

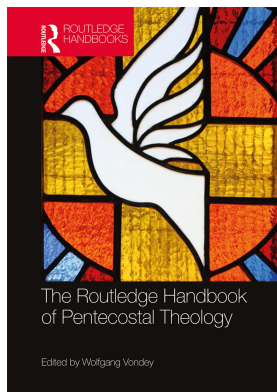
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RACE

Reordering the world on the principle of grace

David D. Daniels III

A Pentecostal theological response to the insight of W. E. B. DuBois that “the problem of the twentieth century is the color-line—the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea” (DuBois 1903, 13) came from Pentecostal pioneer Frank Bartleman (1871–1936), who later attached this pronouncement to the Azusa Street revival and mission, voicing the contours of a liberative theology of race: “The color-line has been washed away in the blood [of Jesus]” (Bartleman 1970, 55). This radical and bold theological pronouncement voiced the early theological promise of the Pentecostal revival, articulating the egalitarian aspirations of Christians envisioning racially inclusive and post-racist ecclesial realities that gesture beyond the color line, which divided the races.

An expansive interpretation of Bartleman’s response to DuBois should engage how the color line framed the ecclesial relationships of white Pentecostals with people of color, ranging from Africans, First Peoples (Native Americans), Latin Americans, Asians, and others (Kalu 2008; Corky 2012; Tarango 2014; Ramirez 2015). Since Pentecostalism emerged during the era of European colonialism in much of the global South and racial segregation in North America, the contexts where Pentecostalism developed are marked by the racial dynamics of the color line. These contexts provide content for Pentecostal theologies of race.

Theologies must grapple with the complexity of race and racism. Race is a concept that functions theologically in different ways within global Pentecostalism. On the one hand, race is understood as theologically shaping the Pentecostal movement in ways similar to how it shaped Protestantism in countries marked by racial inequality, such as the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and South Africa. On the other hand, Pentecostalism also contributes to the theorizing about race especially connected with the ways that interracialism and multiracialism functioned in the Pentecostal movement during the era of legalized racial segregation and apartheid. In this chapter I argue that a Pentecostal theology of race reorders the world and society beyond the color line on the principle of grace. As a Black Pentecostal in the United States, I am particularly interested in the challenges faced by the black and white binary. The essay begins with theoretical considerations before discussing Pentecostal theologies of racial exclusion in contrast to theologies of inclusion. I then present Pentecostal positions on interraciality and multiraciality and conclude by exploring a Pentecostal alternative to racism as a way to structure society in light of a theological vision beyond the color line.

Definitions of racism

Theologically, racial division is fueled by a will to power that contradicts God's created order. Racism, according to major theorists of race, such as William J. Wilson (1973, 3–4, 8–9), is the combination of racial privilege and prejudice plus power. Racism requires that one racial group—white people are the dominant group in the modern era—possesses the power to impose its racial prejudices on another group; it can subordinate another racial group. Racial privilege exists in two forms: unearned entitlement and conferred dominance. Privilege is exclusionary by allotting certain opportunities—economic, political, social, religious—to one group and denying these opportunities to another. Racial power, prejudice, and privilege operate according to specific racial regimes, which kept whites as a race at the apex of the hierarchy of race.

While racism in public discourse is rarely defined beyond the framework of prejudice, there is a need to discuss race within a broader framework such as Wilson's that includes prejudice as a topic but refuses to let the topic of prejudice exhaust the discussion of race. Prejudice is merely one type of racism, a psychological form of racism. As a social construct that defines peoplehood, racial markers can be restrictive for some people and expansive for others. Racism addresses the restrictions of certain racial markers. Racism, then, can be defined psychologically, sociologically, ideologically, and intersectionally, and a theological approach to race must be able to engage with each dimension.

First, there is the well-known concept of racial prejudice as an emotional disdain, fear, and hatred of a particular race. Negative attitudes and feelings toward particular races are cast as prejudice. Prejudice can be expressed interpersonally or toward a group.

Second, there is institutional racism (Wilson 1973; Phillips 2011) as a sociological phenomenon with its focus on the social and political structures of racism. Sociologically, racism focuses on how race structures an organization, religion, or nation as well as how it operates as a system. It highlights how religions and societies are organized around race, granting, or limiting rights, privileges, status, authority, and opportunities according to a group's racial designation. Sociologically, theorizing about race ranges from analyses based on racial formation, racial hierarchies, and the reproduction of racial inequality in outcomes related to income, health, education, governance, and lifespan.

Another sociological trajectory is racialization or racial formation. Interpreting race under the rubric of racialization, we would critically employ historicity and specificity of race. The focus is on how race changes overtime. Race-making as a process receives scrutiny. Such a move offers a more dynamic approach to race as well as a theological understanding of race that takes history and context seriously (Omi and Winant 1994, 55–56).

Third, ideologically, theorizing about race focuses on racial scales that plot different races along a spectrum from superior to inferior peoples. These racial scales include theories ranging from the eighteenth-century ideas of Carolus Linnaeus to nineteenth-century theories of the Darwinists and the twentieth-century theories of Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray. The ideology of white supremacy coupled with its Eurocentric universalism contended that a Eurocentric view of reality is universal, silencing all other "race-particular" perspectives of realities (Copeland 2004, 503).

Fourth, intersectionality as a theory argues that race as an axis should be interpreted in conjunction with other axes such as gender, class, or ability, for instance. Without an intersectional analysis, the experiences of black women, for instance, are often rendered invisible because discussions of race often highlight the plight of black men, and discussions of gender analyses privilege the experience of white women. Intersectional analysis aims at

overcoming the limits of classic race and gender methodologies with its dual or multiple axes approach (Casselberry 2013; Hills Collins and Bilge 2016).

How is race within a Pentecostal reality best explored theologically? Central to any theological engagement of race along the lines outlined here is revealing when religion replicates or resists the established order. In the words of Courtney Jung (2009, 371), race is identified as the way that “the state itself organizes access to power and membership.” Yet, unlike the state, the church does not determine and control the boundaries of exclusion that religious and other actors operate. In church, religious actors may adopt or violate the state-drawn and –sanctioned boundaries of exclusion that select “access to power and membership.” In response, there are at least four Pentecostal theologies of race active in Pentecostal history, each dealing differently with the principle of grace: (1) theologies of racial exclusion and subordination, (2) separation, (3) inclusion, and (4) conviviality. Since theologies of exclusion and of subordination reproduce the dominant racial order, they basically mirror the role of religion in the society. Theologies of religious separatism challenge the established racial order outright. Yet theologies of inclusion and of conviviality are Pentecostalism’s most significant contribution to theological and public discourse on race because they demonstrate that Pentecostalism possesses the capacity to counter the dominant racial order. The remainder of this essay reflects on the different perspectives.

Theologies of racial exclusion, subordination, and separation

Theologies of racial exclusion have produced ecclesiologies of white purity, superiority, and domination. These theologies promote globally all-white ecclesial organizations. Theologies of racial subordination sanction racial segregation within ecclesial structures that are basically under white rule. White superiority assumes the subordination of minoritized races since it is key to the theological anthropology of this theology of race. Theologies of racial exclusion and of subordination both reproduce the racial order of white domination. They privilege white rule and subordinate African Americans, Latina/os, Asian-Americans, First Nation peoples and other minoritized races within ecclesial structures. During the first ten years of the Pentecostal movement in the United States and South Africa, racial division and subordination of minoritized races became particularly visible (MacRoberts 1988, 60–76). Major sectors of Pentecostalism reproduced the racial order with their theologies of racial exclusion and subordination.

While theologies of racial exclusion and of subordination reproduce the racial order, theologies of separatism by respective minoritized races function otherwise. These ecclesiologies reject forced racial exclusion, deny racial superiority of whites and the inferiority of the minoritized races, and oppose exclusive white rule and the racial subordination of minoritized races. Separatist ecclesiologies are framed by the equality of the races and the religious self-determination of races. Religious separatism could also be used to interpret denominations in majority white countries constituted and governed by distinct minoritized races such as African-American, Afro-British, Black, Latina/o, Asian American, Asian immigrant, African immigrant, Afro-Caribbean, and First Nations. These minoritized races engage in religious self-determination in their respective religious organizations. Denominations led by minoritized races include the Church of God in Christ and the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, which are currently predominately African American; the Apostolic Assemblies of Faith in Christ Jesus and the Church of God Pentecostal, International Movement are predominately Latina/o; the United Pentecostal Council of the Assemblies of God is majority Afro-Caribbean; the Korean Full Gospel Church and the Filipino Assemblies of the First Born are predominately Asian American; the American Evangelical Church is predominately

Native American; and the Redeemed Christian Church of God and the Church of Pentecost are predominately African immigrant. Theologies of religious separatism by minoritized races have challenged the dominant racial order with its racial hierarchy of races, rejecting white rule and racial subordination of African Americans within ecclesial structures (Daniels 2014, 78–81). The response is a reorientation of grace in terms of racial inclusion.

Theologies of racial inclusion

Theologies of racial inclusion explore the ecclesial realities of interracial and multiracial Pentecostal congregations and denominations led by people from minoritized races. They emerged at the genesis of classical Pentecostalism during the Azusa Street revival (1906–15) and engage race beyond the black-white binary. Bartleman described the Azusa Street revival in theological terms in the following way:

There can be no divisions in a true Pentecost. To formulate a separate body is but to advertise failure, as a people of God. It proves to the world that we cannot get along together, rather than causing them to believe in salvation.... We are called to bless and serve the whole “body of Christ,” everywhere. Christ is one and His “body” can be but “one.” To divide it is but to destroy it....

(Anderson 2004, 249)

Compelling images of the church as “a true Pentecost,” the “people of God,” and the “body of Christ” name the interracial and multiracial unity of the church as a counterpoint to church and society organized around forced racial divisions.

Consequently, theologies of racial inclusion engage race across different axes that structure Pentecostalism: black-white-Latina/o-Asian, black-Latina/o-white, and Asian-white-Latina/o. It should be recognized that the Pentecostal tradition in comparison to other Protestant traditions exceeded by a significant percentage the number of interracial and multiracial ecclesial organizations, and this reality needs to be theologically investigated. It should be noted that Pentecostal theologies of racial inclusion and interracial ecclesial structures emerged during the era of racial segregation, when even civil rights agencies like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People were predominately white-led organizations. This interracial achievement offers a key insight in how Pentecostal interracial ecclesologies and structures challenged the dominant racial order in ways more radical than the leading civil rights organizations of the early twentieth century. Drawing deeply from the egalitarian theologies of race, such as Henry McNeil Turner or Charles Price Jones, these ecclesologies created sites of racial resistance, exposing theological and racial reasoning that justified the racial order with racial exclusion and subordination. Christian egalitarianism informs Pentecostal theologies of racial inclusion.

An ecclesial statement that gave voice to this theological egalitarianism is the 1917 pronouncement on Christian unity and racial inclusion approved by the Church of God in Christ. The pronouncement articulates a robust vision of Christian unity in these terms:

Many denominations have made distinctions between their colored and white members.... The Church of God in Christ recognizes the fact that all believers are one in Christ Jesus and all its members have equal rights. Its Overseers, both colored and white, have equal power and authority in the church.

(Daniels 2012, 142)

Racial equality as an ecclesial concept challenges the lodging of the church and its members into a hierarchy of the races. It also rejects setting criteria for full participation in the life of the church framed by race. This theological maneuver deems all believers as having equal rights, all races being “equal in power and authority,” that were given to each member, regardless of their race, by Christ (see Chapter 20). By creating a more racially mixed denomination through these ecclesial practices, they inverted the dominant racial order.

The ecclesial innovations of theologies of racial inclusion subvert the racial order of segregation, subordination, and white supremacy. By disengaging from the dominant racial equation of white superiority and the inferiority of minoritized races, theologies of racial inclusion undermine the dominant racial order. These theologies explore interracial ecclesial realities where whites submit to the authority of leaders of minoritized races, practice racial equality, borrow from the cultures of minoritized races, suspend practicing white supremacy, and, together with people across the races, craft new ecclesiologies and ecclesial structures. They anticipate organizationally a post-segregation future by demonstrating that ecclesial racial inclusion is achievable (Crawley 2017, 4–5).

At the same time, while theologies of racial inclusion challenge the dominant racial order, many fail to challenge the dominant racial order’s patriarchal underpinnings (see Chapter 36). The ones that do challenge these foundations practice intersectionality. Interracial Pentecostal ecclesial structures erected by minoritized women confront racism and sexism. In these ecclesial structures, the race and gender that society places at the lower rungs of hierarchies of authority exercise the highest authority in these particular women-led ecclesial settings (Alexander 2005, 162–68).

Practicing theological maneuvers of interraciality and multiraciality

Theologies of inclusion form a type of theology that reflects the direction of the Azusa Street revival and theological focus of Pentecostal leaders such as Smallwood Williams, Leonard Lovett, Antonio Nava, Emma Cotton, and Roger Cree. By rejecting white supremacy, theologies of racial inclusion craft new ecclesial practices; they could be seen as leveling the hierarchy of credibility and severing the link between credibility and race. The ecclesial practice of leaders from minoritized races are fashioned by the experience of having whites submit to their authority, being treated as equals by whites, having their religious culture recognized as worthy of adoption, and rejecting white supremacy. Together these Pentecostals from minoritized races along with white Pentecostals have fashioned new ecclesiologies that generate inclusionary ecclesial practices and structures (Becker 1967, 207; Williams 1970; Lovett 2006; Tarango 2014; Ramirez 2015).

Theologies of racial inclusion construct an interracial ethic that challenges the racial politics of white supremacy, which has shaped the “will to power” exercised by whites as a race. Because these theologies reject whites as the dominant race, these white Pentecostals voluntarily displace themselves from positions of racial superiority. Such racial displacement involves various theological maneuvers. First, these white Pentecostals desist from making the society in the image of their race by forcing other races to fit into their creation. Second, they dispossess themselves of the notion that their race as the “owners of truth and knowledge” has the right to rule others, and that other races represent “ignorance” (Freire 1970, 71). Third, by becoming open to the gifts and contributions of other races, these white Pentecostals acknowledge the limits to their race’s knowledge and join other races in “attempting, together, to learn more than” (Freire 90) each race knows separately. Herein,

the hierarchy of teachability is flattened: whites are willing to be taught by Pentecostals from minoritized races as much as by white Christians. Fourth, they recognize the right of Pentecostals from minoritized races to possess religious authority, including exercising this right over white religious affairs.

Pentecostal leaders and congregations from minoritized races who received white leaders and clergy into their respective denomination practice interracial politics challenging the subordination of minoritized races that has shaped the ethic of servility imposed by whites as a race upon minoritized races. Instead, theologies of racial inclusion acknowledge that minoritized races possess equally the God-given authority to enter the arena of authority and exercise jurisdiction over white religious affairs. These theologies involve figuring out the degree of authority that Pentecostals from minoritized races are willing to share with their white members and the corresponding amount of authority they are willing to relinquish. Such theologies encourage power-sharing, and Pentecostals from minoritized races along with white Pentecostals must experiment with how to lead and co-lead across races without any one race possessing total power.

Lacking the political and social power to change the racial order, theologies of racial inclusion have generated enough power to interrupt the racial order within their religious territory and to erect alternative interracial and multiracial sectors. Although they cannot determine the longevity or social consequences of interracial and multiracial ecclesial realities nor remake Christianity within and across societies, still they can erect ecclesial structures framed by theologies of racial inclusion.

Theologies of racial inclusion require a negotiated and equal sharing of power and authority between Christians of different races where each race is recognized as a peer; all forms of racial subordination are to be rejected (Edwards 2008). These theologies structure church and society around the equality of races. Taking the exclusionary racial practices and social reality of their times as an affront against the Christian gospel, these Pentecostals, such as Bishop Smallwood Williams, willingly violate racial segregation laws and customs. Challenging the principle of white supremacy, they subvert the reigning racial categories, invent race-crossing as an ecclesial practice, and engage in authentic power-sharing.

Historically, certain forms of racial integration were insufficient: while legal barriers to opportunities were lifted, whites still controlled the levers of power in the white majority sectors. To transition to a post-racist society the racial order needed to be transformed: “A more equal sharing of power... is required as the precondition of authentic human interaction” between the races (Cone and Wilmore 1979, 25). Unchecked power distorted love and marred the conscience of white Christians. Power itself became the “controlling element in power” rather than love controlling power. Within white Christianity allied to a racial order of racial subordination, Christian love was unhitched from justice; white Christianity preferred to moralize love as a topic in reference to minoritized races rather than to understanding love and justice as intertwined; justice was key to controlling power in addition to love (Cone and Wilmore, 26).

The gross imbalance of power between the races resulted in whites garnering more power than they could exercise in a just manner. Entrenched within the existing US power structures, for instance, “white power” encountered limited “meaningful resistance” from minoritized races in tempering and restraining it in the cause of justice (see Chapter 40). Consequently, whites exerted an inordinate amount of control over the lives of minoritized people. Without power being constrained by freedom, love, justice, and truth in the image of God, the “concern for justice” becomes “transmuted into a distorted form of love, which, in the absence of justice, becomes chaotic self-surrender” on the part of minoritized races;

“powerlessness breeds a race of beggars” who possess “conscience-less power” and “powerless conscience” (Cone and Wilmore, 23–24). Practitioners of theologies of racial inclusion choose to embrace Pentecost as a theological event of racial inclusion; they embody a multiracial Pentecost rather than the dominant racial order. They anticipate God’s future rather than accommodating themselves to the dominant racial structure. By resisting and countering exclusionary practices based on race, these Pentecostals, such as Bishops Charles Harrison Mason, Garfield Haywood, and Mattie Thornton Branch, inaugurate new ecclesial realities. Espousing a Christian or Pentecostal theological egalitarianism that affirms racial equality, these Pentecostals live into a church where grace structures ecclesial life rather than racism (Talmadge 2014).

Theologies of a post-racist state: an Azusa Street alternative to race

Theologies, where grace rather than racism structures ecclesial life, anticipate or inaugurate a reality in which religious exchanges escape the marks of the racial order; this organizational feat is more than an engagement of imaginaries. It depicts alternative Christian communities where people interact in ways that exceed how their respective races operate according to the dominant racial norms, laws, and expectations. This ecclesiology resists erasing race; it employs race as one of many markers. Race, then, is among the ensemble of religious markers or it might substitute other markers along with doctrine, gender, language, diaspora, and others to constitute peoplehood.

Ecclesiologies, where grace structures ecclesial life, disrupt the center–margin equation with whites in power constituting the center (see Chapter 27). These ecclesiologies and related ecclesial spaces reconstitute sectors in the borderlands of the church and society as a thirdspace, to use Edward Soja’s term—havens infused with power independent of the dominant center of racial power (Soja 1996, 57, 61). The practitioners of these ecclesiologies populate this thirdspace in the borderlands, constituting them as emancipatory sites. Subverting the center–margin binary with the “white” center as the locus of authority, they annunciate a church that transcends the dominant racial order. This emancipatory site subverts the racial hierarchies and exceeds the dominant racial structure constituted by white supremacy by circumnavigating ways of organizing religion that reproduces the racial order.

The disrupting of key dominant binaries in theologies of a post-racist state could build on the scholarship of bell hooks (Gloria Jean Watkins) and Victor Anderson who argue that “unresolved binary dialectics of slavery and freedom, the Negro and Citizen, insider and outsider, black and white, struggle and survival” (Copeland 2004, 508) inhibit the capacity of communities to transcend oppression and essentialism. By transcending key dominant binaries, Pentecostal sites can become emancipatory. As emancipatory ecclesial sites on the borderlands, they operate outside of key dominant binaries: center–margin, black–white, majority–minority, oppressor–oppressed. Transcending key dominant binaries, ecclesiologies, where grace rather than racism structures ecclesial life, chart post-racist ecclesial trajectories.

These post-racist ecclesial trajectories resist post-racial and non-racial theologies. It is not post-racial nor non-racial because race as a social construct like gender still shapes realities. Post-racist ecclesial trajectories do not mirror the white racial order. Instead, post-racist ecclesial trajectories exceed the key dominant binaries by creating a “thirdspace” as one of many possible worlds beyond the dominant racial order. They are polyvalent and polyvocal spaces. Paul Gilroy’s popular concept of conviviality engages with these thirdspaces.

For Gilroy (2005, xv), conviviality registers a “radical openness that brings conviviality alive, makes a nonsense of closed, fixed, and reified identity, and turns attention toward the always-unpredictable mechanism of identification.” He further defines conviviality as not “the absence of racism or the triumph of tolerance.” Instead, what is critical for Gilroy is that conviviality is set in the context of “cosmopolitanism as a ‘network of inter-connectedness and solidarity that could resonate across boundaries, reach across distances, and evade other cultural and economic obstacles.’” The Azusa Street revival, when viewed as conviviality, built a Pentecostal peoplehood around a text in the “Pentecost” book: “And [God] hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth” (Acts 17:26). At the revival, this text was recast in terms of nationalities instead of nations, broadcasting that “all classes and nationalities meet on a common level” (“Beginning of a World Wide Revival,” 1907). The revival leveled the hierarchy, placing all nationalities and classes on equal footing before God and each other. While the concept of race informs the *Apostolic Faith* papers, the language of race escapes it. Nationalities, a key term of the early twentieth century, functioned as the term of choice (Noble, Corum, and Harper 2001, 17).

Building on Courtney Jung, the post-racist ecclesial trajectories produce theologies of the post-racist state by rejecting the racial state’s use of differences to craft practices of racial inclusion, exclusion, allocation, and outcomes. Jung (2009, 367) argues that “differences... have been marked as categories of exclusion and selective inclusion by the state itself.” Significantly,

it is a result of politics that skin color often becomes a race, and traditions and practices often become ethnicity, while eye color remains nothing more than eye color. Race, ethnicity, and religion are not exogenous categories of affiliation; they are internal to politics itself.

(Jung 2009, 367)

In rejecting the racial state’s use of differences, theologies of the post-racist state can draw upon the Azusa Street revival as a post-racist theological and ecclesial project. The differences in language, food, fragrance, and custom at the revival heightened the differences between immigrants from Europe, Asia, and Latin America, along with African Americans and First Peoples who populated early Pentecostalism more than it emphasized the commonalities across these communities (Gould 1981). Since the construction of the early Pentecostal peoplehood preceded the invention of whiteness as a racial category, the Azusa Street revival embraces the ethnic spectrum of peoplehood.

People-making as a project of theological anthropology broadens the process of fashioning identity and communities by investigating the changes, clustering, and alliances of the people-making process. More than a black-white exchange or exchanges between whites and other distinct minorities, race-making engulfs the internal debates in the making of pentecostality or Pentecostal-ness. Within the emerging Pentecostal peoplehood, there were also changes, clustering, and alliances. At the Azusa Street revival, race competed with nationality as the category to organize the society. While the racial category of white and colored is used in the *Apostolic Faith* paper, its usage is rare and limited; only in a very few instances is white or colored used; surprisingly, Negro is never used. Nationality, though, is regularly used in the *Apostolic Faith* paper. The various articles re-enforce the perspective of one writer: “God makes no difference in nationality” (“The Same Old Way,” 3). Throughout the *Apostolic Faith*, the nationalities that were present at the revival are consistently listed to describe the expanse of the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit: Chinese, Ethiopians,

Germans, North American Indians, Mexicans, and others. This listing is on an equal plane; this is not a hierarchy of nationalities (Noble 2001, 3).

In a sense, within the *Apostolic Faith* paper, the people were organized linguistically. The revival offered an alternative to the trilogy of races (Caucasoid, Mongoloid, Negroid) or the four European races (Alpine, Mediterranean, Nordic, Semitic) and the four others (Ethiopian, Mongolian, Malay, American) or nationalities categorized into forty races. The revival focused on organizing the people of the world around their languages, including the languages of “India, China, Africa, Asia, Europe, and islands of the Sea as well as the learned languages of Greek, Latin, Hebrew, French, German, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, Zulu... Hindu and Bengali... Chippewa” (Noble 2001, 1). The languages of Africa (Kru, Zulu, or Ugandan) are listed on par with the other languages of the world. This linguistic framework provided a lens to view humanity in terms other than race (Noble 2001, 1, 13, 21, 23).

Possibly, the Azusa Street revival through its linguistic organization of peoplehood theologically gestures toward theologies of the post-racialist state. By flexibly deploying race as a marker of identity and stressing language instead, a theology of the post-racist state, then, would avow human commonality and “equality.” It would serve as a new basis for Christian unity that bridges the racial divide and erases the color line. Speaking with tongues has frequently been seen as overcoming the confusion of Babel; as a universal language of the Spirit, glossolalia are a sign of ecclesial life beyond the color line (see Chapter 28).

The annunciation of post-racist ecclesiologies by the Azusa Street revival could be interpreted as leveling the hierarchies of the races. The impact of theologies of the post-racist state differed depending upon where the races were “originally” slotted within the racial hierarchy. For “whites,” post-racist theologies deflate the myth of racial superiority, supplant the singularity of “white” identity with the plurality within Pentecostal peoplehood. In a sense, whiteness implodes. For minoritized races, the myth of inferiority is likewise deflated in addition to these minoritized races being recast within the plurality of Pentecostal peoplehood. Thus, theologies of the post-racist state promote cultural, social, and ecclesial exchanges among the diverse constituents of Pentecostal peoplehood.

Beyond the color line

The Pentecostal revival in principle rejects the premise of the color line based on a scheme of racial superiority and inferiority and of white purity and racial pollution. At its outset, Azusa Street disallowed the purported need for the color line, which could be understood as the need to protect and preserve the purity of the white race ecclesially and socially. Whether miscegenation should be promoted to advance this new peoplehood is left unanswered, although Bishop Robert Clarence Lawson’s *The Anthropology of Jesus Christ Our Kinsman* advocated it at least theoretically. The theological anthropology of the post-racist state is pivotal (Jacobsen 2006, 203).

Within the racial context of its era, the Azusa Street revival broke with the dominant racial arrangement. Against the world of the color line or the world fractured by the color line, the Azusa Street revival fashioned a Pentecostal peoplehood. At the revival, Pentecostals took off the dominant racial identity in the society and donned a post-racist identity. Thus, Pentecostals challenged the biblical appropriateness of Christians adhering to the color line and encouraged the people to traverse the spaces emancipated from the barriers of color, to trespass into post-racist zones, even if briefly.

The historian Cecil M. Robeck Jr. (2002, 33) concludes: “Clearly, Seymour may be credited with providing the vision of a truly ‘color-blind’ congregation.” While “color-blind”

is a contested term, Seymour and the Azusa Street revival at least initially designed a post-segregated space. What is astonishing about the revival as a post-segregated space are the conversions that occurred in the racial consciousness of whites (such as Gaston B. Cashwell and others). These were individuals who admitted to being prejudiced and experienced a conversion in racial consciousness that led them not only to reject prejudice and to associate willingly with minoritized races, specifically African Americans, but also to educate their networks about interracial and multiracial association. Their change of consciousness was a component in their formation of a new peoplehood.

A Christian apologetic espoused by theologies of the post-racist state contended that the Christian God objects to racism in addition to identifying with and standing in solidarity with the victims of racism, with the oppressed; the Christian God is the God of the oppressed. They asserted that the Christian gospel, as opposed to certain white Christian theologies, does not legitimate racism because the gospel supports the emancipation of minoritized “people from white racism, thus providing authentic freedom” (Cone and Wilmore 1979, 53), an emancipatory act signaled by the cross and the resurrection where victory was won so that all can “inhabit the world beyond racial and theological... closure” and “inhabit the world beyond the theological problem of whiteness” (Carter 2008, 379). This space beyond the color line is the heritage and product of Pentecost.

Conclusion

The proclamation that the “color line” was washed away at least symbolically and discursively in the blood of Christ is at the heart of a Pentecostal theology of race within sectors of the early Pentecostal movement. Striving to be Christian communities of grace where all people are welcomed, many African American denominations became religious communities that were open to all; they promoted grace over racism. For some of the participants, the Azusa Street revival and mission introduced them to a new peoplehood. The mere existence of innovative theological anthropologies and ecclesiologies were transformative to the self-understanding of the emerging Pentecostal movement. The opportunity to become practitioners of theologies of racial inclusion and theologies of post-racist church was revolutionary. Pentecostal theologies of the post-racist state espouse the doctrines of a common creation of all people, a common image of God in all people, a church for all people, and the equality of all peoples. Post-racist Pentecostal ecclesiologies generate an ecclesial vision of the church and society framed by conviviality that anticipated the post-racist era. Post-racist theologies inaugurate post-racist ecclesial communities. They have created an emancipatory space, where grace outpaces racism in ordering ecclesial and social life for all peoples.

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