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BLACK SOTERIOLOGY: THE PHYSIOLOGICAL AND ONTOLOGICAL PROCESS

ABSTRACT

The Black experience that is historical and continues in post-oppressive and racist regimes proves to be problematic for Black existence. This is particularly so when one considers that the freedom posed by colourlessness and universalism of humanity is an irrational ideal, which works to undermine the level of Black historical oppression, and a denial of justice. This is linked to the untapped reconciliation of the chasm and dichotomy in Black ontological and physiological existence, where their humanity has to be reconciled in both these paradigms for authenticity and even more so for salvation. Such a need ushers in a soteriology that is dialectical in the quest for Black ontology and physiology to allow true affirmation, which is redemption, of Black humanity as Black before God and the world. This soteriology exists through Black theology and the notion of the Black church by encouraging a Black soteriological syllogism.

1. INTRODUCTION

The mind is the greatest tool that guarantees and warrants the beauty of human existence, as metaphysical as it can be. The ideas it renders have a physical reality and presence when applied in praxis, thus the conceptions can be manifested realities. It is in the mind that the identity of a human soul emerges, where cultures are born, where the spirit exists, and where human existence is cultivated to bring out the best in any race. Biko (1978:74) argues: “The greatest weapon in the hand of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed.” Tshaka (2012:171) shares this sentiment when he asserts: “Black internalised oppression encourages a flight from the black self.”

When one considers the Black experience and the role of oppression of the minds, souls and bodies of Blacks, one cannot overlook the external and internal link of oppression. And the attack on blackness as a physiological and ontological process – destruction meant to repress, reduce and damage all that which Blacks know about being human. The acceptance of the ideas of Whites, the Western world and definitions of their religion are both physiological and ontological. Where blackness is a complete identity, it has been met with violence, oppression, injustice, and murder in order to alter Black existence, which has to be soteriologically reversed. As Fanon (1963:195) asserts:

As soon as the Negro comes to an understanding of himself, and understands the rest of the world differently, when he gives birth to hope and forces back the racist universe ... there is a need for pushing back of whiteness in order to regain the self.

This paper advocates for Black soteriology as an ontological and physiological process that is both explicit and vocal in pronouncements and affirms its presence and realness through overthrowing forces of White power over Black existence. The White power that exacts oppression through the Black physical body and the soul or spirit leaving deliverance for Blacks that exudes through and permeates Black physicality and metaphysically. The paper is written under the backdrop of post-apartheid South Africa that prides itself on democracy and the world at large. This paper seeks to point out that colourlessness/multiracialism is an immature framework for rebuilding Black humanity, let alone a country, particularly if built through denial, evasiveness and historical amnesia coupled with the miscarriage of justice; economically and ecclesiastically. The paper takes cognizance and quite seriously the damage done to Blacks both physically and in the realm of ontology/being. The paper makes use of literature that focuses on the realities of being Black in a world that has positioned itself as being anti-Black. The evidence of this position of an anti-Black world finds credence in that the same things desired during liberation struggle are still unachieved, i.e. land. But more than anything, what has not been achieved is the true humanity of Blacks that can be, and has historically been articulated within the confines of a Black church where both physiology and ontology find expression ecclesiastically, politically, culturally, socially, and economically.

2. THE SIN OF RACISM

Christianity is a religion that has, as its chief characteristic, soteriology – a soteriology from sin as having been recorded in the Bible. It also follows that this soteriology consists of a saviour who is historical and is not some

latent gnosis revealed to only a few. But born from a womb of mortality for salvation, it is his birth that reveals the link between the revelation of God, creation and a salvation of humanity linked with identity. Shutte (1993:60) rightly points out:

Sin makes God angry (if you want to think in that way) not because it goes against His will, but because it goes against our nature. And he wants the best for us.

It is significant to point out from at least the biblical texts that sin is defined as rebellion and what separated God from humanity and vice versa. Furthermore, it is deducible that the lack of relation or face-to-face encounter with God, e.g. the fall (Genesis 3), where humanity hid from God, fundamentally affects human-to-human relationships. It is at the point of reconciliation between humanity and humanity, the world and God that Christ and the Gospel emerge. But, within the reality and passing of history, the condition of humanity continues to reflect a battle with sin, but more importantly is reflected in the lack or purposeful misunderstanding, deceit and misinterpretation of the Gospel as noted in the development of White supremacy. Cone (2004:140) asserts:

No one can deny that racism is a major killer in the modern world. Yet there has been considerable resistance to seeing it as a profound problem for the religion of Christianity. During the course of five centuries, Europeans and White North Americans systematically confiscated lands and committed genocide against untold numbers of indigenous people around the world. When Whites 'discovered' something they wanted, whether land or labor, they took it with very little thought of the consequences for the lives of the people already there.

Cone (2004:141) further argues that racism is not dangerous only because of the physical death it causes, but rather more fundamentally it is the spiritual death that it commits to both the victim and the racist. Thus, in some sense, power relation and human relation are then easily affected on top of the effect of the already existing fall of humanity (Genesis 3). But what is further fundamental in this paper is what Cone (2004:141) points out by the fact that for Black to be a Christian, civilised and human meant to be White. The content is in line with that when pointing to racism as sin that somehow seems to affect existence as a whole in relation to land, dignity, freedom, and human relationships. It would seem that White supremacy and its inherent racism, particularly cocooned in evangelization and missionary work, has caused the damage tantamount to the fall and has done so through speaking for God. What Cone (2004:141) has mentioned

explains why the majority of the people of colour are poor, marginalised and expected to be good Christians in the world that denies or views their story as a footnote of history. Cone (2004:142) rightly asserts:

White theologians and philosophers write numerous articles and books on theodicy, asking why God permits massive suffering, but yet hardly ever mention the horrendous crimes Whites have committed against people of color in the modern world.

The catalyst of Christianity is the Gospel: an articulation of God's dealing with human sin in the world and the final aspect of that being the brutal, violent and dehumanisation of the body Christ on the cross. It is the declaration of this message that was given approval and a seal upon the resurrection and ascension of Christ to be declared among the nations (Matthew 28:19) and not only for the exclusivity of Whites. The violence and dehumanisation of the body of Christ is the same body that will build the body of Christ on earth. One will not dwell on the obvious that Africa was Christian before Europe,¹ but rather locate the Gospel as being at the hands of a race guilty of violence, dehumanisation, deceit, decadence, and global oppression through White supremacy. Pheko (1982:75) rightly asserted:

What has the Gospel done for Africa? This is a subject that can arouse deep emotions in the hearts of some people in Africa. From the very onset, therefore, I must state categorically that I am not about to defend colonialism or the role misguided missionaries from the West played in Africa.

Mugambi (1989:8) pointed out that “[c]olonial Christianity was directed to pagan Africa where European influence had not reached.” Thus, the evangelisation of Blacks was the death of themselves, a culture termed pagan by European modernity and savages who would act out the greatest cruelty upon the Black race. One has to mention that the Gospel preached by Europeans was not only their cultural advancement, but also their burden became ours; what they accused Blacks of was what they were. Carmichael² pointed out that the White man's burden should not have

1 Pheko (1982:2) states: “The subject of the Early Church in Africa puts the history of Africa in perspective and indicates that the Christian faith came to Africa long before the rise of Western colonialism and the invasion of Africa by Arabs from Arabia.” Hildebrandt (1981:5) validates this further: “Now it is good to note in the book of Acts that the next place that this witness went in the world was not Europe or the rest of Africa. No God wanted the Gospel to go next to Africa, and so He arranged for Philip to witness to an African.”

2 This he said in an interview with Mike Wallace in 1966, The CBS NEWS Special: “BLACK POWER/WHITE BACKLASH”.

been preached to Black people in Africa; it is Whites who have proven to be destructive, savages and uncivilised, not Black people. Thus civilise yourself White man; you have always been uncivilised and a savage. It is important then for Blacks to understand that what was preached was used to make them what they were not in the beginning that is, savages, heathens, and uncivilised. At worst, they were converted to that which colonial Christianity claimed was not about. Hastings (1979:18) asserts concerning this destruction through conversion of colonial Christianity:

It bit into the cultural context of political institution just as it did into the marital institution. It may take generations for a replacement of comparable credibility to be found for what was lost with conversion.

Gaining from the West was the loss of what is distinctively African.

It was an acceptance of the White, cold, materialistic and individualistic world and an abandoning of unity and solidarity of a people. Colonial Christianity was to introduce and perpetuate Black self-hatred, individualism, opulence, decadence and glorification of all that is White and Western as divinely mandated, materially maintained, and spiritually venerated by Blacks (Biko 1978:61). This Black self-hatred is on a physiological and ontological level. Rhodes (1991:1) asserts:

For tax purposes, slaves were counted as property – like domestic animals. Eventually, however, a question arose as to how to count slaves in the nation's population. Congress solved the problem by passing a Bill that authorised the US Census Bureau to count each slave as three-fifths of a person. This congressional compromise resulted in what one Negro writer of the 1890s called "the Inferior Race Theory"; the placing of the Negro somewhere between the barnyard animals and human beings.

This explains Black self-hatred on a physiological level represented by the skin and on the ontological level because of a denied soul. Biko (1978:51) remedies this dialectical dehumanisation by the rejection of Western values:

In rejecting Western values, therefore, we are rejecting those things that are not only foreign to us, but that seek to destroy the most cherished of our beliefs – that the corner-stone of society is man himself – not just his welfare, not his material wellbeing, but just man himself with all his ramifications. We reject the power based society of the Westerner that seeks to be ever concerned with perfecting their technological know-how while losing out on their spiritual dimension.

Biko's call demands the love of humanity, which is the very expression of the Gospel concerning the love of God expressed in the crucifixion. Colonial Christianity is theologically immoral to Black humanity and identity; this is evident by the set trap and seduction to believe that it is better to be a Christian than human. Such a Gospel is of Black exclusion; Blacks were thought to be subhuman – a condition that remained even when they became Christian.

Colonial Christianity came as a world of its own and a world forced upon the minds, bodies and souls of Black people to exist. It came as a sterile and surrogate womb that cannot hold Black humanity as a seed that can grow in favourable conditions. An existence and acceptance of this world required the total obliteration of blackness and pride. Black humanity aborted from the ambience of authenticity from the Black womb in order to be offered at the altar of a White and racist God who has total oblivion of human suffering; justifying and advancing a particular race of minorities by disadvantaging a race of majorities through self-hatred. Boesak (1977:28) argues:

Self-denial is not the same as self-hatred and self-destruction, and it is these which can arise within circumstances so devastating that even basic human self-love is absent. People's personhood can be so effectively undermined, even destroyed, that in time they learn to despise themselves and regard themselves as incapable of leading normal, human lives. This abnormal situation, provided it lasts long enough, becomes for them the accepted, normal way of life.

It is at this point of the destruction of Black humanity through a perverted version of the faith that the Gospel at the hands of colonialists is the greatest atrocity in human salvation. This salvation is unachievable lest one abandons all and it is salvation that is linked to blindness, weakness and allows for Black mutilation – ontologically and physiologically. To mutilate, through material suffering as a stimulus for Blacks in the White world for reaching the ontological decision of physiological self-hatred in the maze and confines of whiteness, the climax being to understand that being Black in the world is a physical and ontological problem. The material conditions provided for physical self-hatred are then linked to questioning the very essence of one's being; the ontological aspect. That expresses spirituality, culture, and identity. Biko (1978:30) asserts:

The fact that apartheid has been tied up with [W]hite supremacy, capitalist exploitation, and deliberate oppression makes the problem much more complex. Material want is bad enough, but coupled with spiritual poverty, it kills. And this latter effect is probably the

one that creates a mountain of obstacles in the normal course of emancipation of the [B]lack people.

Biko's view of material want and spiritual poverty, with the latter being the mountain of obstacles, reveals the physiological and ontological dialectical link for Black destruction. But, more fundamentally, it raises the question of human worth and purpose that does not lie solely on physical appeal, but what that physicality curtains within itself.

Christianity is an ontological and existential faith that wrestles with being human. West (1999:62) pointed out that

Black people became Christians for intellectual, existential and political reasons. ... The existential level is the most relevant here because it has to do with what it means to be a person and live a life under the horrifying realities of racist assault. To be a [B]lack human being under circumstances in which one's humanity is questioned is not only to face a difficult challenge, but also to exercise a demanding discipline.

Thus, Christianity seeks to build upon *Imago Dei* and attach goodness, character, truth, justice and righteousness as the identity of self. Colonial Christianity replaced it with the White world, White God, values and his White risen saviour, creating the obsession of Blacks to appease, please, and desire Whites in totality through flight from the Black self. Tshaka (2012:171) asserts of this flight of the Black self:

This flight from the self does not only happen among the [B]lacks who become assimilated into the established order, but it is something that is happening even among the masses. There is always an intense need to be a little better than the others.

In such a situation, classical salvation becomes useless, as Blacks would not find a place in a White heaven because they are Black, and similarly they will not find a place in this world because it is an anti-Black world. In a sense, as part of the expression of ontological substance, metaphysics is a theological shock to blackness, because it is also White. There is no escape materially or metaphysically for Blacks, thus a breakage of both is necessary and this was achieved through conversion.

Soteriology is the way in which God seeks to have a personal relationship with all humanity. But, in order to do that, He must remove sin from humanity, as noted by Shutte (1993:60). With this in mind, it is clear that the greatest sinner in humanity was not qualified for preaching salvation among Black people, as noted by Stokely Carmichael when referring to the preaching of the White man's burden. In Black ecclesiology, colonial Christianity is a sin of the highest order, because it goes against Black people's nature (Shutte

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1993:60), and, in fact, it moves and nearly aborted Blacks from the very womb that brings out the best in us. Evans (1992:100) argues:

The true nature of [B]lack humanity has been veiled by a litany of stereotypes, endemic to Western European culture. People of African descent have been described as inferior, savage, profane and invisible; they have been called outsiders, intruders, interlopes and subhuman beasts.

The burden of White society in the name of Christ and teaching morals to pagans is probably a discovery for White morality geared to improve the lot of Whites only. Boesak (2004:9) argues:

The colonial project and the concomitant conquests of the peoples of the 'new worlds' were in turn firmly embedded in the rapid growth of [W]hite racism in European political, socioeconomic and religious life. Its moral and intellectual justification was indispensable for the establishment of White power over a vast portion of the world

Christianity, as it relates to right and wrong, is not extinguishable to the ethos of the African community and culture. Erskine (1981:37) notes:

Scholars and missionaries alike testify to the fact that Africans find the Old Testament easy to understand. The atmosphere of the Old Testament is like the atmosphere they breathe. Their agricultural style, their talk about offspring, their longing for offspring, and the concrete ways in which they talk about God and people ...

Thus, there is a similarity in life and faith. But sin is not expressed, as it is in the Western world, in an individualistic relationship of the creature with the Creator – though such is part thereof. Earhart (1993:57) and Dwane (2004:75, 76) point out how important it is for African Christians to be Christians, but also to maintain with pride, culturally, their being African. Sin then becomes, as Shutte (1993:60) expressed in relation to God wanting the best for us and culture, indispensable to the best of any race. Sin in African soteriology begins with one's fellow human being who can corrupt the order of things so as to affect the entire community and world; thus punishment ensues by the ancestors or by divine intervention. This links to Biko's (1978:51) point of the centrality of humanity and the importance of the community in African culture. This point is important to understanding the problematic nature of a group that has committed a habituation of societal and global sins of dominance and dehumanisation upon a group. Roberts (1994:91) notes this tenet of societal sin in discussing the economy, capitalism, and Christians:

We cannot live on bread alone. Neither can we live without bread. It is, therefore, essential that all Christians should give some attention to understanding the economic order. Not only individuals but also social structures can be either 'sinful' or 'humane'.

It is at this point that one begins to venture fully, first, into Black soteriology, by delineating sins within the nominal and traditional Christian view as a prelude for Black salvation and, secondly, into a historical approach that requires something greater than simple definitions of sins, but rather that which explains the evil that exists and permeates the Black reality. That, in turn, has corrupted and led them away from themselves, their God, as well as their world and minds. Their reality is that of a group destruction, which was put in place with much emphasis on individual spirituality accompanied by savage modernity. Black soteriology begins with Christ as part of the Christian tradition, African communal culture, and the unity of Blacks. Maimela (2005:34) rightly points out:

There can be no Christian theology that does not have Jesus Christ as its point of departure. Though [B]lack theology affirms the [B]lack condition as the primary datum of reality that must be reckoned with, this does not mean that it denies the absolute revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Rather it affirms it. Unlike [W]hite theology, which tends to make the Christ event an abstract, intellectual idea, [B]lack theology believes that the [B]lack community itself is precisely where Christ is at work.

The Black community reveals a racist group's determination to destroy the Black community and individuals.

Black soteriology requires Blacks to denounce the White God of colourlessness, peace and pacifism. The idea of that God is a true signal of the evil of whiteness by wanting to control Black life, destiny and aspiration, as noted by Erskine (1981:38):

One of the great tragedies of this world that confronted [B]lack people was that of the [W]hite person wanting to be revered as God: the creature wanting to be revered as the Creator. And the creature in this world of abject suffering sought to separate the bodies and the souls of [B]lack people. It was this false understanding of humanity that encouraged the Moravian church in the Caribbean to own slaves and pleaded with the slaves to be better slaves.

Erskine's point of Whites seeking to separate the bodies and the souls of Black people speaks of the ontological and physiological damage that Whites through colonial Christianity – the White church as a synagogue of

Satan – have committed on Blacks. At the same time, there is a theological dimension to whiteness as it relates to Black ontology and physiology, and how their theology, as intellectual and spiritual as it would like to assume, is fundamentally damaging and causes psychological absurdity to Blacks, particularly in relation to God, oneself, and oneself as the collective community and the world.

Erskine's point of view of a creature wanting to be worshipped as God, as an analogy, points to the fall and the serpent that deceived humanity (Gen. 2) and made itself to be God. Imarogbe (2001:20-21) argues:

Man constructs the world system with its values, lifestyles and institutions. If it is communal, then it is compatible with the will of God. If it is individualistic and corrupt, then it is evil – Satan personified – and is not characterised by love, harmony, unity and balance as the Divine System. But it is dominated with selfishness, hatred, greed, isolation, violence, war, unfaithfulness, deceit, theft, dishonesty, injustice and oppression. It is in disobedience to God.

The Biblical narrative points to the origins of disobedience as being learnt from the snake, the modern world, as it relates to God, because Westernisation and whiteness have been constructed under deceit, violence, greed, hatred, disobedience to God, and the betrayal of truth. The disobedience on the part of Whites is that of appointing themselves as God's mouthpiece and a navigator for all of humanity. Pheko (1982:78) rightly asserted:

If the Bible teaches that the individual is unique and of infinite worth before God, colonialism in many respects said the opposite, so that biblical teachings were at variance with colonialism, and it became only a matter of time before one ousted the other. The Bible-liberated African reasserted himself not only over tribal, but also over colonial authority.

In the South African context, the reality of deceit and disobedience is ever present in the legacies, policies, and structures of apartheid that are now part of the new South Africa, accompanied by ignorance at times. Tshaka (2012:168) rightly points out the deceit:

... there is much popular talk in South Africa that we are a country that is striving towards a non-racial society. Embedded in this talk is the assumption that racial prejudice can be quickly eradicated. There is also much talk of reverse racism in South Africa, as if the effect [W]hites might experience is equivalent to what [B]lacks experience. Such talk is possible because we have confined our talk about racism to racial prejudice and have not extended it to systems

and structures that discriminate and continue to discriminate against people based on race.

West (1999:115) also argues:

The global cultural bazaar of entertainment and enjoyment, the global shopping mall of advertising and marketing, the global workplace of blue-collar and white-collar employment and the global financial network of computerised transactions and mega-corporate mergers render any talk about race irrelevant.

The irrelevance of race in politics points back to [W]hite deceit, unaccountability, lack of repentance – observed in their condescendence of Blacks – and the fact that Black people and Black churches do not relate White racism to be the absolute sin that has ever plagued Black humanity. This sin has allowed and guaranteed Black disillusionment and disparity, an anathema to being created by God, from His image and likeness and a Black humanity for which He also died. Thus, if this be so, God undoubtedly resides and finds pride in blackness; ontologically and physiologically, destruction of that is an attempt to destroy and bleach God out of blackness, the Black world, and the Black experience. One must point out that the Black experience should never be considered historically static for as long as whiteness governs and White privilege is in motion; when [W]hites continue to rule, the [W]hite illusion of God rules with them. Blacks then continue to be in denial of who they are. Imarogbe (2001:xii-xiii) argues:

Our acceptance of inferiority cannot be consciously admitted so we repress it, leaving it to function as unconscious motivation. We reject our blackness and seek to build a fantasy identity with which to connect it. This is the [B]lack man's identity problem. A [B]lack man living in a [W]hite world which has declared him inferior cannot escape the stigma of his blackness. There is no escape as an individual. Only a group can create a counter culture in which [B]lack is acceptable. Because you are [B]lack, you live in a ghetto with all of its restrictions; poverty, unemployment, crime, exploitation, poor schools, social disorganisation, and powerless dependency; you resent being [B]lack with all of its restrictions so you try to break your identification by denying your identity. You try to pretend that you are not [B]lack.

3. BREAKING THE SHACKLES

White spirituality, interpretation, influence, and practice must be denounced – a rejection of Western life to redeem Black humanity. Biko (1978:51) rightly asserted that Western life has been nothing but destruction of the

cultural, moral, metaphysical, mental, psychological, and spiritual life of Blacks, due to Black continual suffering. Black suffering is the chief reason for a soteriology and requires the revelation of God from the margins. The revelation of God that reveals their audacity of self-knowledge and those who are for the people with an understanding of the ever-present stagnation of Black power and influence. Brown³ (1968) pointed out that, even if a Black individual is elected into power, [B]lack people must be willing to fight against that person, because the system mandates the actions of the individual and not the individual, the individual does not have influence socially, politically and economically to mandate something, thus what we are talking about is a complete change in system. This point is necessary in order to understand the current dialectics of power in South Africa, where a “Black” elected government is not working to correct the negative historical images Europeanism, whiteness, and modernity have given to their racial group. This is achievable, because blackness is not expressed fully to render indeed the authenticity of Blacks and their blackness in Africa as something they should be proud of. Instead, there is a continuity of Blacks living in two worlds – one White and the other Black – while White supremacy is master of both. Evans (1992:99-100) argues:

Black people continue to struggle to answer the question of what it means to be Black (and human), caught between the identity that their oppressors attempt to force upon them and the identity that is theirs by their own conviction and by divine decree.

Fanon (1963:169-170) rightly noted of colonialism:

On the unconscious plane, colonialism therefore did not seek to be considered by the native as a gentle, loving mother who protects her child from a holistic environment, but rather as a mother who unceasingly restrains her fundamentally perverse offspring from managing to commit suicide and from giving free rein to its evil instincts. The colonial mother protects her child from itself, from its ego, and from its physiology, its biology and its own unhappiness, which is its very essence.

What both Evans and Fanon expose is this quest for true identity beyond the pretext and constrains set by White supremacy on Black existence ontologically and physiologically. These White prerequisites to life are maintained through stereotypes and the self-imposed fear of Blacks to go beyond the constraints of what is considered normal, which is

3 This was an interview with Gil Noble on the *Like It Is* show in 1968, where Brown was the guest.

that Blacks need White approval for spirituality, intellect, governance, and life in general. Young (1990:37) points to Jones when he asserts:

Black awareness should not be contingent upon [W]hite recognition of the humanity of [B]lacks, for that would place [B]lack self-identity outside [B]lack consciousness.

Fanon (1963:175) posits Black consciousness as a separation from Western culture and points to the difficulty of this separation and the implication thereof of not separating from White definitions and life. He asserts:

This tearing away, painful and difficult though it may be, is, however, necessary. If it is not accomplished there will be serious psycho-affective injuries and the result will be individuals without anchor, without a horizon, colourless, stateless, rootless – a race of angels.

This colourlessness and racial blindness reveals in depth the ontological damage that is reoccurring to Blacks, because no one views, under the present western culture, the importance of humanising the dehumanised. That now has an altered identity that comes with the stripping away of Black humanity. The salvation of Black humanity is fundamentally an ontological and physiological task, even in a Christian context. Rhodes (1991:4) captures this in his critique on Cone's Black theology:

Cone notes aspects of blackness: the physiological and ontological. In the first sense, "[B]lack" indicates a physiological trait. It refers to "a particular black-skinned people in America". In the second sense, "[B]lack" and "[W]hite" relate not to skin pigmentation, but to "one's attitude and action toward the liberation of the oppressed [B]lack people from [W]hite racism". Blackness is thus "an ontological symbol for all people who participate in the liberation of man from oppression".

Biko (1978:52) asserted:

Being [B]lack is not a matter of pigmentation – being [B]lack is a reflection of mental attitude. Merely by describing yourself as [B]lack 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.

Biko's assertion adequately tallies the unity and coexistence of blackness as a unitary metaphysical and existential presence, expressed ontologically and physiologically for true liberation. Both Biko and Cone point out that White superiority has been and is used as a trajectory of human existence;

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morally, scientifically, spiritually, culturally, economically, physiologically, and ontologically, and has been forcefully engraved upon the existence of Blacks. In a nutshell, whiteness dehumanises the world and blackness humanises the world; physiologically and ontologically, this is the truth of the Black world and that can come from the notion of a Black church. One also has to point out that blackness, physiologically and ontologically, was useful as a tool of organising the oppressed. Carmichael (1967) in Havana, Cuba, in his address on *BLACK POWER and the THIRD WORLD*, asserted:

We greet you as comrades because it becomes increasingly clear to us each day that we share with you a common struggle; we have a common enemy. Our enemy is [W]hite Western imperialist society. (Note that we use the term [W]hite Western society as opposed to [W]hite Western civilisation. The West has never been civilised. It has no right to speak of itself as a civilisation.) Our struggle is to overthrow this system which feeds itself and expands itself through the economic and cultural exploitation of non-Western peoples – the THIRD WORLD. We share with you also a common vision of the establishment of humanistic societies in the place of those now existing. We seek with you to change the power bases of the world, where mankind will share the resources of their nations, instead of having to give them up to foreign plunderers where civilisations can retain their cultural sovereignty instead of being forced to submit to foreign rulers who impose their own corrupt cultures on those civilisations they would dominate.

Carmichael⁴ also pointed out that Blacks' coming together is about survival, and survival is fundamentally Black soteriology.

4. THE BLACK CHURCH AND ITS METHODOLOGY FOR BLACK SOTERIOLOGY

The above then gels well with the need for salvation for, when speaking about Black soteriology as physiological and ontological, one cannot make mention of this without the womb of Black theological truth, the Black church, and Black theology. That represents the germination of Black spirituality and an alternative to White global and theological supremacy. While exposing Black hermeneutics that reveal the illegitimacy of colonial Christianity, Cone (1975:15) stated:

Our theology must emerge consciously from an investigation of the socioreligious experience of [B]lack people, as that experience is

4 This he said at the Huey Newton Rally.

reflected in [B]lack stories of God's dealings with [B]lack people in the struggle of freedom.

Renate (1974:38) asserts the following:

At least during the first phase of the anti-colonial struggle the new messianic religions, which have been appearing in colonies of Africa, Latin America and Asia, have a progressive character in so far as preaching the Africanisation or adoption of Christian doctrines to local conditions. They fan the embers of a nascent nationalism and present the struggle against colonialism as a struggle against the deformations of colonial Christianity.

The notion of a Black church reveals the fundamental underlining reality of Black people's resilience, prodigious faith, audacious tenacity, and resistance that characterise Black struggle and optimism, along with the influence of good Black leadership that was historically found in the Black church, the religion of the slave. Drawing from the Du Bois analysis of the slave religion, Billingsley (1999:7) records:

Three things characterised this religion of the slave: the Preacher, the Music and the Frenzy. ... The preacher is the most unique personality developed by the Negro on American soil – leader, a politician, an orator, a boss, an intriguer and idealist.

Frazier (1964:11) argues:

Through the medium of the Negro preacher the stories in the Bible were dramatised for the Negro and many characters and incidents were interpreted in terms of the Negro's experience.

Frazier (1964:12) further argues:

In providing a theology, and thereby a new orientation towards the world and man, the Bible provided the Negro with the rich imagery which has characterised the sermons of the Negro preachers and the sacred folk songs of the Negro.

The notion of a Black church is then a refusal to die physiologically, ontologically, historically, and spiritually.

Mdingi (2014:62) asserts:

In maintaining a soteriology for [B]lack humanity, the notion of a [B]lack church must have a soterological syllogism, which will entail both paradigms of ontology and physiology. This is a call beyond the traditional metaphysical soteriology of Christendom that has

often been interpreted as a one-sided Gospel that the missionaries exploited. But it should be a salvation that will expel condescending, demeaning and all facets of [B]lack humanity's dehumanisation that are still attached to [B]lack people who are affected by consumerism, materialism and individualism.

The physiological entails not simply the organic make-up of Blacks who have been denied, but also the material conditions in which Blacks find themselves – situations that constantly mirror the negative images created by White society of blackness being a symbol of poverty, sickness, the ghetto, objects of capitalism, and marginalisation from institutions, resources, land, and the economy.

Black theology has used the Marxist tool of analysis (Cone 1975:39) to venture into the economic, social, sexist, and political plight of Blacks under a capitalist society. Posel (2010:160) revealed the arrival of the elitist Black who emerges from the history of White racism, class and definitions of life and has swallowed them, and depends on status and money to consider his/her humanity. Day (2012:107-108) mentions the mission of the Black church and how Blacks currently face more social and economic issues tied to race. Day also asserts that the church has now lost its class-based vision for economic justice for the poor and the acceptance of neo-liberal free-market values. On the other hand, the ontological aspect will entail Black spirituality, ideas, and the aspiration of the masses. It captures the imagination of the oppressed far beyond the ideas of Whites. This assumed belief and ideas of the supremacy of Whites being habited in the minds of Blacks is best described as mentacide. Wright (1976:1), in speaking about Black mentacide, argued: "... mentacide is defined as the 'deliberate and systematic destruction of an individual or group's mind'." Mentacide differs in theory and practice from concepts, for example, "brain washing", in that its ultimate aim is the extirpation of an entire race; whereby "brain washing" is primarily used to convert individuals or groups to a case or belief. In addition, on an ontological level, what Biko (1978:52) and Rhodes (1991:4) in reference to Cone are saying about blackness existing ontologically as thought, can also be seen in Black soteriology. But, in fact, Black ontology begins with physiological pigmentation and carries it even on a metaphysical level. Then it becomes an ontology that does not emerge as a metaphysical reality of colourlessness, but it is pigmented as physiology is, thus the syllogism is within and outside and to the rest of the world. Thus it is in Blacks, the race most dehumanised, were Black ontology is synonymous with Black physiology and can transform and save the world.

5. CONCLUSION

The notion of a Black church is confronted by the ghost of Amilcar Cabral in his party directive in 1965, especially the title, that declares *tell no lies and claim no easy victory*, which is descriptive of South Africa. This is applicable, in that democracy in South Africa has told lies and claimed only the easy victory of saving White face from public display as still the oppressor. The ventriloquist in politics of change that is in control of institutions of power, Ture⁵ is right in declaring that

[t]he major enemy is not flesh of your flesh and blood of your blood,
but the hunky and his institutions of racism.

These racist institutions have given birth to conditions that have necessitated a continual soteriology that will solidify the blood and flesh of Blacks for Black brotherhood and sisterhood in struggle. It reveals fallacies that have been brought forth in post-apartheid South Africa that have been legitimised and theologised by the church under the banner of reconciliation, having sealed defeat and exacerbated Black suffering. The White church blessed White supremacy to sin in the Black world and the Black church has approved the deceit and compromise by ignoring the pertinent question of humanity. White Christianity came from the water that carried the oppressor to the shores of the Black world. A strong analogy is that water that carried oppression to Africa's shores was used, while filled with oppressive intent, to baptise Blacks for conversion after spiritual and material subjugation for "salvation". Thus, there is a psychological, physiological, spiritual, mental, and ontological entrapment for Black authentic existence and it requires separation for Black redemption. The Black church must stand to declare that silence in the face of truth is sin. Further, the church must help in areas of Black defence as long as Whites can continue to enter Black churches and shoot Black Christians. Jesus declares no man enters a strong man's house to spoil his house; he has to bind him first, then spoil his house. White racism soteriologically must be counter attacked. Brown's⁶ words are relevant to the Black church, when he declared:

We recognise America for what it is – the fourth Reich – and we want
America to be on notice that if you go play Nazi, [B]lack people aren't
go play Jews.

South African democracy is synonymous with the biblical tokenism of the Romans giving Jews Herod; this is best expressed in the new dispensation of Black presidents; tokens from White power. Thus leading

5 This he delivered at the Black Panther Rally in 1968.

6 Brown declared this in a press conference in 1967.

the masses to not only overthrow Herod, but also behead Caesar who controls Herod. Brown⁷ further asserted, concerning White nationalism, that it is like “Santa Claus; a White hunky that slides down a Black chimney but still comes out White.” This is profoundly relevant for soteriology in the South African context where, after negotiation with the support of the Black majority, the country is still White.

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7 This he said in the 1968 Free Huey Rally.

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