy were successful in harnessing a secular philosophy and bringing God into the middle of it--a God who demanded justice. In South Africa, through Biko's commitment to psychological liberation and community development, blacks combated fear and sought to reclaim the land of their birth. The focus on coalescing around blackness recognized a holistic spirituality and humanity through each other.

Fanon's philosophy progresses one step further. After one acknowledges one's true existence, then social responsibility proceeds. In African and African-American culture, this individual and communal responsibility to resist racism,

colonization, and apartheid is responded to through empowerment, confrontation

and potential conflict. Black consciousness responded in this stage through a host

of programs and actions where their numbers clearly represented their sincerity

and might. Black consciousness clergy helped people relate to this period of

struggle and confrontation through examples in the Exodus story, biblical and

historical materialism, and the life, work, and suffering of Jesus Christ. Black

power made its primary challenge through political modernization and through

the potential of rebellion and violence. In both instances, the clergy worked with

the community progressives providing theological justification for an equitable

inclusion or desired exclusion.

This study has shown that cultural and spiritual self awareness leads to

social responsibility. The influence of Christian religion within the black power

and black consciousness philosophical models led to a sacred and moral

imperative. Through *ubuntu* and power, black culture was to be continuously

recognized until it could become part of the equality of all humanity. For black

power, as well as for black consciousness, Fatton concluded:

> As the antithetical stage of the revolutionary dialectic, the black
> consciousness movement was bound to work for its own abolition.
> Indeed, it must be construed as an ethico-political philosophy of praxis
> whose ultimate end was its own annulment through the achievement of the
> task it had set out to accomplish. Once black people have engaged in
> revolutionary activity and erected the foundations of the new society, the
> black consciousness movement will be superseded since the class between
> the polar opposites will have resulted in a new synthesis.[49]

Through this statement, Robert Fatton is expressing a mission of

impossibility. Black power and black consciousness thought, as with other

philosophical movements, are only temporary periods of intense enlightenment

and change. However, Fatton's notion is useful as it seeks to reconcile the human

race and acknowledge a common humanity where such nationalism is

unnecessary. Society has not proven ready for this equalization of power so

therefore this goal has yet to come to fruition. Through the achievement of a

belief in the ideal and promoting action as a must to unveil a better reality, these

philosophies can be applauded for the consciousness gained, the challenge to the

power structure, and the overall humanity earned. This period of liberation and

enlightenment is still a work in progress and nearly forty years later the

framework of *ubuntu* as culture, power and politics, and Christian responsibility

still serve as the best tools for the liberation of black and African people.

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NOTES

[1] Popular phrases of the black power and black consciousness eras that emphasized their desired self reliance.

[2] These methods of praxis are not exclusive to the assigned movement. In the USA and RSA, varying degrees of participation are evident in the various areas of church, politics, community, and physical rebellion. However, due to the limited scope of this study they will be analyzed in an isolated manner.

[3] Cheryl Lynn Greenberg Ed., *A Circle of Trust-Remembering SNCC* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press, 1998), p. 21.

[4] John Lewis. Personal interview. 28 July 2005.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Howard Zinn, *SNCC-The New Abolitionists* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: South End Press, 2002), p. 245.

[7] Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power-The Politics of Liberation in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), p. 88.

[8] Ibid. p. 100.

[9] Barney Pityana. Personal interview. 5 August 2004

[10] Ibid.

[11] *Practical Application of the Ideology of Black Consciousness.* This document was collected at the William Cullen Library/Historical and Literary Papers Division at the University of Witswatersrand.

[12] John DeGruchy and Charles Villa-Vicencio (1994), *Doing Theology in Context- South African Perspectives. Theology and Praxis: Volume One.* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books), p.159.

[13] Eddie Makue. Personal interview. 3 August 2004.

[14] Allan Boesak. Personal interview. 29 July 2004.

[15] Ibid.

[16] *Pro Veritate*, (Christian Institute sponsored journal) March 1973.

[17] Japie Lapoorta. Personal interview. 28 July 2004.

[18] Timothy Jenkins. Personal interview. 26 March 2005.

[19] Ibid. p. 107.

[20] *Practical Application of the Ideology of Black Consciousness.* This document was collected at the William Cullen Library/Historical and Literary Papers Division at the University of Witswatersrand.

[21] *Black People's Convention Vol.1.* This document was collected at the William Cullen Library/Historical and Literary Papers Division at the University of Witswatersrand.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Barney Pityana. Personal interview. 5 August 2004

[24] Zinn, *SNCC-The New Abolitionists,* p. 14.

[25] Jean Genet, *Ramparts* (June 1970), p. 31.

[26] Lewis Killian. *The Impossible Revolution: Black Power and the American Dream.* p. 134.

[27] Major Jones, *Christian Ethics for Black Theology,* (Nashville/New York, Abingdon Press, 1974), p.143.

[28] "Black Power, Black Nationalism, Black Rebellion," *Concern* 9:16 (October 1, 1967).

[29] Killian, *The Impossible Revolution,* p. 165.

[30] Nathan Wright, Jr., *Black Power and Urban Unrest: Creative Possibilities* (New York: Hawthorne Books [1st Ed.], 1967).

[31] Jones, *Christian Ethics for Black Theology,* p. 126.

[32] Gayraud Wilmore. Personal interview. 25 May 2005.

[33] Robert Brisbane, *Black Activism-Racial Revolution in the United States 1954-1970.* (Judson Press, Valley Forge.).

[34] Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton *Black Power-The Politics of Liberation in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967).

[35] *The Black Power Revolution*-Sermon preached in March Chapel, Boston University, Jan 15, 1967.

[36] Ibid.

[37] National Committee of Negro Churchmen, *Black Power Statement*, July 31, 1966.

[38] Gayraud Wilmore. Personal interview. 25 May 2005.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ed Brown. Personal interview. 27 May 2005.

[41] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press.1971).

[42] Dirk Louw. "Ubuntu and the Challenges of Multiculturalism in Post-Apartheid South Africa" in The 1997 South African Governmental White Paper on Social Welfare. www.gov.za/whitepaper/index.html>

[43] Bernard Spong. Personal interview. 2 August 2004.

[44] R.S. Nyameko and G. Singh, *African Communist No. 68 (1st Qtr., 1977).*

[45] South African Council of Churches, *The Kairos Document: Challenge to the Church, Revised second edition,* (Johannesburg: Skotaville, 1986), p. 15.

[46] Weli Mazamisa. Personal interview. 30 July 2004.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Robert Fatton, *Black Consciousness in South Africa: The Dialectics of IdeologicalResistance to White Supremacy* (New York: State University of the New York Press, 1986), p. 77.

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