

Southern New Hampshire University

Slavery, Christianity, and the Exodus
from the Black Church

A Capstone Project Submitted to the College of Online and Continuing Education in Partial
Fulfillment of the Master of Arts in History

By

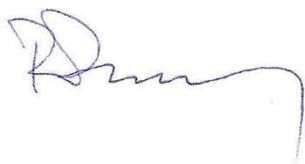
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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to address the issue of African Americans leaving Christianity and finding solace in religious ideologies which do not represent the same Judeo-Christian and democratic values that traditionally have been espoused in this United States of America. From examining the material that is available on slavery, its association with Christianity in the United States and the western hemisphere, and information on alternative ideologies being embraced by African Americans, the intention of this research is to show that the exodus was in part due to the link between Christianity and slavery in the United States. In addition, it will be shown that African Americans are finding alternative religious and philosophical ideologies more favorable because they are addressing the needs of African Americans. Some of the religious organizations that African Americans are gravitating to outside of the realm of Christianity are making those disenchanted with Christianity believe that their alternative religious ideologies are more in line with their African ancestry.

Along with this, the thesis will present some of the main arguments for and against Christianity. This aspect of the project will include the use of scriptures which from the Old and New Testament showing the biblical position on slavery and perspective on conduct to be afforded to others in and outside of the Christian faith.

Afterwards, this thesis will provide the cost of having a presentation conducted at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. And lastly, there a summary will be provided along with information about the online presentation that will contain highlights of the project.

Dedication

This paper is being dedicated to all people from every ethnicity who gave their blood, sweat, tears, and lives showing their faith by their service to others.

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Glossary

1. **Black Nationalism** – An Afrocentric ideology which promotes the idea that descendants from Africa living in the U.S. and elsewhere should support African business, religious ideas, and refrain from believing in a Eurocentric religion and philosophy.
2. **Eastern Orthodox Church** - It is an alternative name given to the Orthodox Church which broke away from the Roman Catholic Church during the Great Schism in the 11th century over doctrinal issues. This church largely exists in Eastern Europe, Russia, and parts of the Middle East and Africa.
3. **Five Percent Nation** – An off-shoot of the Nation of Islam. The organization has been classified as a gang by the New York City Police Department because of the illegal activities which are often associated with its members. New members are sometimes recruited while in prison by other members. Aside from this, Five Percenters hold to an esoteric, unorthodox view of the Bible and Qur'an. Those in this group believe that they are the embodiment of the divine and are known to refer to themselves as god or Allah.
4. **Fundamentalism** – A term that refers roughly to a conservative belief system within a religion. The term is associated with beliefs recognized by its adherents as the core or fundamental set of beliefs of the religion.
5. **Fundamentalist** – a person or belief system based on fundamentalism. This term has been used when referring to certain Christian groups such as Baptists and Pentecostals because of their conservative views on tobacco, alcohol, wine, and other strong drinks along with their dress code and other beliefs. It has also been used when referring to Muslim groups which believe in the literal translation of the Qur'an, strict observance of Muslim (Sharia) law and the right of Muslims to defend and die for the faith as a martyr if necessary.

6. **Hebrew Israelite** – A separatist religious organization started in the early 20th century which claims that African Americans are the descendants of Abraham and are the true Hebrews from the Bible along with some other ethnic minorities.
7. **Islam** – The name given to one of the seven major religions of the world. It was started in the Near East in the 6th century by a poor caravan driver named Muhammad. The religion contains elements from the Old and New Testament, but embraces customs not found in the Bible. This religion claims to be the final authority and last revelation of the God of the Bible.
8. **MOVE** – The name of a radical separatist African American organization started in Chicago by some disenchanted African Americans. The group became infamous for its opposition to the police and local authorities in Chicago and made the headlines in the news for being bombed by the major and police department.
9. **Nation of Islam** - A religious organization claiming to be Muslim which was advanced in the early 20th century by an African American named Elijah Poole, who later became known as Elijah Muhammad. This organization was made famous by Malcolm X and the former heavy weight boxing legend, Muhammad Ali.
10. **Protestant** – the name of a church or member of a church which originally evolved from the Lutheran movement after 1517 that was started by the Catholic monk turned reformer Martin Luther.
11. **Quakers** – The name of a conservative Protestant Christian denomination known officially as the Society of Friends. During America's colonial days, members of this organization was among the first to help slaves and oppose slavery.

Introduction

With so much mayhem and evil being aired in the news and through the various forms of social media online, there appears to be a growing disenchantment on the horizon among both the young and old with the way things are in the world. And because many people do not see any help coming from their religious affiliations, some people have disconnected themselves from religion entirely. Others have decided to gravitate towards alternative religious experiences. Then there are others that have been led to the conclusion that there is a need for a new religion or, as some would say, a “New Age” religion.

People are looking for ways to find fulfillment in this world. It may not be a new religion that people need. Nor is there a need for more walls, bombs, guns, or new political parties. What seems to be lacking, is love beyond the perimeters of their relatives or others with whom they have a connection. And in addition, there is a need to recognize the values associated with the faith that helped to build and sustain this country and the people that have come to call it home.

Although calls for change can be heard in the streets, in churches, and on the Senate floor, there are still too many who have not recognized that real change for the better comes when people recognize the good that exists in our religious heritage and the importance of cooperation rather than dissension and destruction. Our planet’s resources are becoming scarce, and our air, water, and land are being poisoned with toxins along with our bodies. In addition, racism and hatred are still being perpetuated. The research conducted for this thesis is not cannot tackle all of the possible reasons; however, it will show that the perpetuation of slavery and segregation were connected to a racist ideology which included the misrepresentation of Christianity.

When a person, group, or nation presents itself as being educated or intelligent, civilized, and moral, what should follow is a manifestation of civility and morality. The hallmark of society

that identifies it more than anything else is its commitment to upholding the values that it professes within its religious and philosophical ideology. Unfortunately, in this world people's commitment to implementing actions has not seemed to surpass our ideologies on paper. Such should not be the case and does not have to be.

This blatant disparity between what is proclaimed and what is practiced can be seen around the world and throughout history. And although this is a worldwide problem, this project will be dealing mainly with the religious ideology known as Christianity. At some future point, there may have the opportunity to expand our focus to deal with this on more global basis.

This research will show that the disparity in Christianity advanced by Europeans has contributed to a continued exodus from Christianity among African Americans. And although this may not warrant a concern among many, it should because many African Americans leaving Christianity are joining radical, militant religious groups that do not have our best interests at heart. And not only that, the exodus from Christianity and entry into these groups may lead to repercussions that will adversely affect this entire country. All may not be lost and a mass exodus from Christianity into an anti-Christian radical religiosity can be thwarted. So, beyond what has been said thus far, it is the goal here to show that Christianity is not exclusively the "white man's religion" or just a system of beliefs. Christianity historically surpasses the façade that has presented itself as Christianity by Europeans with a racist mindset and white supremacist agenda. But since a presentation of shortcomings in European Christianity is not proof of why African Americans are leaving the faith, information will be provided that will show how slavery and racism have contributed to the African American exodus from this religious institution. In addition, this research aims to show how a disconnect with Christianity has adversely affected us and will affect us in more substantial ways.

Although there is a trend against Christianity towards secular humanism, historically, the United States has been recognized as Christian. Its founding fathers used elements and ideas from the Bible to help the construct some of this nation's greatest legal documents. Our U.S. Congress has a Christian clergyman provide an invocation prior to sessions on the congressional floor. Even our dollar bill contains the words "In God We Trust." And if there is still any doubt that this country has anything to do with Christianity, despite the so-called "separation of Church and State," let him or her recall the fact that our pledge of allegiance includes the word "God."

So, when this country became a nation, set up its government, and decided to continue calling itself "Christian," it put this United States under a microscope for the world and gave our parent country, England, to look upon this nation with disdain.¹ After looking at the U.S. under this microscope in the 1800s, the great English novelist Charles Dickens was led to write unfavorably about the mistreatment of African Americans in colonial America.² The continued mistreatment of African Americans led another respected individual, Albert Einstein, to mention what he perceived to be an unfair treatment of African Americans her in the United States.³ Even those born in this country have been examining how the U.S. has been conducting itself with regards to continued mistreatment of its ethnic populations.

The intention of this research is to facilitate a reevaluation of the racist elements historically in the western hemisphere that have influenced Christianity, perpetuated prejudices, and fostered discrimination in this country. This reevaluation can be done by holding a lecture at the Schomburg Research Center where attendees can be updated on what has been perpetuated against

¹ Orville Dewey, *The Works of the Rev. Orville Dewey, D.D.* (Belfast: Simms and M'Intyre, Aldine Chambers Paternoster Row, and Donegall Street, 1844), 880-881.

² Dewey, *The Works of the Rev. Orville Dewey*, 880-881.

³ Albert Einstein, *The World as I See It & Out of My Later Years* (Camp Hill: Quality Paperback, 1990), 132-133.

the African American community in America during the colonialism, know what is being used by those who are using alternative radical religious ideologies, and understand what they can do as a counterbalance to white supremacy, radical Black Nationalism, and other potentially adverse ideologies.

The Schomburg's stated mission, according to its mission statement, indicates that the organization is "devoted to collecting, preserving and providing access to resources documenting the experiences of peoples of African descent throughout the world, with emphasis on blacks in the Western Hemisphere...." And with the center's vested interest in promoting "the study of the histories and cultures of peoples of African descent," a lecture proceeding from this research will be a superb location for this endeavor.⁴

Such conditions are adversely affecting our individual and national wellbeing. This was true when our sixteenth president, Abraham Lincoln, stated that a nation divided against itself cannot stand, and it is true today. And because this is still true, it is high time to look for a way to extinguish the simmering coals of dissension that continue to grow in the Black communities against Christianity and democracy. Having a lecture at the Schomburg will serve as a start in this pursuit.

Europeans in America during the colonial period of American history utilized a twisted, one-sided version of Christianity to endorse and perpetuate slavery, and advance racism for their own financial well-being to the detriment of African Americans and other ethnic minorities. And although the endorsement of slavery by European American clergymen in centuries past may not appear to have had an adverse effect on African Americans, it has. Information about white

⁴ Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, "Strategic Direction – Vision Document," June 22, 2009, <https://www.nypl.org/sites/default/files/SchomburgStrategicDirectionReport.pdf>, (accessed January 30, 2018).

Christian acceptance of slavery in America has been a tool used by radical African American groups within the past century and is being used by radical groups today to stir disenchanted African Americans away from churches in this country. The modern-day African Americans who are pointing the spotlight on European American Christianity are doing so by presenting Christianity as a white supremacist tool for oppressing African Americans. It will be shown in this research that the Christianity perpetuated by slaveowners and racists after the official demise of slavery in America does not reflect the Christianity found in the Bible.

Chapter 1: Historiography / Literature Review

Since this thesis involves the discussion of slavery and Christianity, sources were sought out that covered slavery from its inception in the western hemisphere in the late 15th century under Spanish colonialism. To facilitate this goal, books covering the Spanish colonization of the Americas were read. Among these books was the book entitled *1493: Uncovering The New World Columbus Created*. This book provided little-known information regarding how horticulture helped to shape the colonial world under Spanish rule and world today. The author, Charles C. Mann, was more interested in praising Columbus rather than providing readers with information on the darker side of the explorer. Although the book addresses aspects of colonialism and sheds light on how crops and trade played a role in the trade, it maintains a traditional approach to Columbus. And instead of using the term “slaves” or “enslaved” to describe those who were brought to the New World by Columbus and others, the author prefers to call these unfortunate Africans “workers.”¹

Realizing that this source would not provide suitable information on Spanish colonialism’s institution of slavery, other sources were researched. But before moving on to other sources, it must be noted that the author of 1493 indicated that Africans were preferred for use in the fields because they had a higher resistance to malaria.² He failed to mention the element of racism in the decision to retain Africans by the Spanish colonies.

While still looking for information on African slaves under early colonial rule in the Caribbean, the book by Nigel Cliff entitled *Holy War: How Vasco Da Gama’s Epic Voyages*

¹ Charles C. Mann, *1493: Uncovering The New World Columbus Created*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011) 43.

² Mann, *1493: Uncovering The New World Columbus Created*, 133.

Turned The Tide in a Centuries-Old Clash of Civilizations was considered. Although the book dealt with mention the brutality of Columbus against natives, it proved to be inadequate as a source of information on slavery under Spanish and Portuguese rule.³ It does, however, provide one valuable clue to the religious sentiments of the Spanish conquerors who enslaved the natives in the western hemisphere by acknowledging that Columbus had natives hung and burned thirteen at a time in honor of Christ and his twelve apostles.⁴ In addition, this book also supported the idea that economic motives influenced the severity of Columbus's atrocities against the native population that he encountered.⁵

Because very little direct information was uncovered in these books dealing with natives, research was redirected to books dealing with Africans in the Caribbean and South America under colonial rule. One of the books researched was entitled Laurent Dubois' book, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution*. Although the book deals with the complexities the involved the wars and racial tension between the Africans and Africans who were of mixed race, it falls short in dealing with the issue of European racism and the Roman Church's involvement in the institution of slavery.

Another book that was used to research the institution of slavery in the New World was volume two of the book entitled *The Age of Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America*. Although this book covers a broad range, it does not provide proof of its claim that the African slave revolts in the United States were due to them hearing it rather than having any desire or will to do so on their own. In addition, the author makes use of the derogatory term

³ Nigel Cliff, *Holy War: How Vasco Da Gama's Epic Voyages Turned The Tide in a Centuries-Old Clash of Civilizations*, (New York: HarperCollins, 2011) 151.

⁴ Cliff, *Holy War: How Vasco Da Gama's Epic Voyages Turned The Tide in a Centuries-Old Clash of Civilizations*, 147.

⁵ Ibid, 151.

“mulatto” indicates an insensitivity towards these Africans.⁶ And like some of the other books previously dealt with, Palmer’s book did not prove to be a source of information regarding information on the involvement of religion in the slave trade.

On the other hand, Philippe R. Girard’s book entitled, *The Slaves Who Defeated Napoleon: Toussaint Louv*, presents a more even-handed and approach to the subject of those enslaved in the Caribbean island of Haiti. Girard’s book covers the history of the Haitian Revolution in greater detail than other books before it. And while doing so, he reveals that there were “renegade” priests who lived among the Haitians who were said to have supported the African Haitians’ revolt of 1791.⁷ But like the other books preceding his, the book does not delve into the area of how Catholicism played a part in the institution of slavery. And although it does show racial tension between various African groups in Haiti that relate to the idea of inferiority in association with color, it does not indicate a direct correlation to white supremacy.

Two other books involving slave rebellions were *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia* and *The Counter-Revolution of 1776: Slave Resistance and the Origins of the United States of America*. Since both books were concerned with the subject of African slave rebellions, it was hoped that they would contain information helpful to this research on slavery and its connection to racism and European Christianity.

The *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia* book provides some evidence to support the idea racism did not become dissolved after slaves became free men and women. Its authors, Jose Joao Reis and Arthur Brakel, also devolved the fact that some Africans

⁶ R.R. Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America*. Vol. 2, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 514-515.

⁷ Philippe R. Girard, *The Slaves Who Defeated Napoleon: Toussaint Louverture and the Haitian War of Independence, 1801–1804*. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2011) 194.

involved in the uprising were Muslims. Evidence for the enslavement of Africans based on economic needs was also stated in this book. This book also concurs with other sources about the colonial American notion among whites that Africans were savages and rapists.⁸

And as *The Counter-Revolution of 1776* was being researched, it was discovered that this book touched on some racial issues. One of which was the fact that European slaveowners in the Caribbean were criticized as being un-Christian in 1693.⁹ The book also serves as proof that racism was behind the mistreatment of Africans. This was evidenced by the fact that even when Africans accepted Christianity, they were still not afforded the same rights or treatment as whites.¹⁰ Proof of the racist mindset was also exposed by the contrast in treatment afforded to Africans who revolts versus European revolts.

Lee Bebout's *Whiteness on the Border* was reviewed to determine if it would provide more information than the previously mentioned sources. Being a more recent book, and one which was about Mexico, it was thought that this book would contain more information on the history of slavery and racism south of the border. The book proved to be a source for contemporary signs of racism in movies and other cultural venues in the United States, but not a source of information on slavery and racism with relation to Africans. And like the book entitled *All The Real Indians Died Off*, this book's author incorporates information into his book from his own personal experiences. Bebout deals with the contemporary state of things regarding racism and the complicated issue of Mexicans being recognized at times as "white" while simultaneously being treated in a disparaging manner by whites.¹¹ And since the subject of racism is primarily focused

⁸ Gerald Horne, *The Counter-Revolution of 1776: Slave Resistance and the Origins of the United States of America* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2014), 235.

⁹ Horne, *The Counter-Revolution of 1776: Slave Resistance and the Origins of the United States of America*, 34.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 66.

¹¹ Lee Bebout, *Whiteness on the Border: Mapping the U.S. Racial Imagination in Brown and White* (New York: New York University Press, 2016) 49.

on the 20th century, it remains incapable of serving as a reference for colonial slavery. *All The Real Indians Died Off* appeared to be more promising since it dealt more specifically with the history of Native Americans and did so by covering the history of these people from colonial times up to the present. Its authors, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz and Dina Gilio-Whitaker, do suggest that the murderous actions taken against the Natives in the western hemisphere were in line with the Catholic teaching of that period in history. This book makes the connection between the Roman Church and the subjugation of all heathens, pagans, and infidels.¹²

A book with a more personal account woven into the history of Native Americans and European colonists was Thomas King's book, *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America*. Since this book was written from the perspective of the author, who is of Native American descent, some may be led to believe that King's book is an example of his own biased opinions. But its contents indicate otherwise. The book not only gives examples of the author's own experiences. It cites an exhaustive list of dates during which Natives were involved taken advantage of and subjected to broken promises after making treaties with the United States and Canadian government.¹³

Numerous other sources that were read were found to contain no significant information to collaborate the argument proposed in this thesis. Some of these sources included information from news articles, journals, e-books, online videos, and a video documentary on DVD. Research was also done by searching U.S. government websites which included the National Park Service, the National Archives, the U.S. Census Bureau, and the census department of Australia along with a

¹² Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz and Dina Gilio-Whitaker, *All The Real Indians Died Off'' and 20 other myths about Native Americans* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2016) 28.

¹³ Thomas King, *The Inconvenient Indian, The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012) 101-116, 147.

government site containing declassified FBI files on a Black Nationalist organization. Assistance in locating archived information on African American slaves was also provided by Cheryl Adams, a research librarian at the Southern New Hampshire University's Shapiro Library. Some of the books were accessed at the archive department of the Schomburg Research Library.

Although, many of the books, articles, and other material researched did not contain as much information on the subject or the specifics as needed, the information that they lacked was an indication that was a need for more to be written and researched on the subject. By collaborating with the librarian at the Shapiro Library and by checking other online sources, a website containing information about Frederick Douglass was located.¹⁴ By reading this, it was discovered that there were several white ministers who had written pro-slavery books.

One such book was written by a Reverend Spencer. It serves as an example of how Christianity and the law were used to impose the institution of slavery in the United States.¹⁵ Another was composed by a Reverend Orville Dewey. His book proved to be a great asset in this thesis since his argument for slavery along with that of other white Christian ministers confirmed the argument in this thesis regarding Christianity's support of slavery in the United States.

Although these ministers did not represent every Christian minister or the sentiments of every Christian, their writings represent what was recognized as the norm during the 18th and 19th century. And from the writings of Bartolome de Casas, the Catholic cleric who became an advocate for the Natives being enslaved and butchered by his fellow Spanish colonists, it can be

¹⁴ Frederick Douglass, "Love of God, Love of Man, Love of Country" Delivered at Market Hall, New York City, October 22, 1847, American Slavery, TeachingAmericanHistory.org: A leading online resource for American History teachers & students.

<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/american-slavery/> (accessed 12/17/2017).

¹⁵ Spencer, Ichabod. *FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW. The Religious Duty of Obedience to Law: A Sermon, Preached in the Second Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, Nov. 24, 1850.*

deduced that slavery, racism, and religion were working together for the economic advancement of the Spaniards in their colonies.

Another major source was that which was composed by Reverend E. W. Warren. His book, entitled *Nellie Norton: or Southern Slavery and the Bible*, is an exhaustive work showing the extent that Southern exponents of slavery using the Bible would go to prove that slavery was a godly institution.¹⁶ For those who were pro-slavery in the United States, particularly in the South, this book was a treasure. But for those who were opposed to slavery, it served as a reminder that the Bible could be used to support slavery.

Fortunately, though, Frederick Douglass was able and willing to put forth a book and give lectures despite attacks on him by whites who wanted to deny him his God-given rights to equality as a man. His book, *Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass an American Slave*, was included in this research as a primary source because it is a firsthand account of slavery.¹⁷ His book was chosen as a primary source also because it confirmed the idea that most white Christians in the United States during its colonial days supported slavery.

Although the sources covered Christianity's involvement in slavery and pointed to the economic and racist factors which helped to drive slavery, evidence was still needed to show that these elements were in some way impacting on African Americans in modern times. For this, sources needed to be found which could show a correlation between African Americans today

¹⁶ Reverend E. W. Warren, *Nellie Norton: or Southern Slavery and the Bible, A Scriptural Refutation of the Principal Arguments Upon Which the Abolitionists Rely, A Vindication of Southern Slavery from the Old and New Testaments* (Macon: Burke, Boykin & Company, 1864), 26, <https://archive.org/details/53950989.4112.emory.edu> (accessed January 14, 2018).

¹⁷ Fredrick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass an American Slave* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2002).

and events which were initiated and carried out hundreds of years ago. A number of literary sources were researched. Among them was the book entitled *A Pictorial History of the Negro in America*, by Langston Hughes and Milton Meltzer. In this book, readers would see the history of African Americas with highlights of major figures involved in promoting slavery, opposing slavery, and serving as a means of negating the lies of slavery regarding the inferiority of the African American. However, the book did not include information which would show any connection between slavery and African Americans joining radical religious organizations. For this, research had to be done by combing through an e-book entitled *Thin Description*.¹⁸ This book contains an enormous amount of information on a radical African American group which espouses the belief that Africans, or at least some Africans, are the descendants of Hebrews in the Bible. Those in this religious organization represent a reactionary movement against Christianity and white supremacy. Another group, which had a shorter lifespan, was researched. This group, which also claimed a connection to biblical Hebrews, was known as the Nation of Yahweh. Although the group appeared to be reactionary and was radical, it was not determined whether the group's teachings included a renunciation of Christianity due to any past connection with slavery.

Further research on other African American organizations claiming a literal connection to Hebrews in the Bible did provide some interesting information from one site. Although not mentioned in most of the books on African Americans, research online did reveal that in the late 19th century an African American sect was established and had begun promoting the idea that

¹⁸ Jackson, John L. *Thin Description*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013)
<http://eds.a.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.snhu.edu/eds/ebookviewer/ebook/bmxlYmtfXzU3NTY0MV9fQU41?sid=8b9355cd7de64aceabaea2ddd33832b0@sessionmgr4006&vid=0&format=EB&rid=1>.

Blacks were the true Hebrews.¹⁹ Whether this idea was valid or not, the existence of a sect claiming lineage to Hebrews in the late 19th and onset of the 20th century was an indication that there were African Americans dissatisfied with the standard or mainstream colonial Christian idea held in of Blacks being the cursed descendants of Ham. And far from being an isolated situation, further research has revealed that there were other groups being formed in the early 20th century which opposed European Christian ideology.²⁰

The discovery of this information points to the fact that a radically divergent religious ideology among African Americans did not start in the 20th century but began less than four decades after the Civil War. The recent literature and sidewalk proselytizing being conducted by various African Americans claiming Hebrew ancestry also serves as evidence that these groups are using information about slavery and racism to stir up new generations of converts to their cause. And while more research will need to be conducted to substantiate the numbers, it is certain from what this research has uncovered that radical groups like these are attracting the attention of many in the African American community.²¹ Groups like this represent just some of the varieties of radical and anti-Christian sects that are recruiting disenchanted and disenfranchised young men and women. Other groups include the New Black Panthers, which for the time being have been low key, the Bloods and Crips gangs, the Five Percent Nation, which is not as popular as it was decades ago, and the Nation of Islam, which has put on a new face, but which still has some of the same vanguards at the helm. Then there is also the lesser known group known as MOVE, which

¹⁹ Eric J. Sundquist, *Strangers in the Land: Blacks, Jews, Post-Holocaust America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

²⁰ Yvonne Patricia Chireau and Nathaniel Deutch, *Black Culture and Black Zion: African American Religious Encounters with Judaism, 1790–1930, an Overview* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 18, 21.

²¹ “The Israelites: What Church Has Been Hiding From Us! #OurHistory” Dec 19, 2015, 138:43 minutes, IUIcintheClassRoom Orlando, Youtube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=If3jWoV71VA> (accessed January 9, 2018).

terrorized a neighborhood in Philadelphia before it was forcefully halted due to a bombing conducted by the police department.²² From what has been ascertained thus far, Black Nationalists are making a comeback.²³

²² William K. Stevens, "Police Drop Bomb on Radicals' Home in Philadelphia," *New York Times*, May 14, 1985, <http://www.nytimes.com/1985/05/14/us/police-drop-bomb-on-radicals-home-in-philadelphia.html?pagewanted=all>.

²³ Johnson, Daryl. "Return of the Black Nationalist," Intelligence Report. *Southern Poverty Law Center*, 2017 Fall Issue, August 8, 2017, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2017/return-violent-black-nationalist> (accessed January 15, 2018).

Chapter 2: Methodology

While observing the diversity of the Coral Reefs or the landscape of the Grand Canyon, one may come to the realization that these natural wonders did not come into being overnight. Their creation took years to become what they are today. Likewise, when observing the landscape of time with regards to the formation of the United States and its history of slavery, it is a good idea to consider the elements which brought these things into being.

As a researcher one needs to know *who* was involved in the events, and recognize *what* actions were taken by the individual or individuals, and *what* reasons or motives were behind the actions taken by those involved. In addition, knowing *when* the events transpired may be a factor since events happening during an age or era may correlate or be affected by the social, scientific, religious, judicial, political, philosophical, or economic environment that existed at the time of such events. Only after making such an observation can the element in history that is being considered be understood.

Since this project concerns the subject of slavery and Christianity in America, it was determined that there was a need to employ various lenses. And because certain aspects of slavery in the United States had existed in the institution under colonial Spanish rule in the Caribbean and South America and contained traits found in the institution under the Spanish colonial system, it was deemed necessary to take such into consideration. The key figures included in the project from the Spanish colonial period are King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain along with Columbus, Cortez, and Bartolome de las Casas.

These individuals show the need to employ a *religious* lens since their enslavement of the natives was said to have been connected to their desire to see these so-called primitive people

converted to Christianity.²⁴ But because motive for the Spanish conquest was primarily to acquire riches, an *economic* lens was determined to be necessary also. Aside from these lenses, the research showed that at Queen Isabella had an interest in the wellbeing of the natives being conquered, so a *social* lens was also taken into consideration for use.²⁵

And when looking at the institution of slavery as it moved into the North American colonies, it was recognized that a social, religious, and economic lens were all necessary since the same excuses, attitudes, and ill-treatment were afforded to the unfortunate Africans that were previously experienced by the natives under Spanish rule.²⁶

To do these things, this research will include examining books written by individuals who were eyewitnesses and players in either the early colonial in Latin America, the colonial period of the United States, or the period post-slavery Reconstruction era. Those living during the above-mentioned periods will provide insight into what happened or, at the least, be able to convey the facts of the occurrences which helped to initiate, maintain, and eradicate the institution of slavery. In addition, the various sources including e-books, articles in PDF, and videos will be used to supplement the information from primary sources. As for archives, the research project will include a search of alternative or additional information to collaborate what has been provided or to acquire information that was not located in the other primary and secondary sources. Due to limitations on time, most of the archival research will be done online rather than at a physical research library or other research facility. While conducting online research, information from

²⁴ Stafford Poole, ed., *In Defense of the Indians*, (Dekalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974) 14, 38.

²⁵ Francis Augustus MacNutt, *Bartholomew de Las Casas; his life, apostolate, and writings*, (Nov. 13, 2007) Cleveland, OH: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 13, 28, 33, Project Gutenberg Ebook 23466, reproduction ed. OCLC 2683160.

²⁶ James J. Gigantino, "The Ragged Road to Abolition: Slavery and Freedom in New Jersey, 1775-1865," (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 25, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt83jhjw.5> (accessed: 8/29/2016).

newspapers, government documents, journals and online articles will be utilized. Various media will be considered for research so that the research will be unbiased and various perspectives can be ascertained for their truthfulness and thoroughness.

In this research, the secondary sources which were used for this purpose include Henrice Altink's *Deviant and Dangerous: Pro-slavery Representations of Jamaican Slave Women's Sexuality* book was used because it pointed out the lie about African women enslaved in Jamaica being sexually promiscuous. The *Whiteness on the Border* book by Lee Bedout was found to be helpful in exposing the continued racism that exists about Mexican sexuality and inferiority to Europeans. *Haiti, Slavery and the Age of the Democratic Revolution* by Robin Blackburn was included as a secondary source because it provided insight into how Africans enslaved in Haiti handled their plight under French colonial rule along with the book entitled *Avengers of the New World* by Laurent Dubois, which provided insight into the mind of the Africans involved in the Haitian Revolution. Philippe Girard's *The Slaves Who Defeated Napoleon* was included because it shared insights into the mind of the Africans and their revolutionary leaders' courage and intelligence.

Another book that was found to be helpful in exposing the past and present racist mindset held against Native Americans which still exists in the world is *All The Real Indians Died Off* by Dunbar-Ortiz and Dina Gilio-Whitaker. And Marrison Fessenden's article on the Smithsonian's website was invaluable in pointing out that Africans in America did pose a serious threat to colonial slavery. Her article points out the information about how close Africans were to being successful in a revolution against the United States and that such information was ignored or suppressed by the establishment.

The issue of dangerous radical African American groups was covered in Sydney Freedberg's *Brother Love: Murder, Money and a Messiah* and the New York Times piece written by William Stevens entitled *Police Drop Bomb on Radicals' Home in Philadelphia*. His article shows how racism and anger can lead to unnecessary chaos and death of innocents when cooler heads do not prevail.

Another interesting secondary source came in the form of a book entitled *Saving the Original Sinner*. This book, which was written by a former Protestant named Karl Giberson, shows how the Bible, rightfully or wrongly, can be used to promote an agenda that may be adverse, and which can lend itself to bias and discrimination against others even in modern times in the United States. Aside from this and other sources used in the research, there was the book by John Jackson called *Thin Description*. This book provides extensive insight into the lives of African Americans who gave up on the United States and dropped Christianity to join an alternative religious organization.

Steve Weidenkof's online article for Catholic.com entitled *Did the Church Ever Support Slavery* was quite helpful in showing that there is still denial in the Catholic Church about its support, or at least, acceptance of African American and Native American Slavery. And regarding the issue of African Americans joining Black Nationalists organization, the piece written for the Southern Poverty Law Center entitled *Return of the Black Nationalist* by Daryl Johnson, is proof that there is a revived trend towards rejecting what's considered acceptable in the United States by the establishment.

And as for proof that there was a fear among whites that African Americans would turn against them, there was the article in The Atlantic Daily entitled *The Secret History of Guns*. This

article offered proof that even African Americans who had joined the Union Army were feared by whites from the North although the northerners supposedly should have had nothing to fear since the Africans would have been fighting alongside them against the southerners.

In addition to shedding light on the involvement of racism in the “Christian” acceptance of slavery, this aim of this research is to help individuals recognize the errors of racism perpetuated in this country’s past for the lies that they are. After this is accomplished, individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, and ideologies can find a means by which they can live out their existence with one another as brothers and sisters rather than as enemies or objects of scorn.

Chapter 3: Target Audience

Information is a valuable tool. It provides guidance to those who desire to gain a better understanding of something which they find interesting. The information may provide those who have received it with an understanding of how to perform a task, measure time, distance, or a physical object. On the other hand, information acquired may serve as a means of providing comfort or solace. But that is not necessarily the case with all information. And as is the case with a sharp or potentially dangerous object, information must be handled with care.

The subject of racism, prejudice, and slavery are not to be taken lightly. Neither should the subject of religion be handled haphazardly. These subjects can either facilitate anger or awe, and everyone is not up to the task of handling such matters with the care that may be needed. But those who are entering an institution where they are learning about history or the subject of religion, and Christianity in particular, should know something how these elements helped shape the United States of America.

Students of history and students of religion should know about these matters because it will enable them to better understand why some people embrace certain positions or hold certain ideological views. More specifically, by having a knowledge of the information in this research, students and instructors alike will recognize what ideas may have influenced some individuals to either embrace Christianity or reject it.

The New York Public Library's website has a list of events that are scheduled to take place at the Schomburg Center that involve education, information, and/or cultural issues. After examining the website and compiling the information from the events listed from the six-month period represented online for the year, it was determined that the total number of events to be held

for that period provided by the Schomburg came up to 38 events. These events dealt with issues of African American culture and the African American community. More specifically, the events dealt with racial issues, religious issues, health issues, and education. Other than that, no specific statistical information on the number of attendees, revenue acquired from previous events of this nature, or preferences toward a specific type of lecture were provided. To acquire data which would indicate whether the Schomburg would be a suitable place to host this research project's presentation, excerpts of events listed from the Schomburg's site were recorded. A list of the themes for these events was added to a spreadsheet and a word search was conducted to determine which events presented these themes. The data was then transferred to the spreadsheet and both the spreadsheet and list of events with their website links have been included below.

Based on the data, it was determined that the Schomburg would be a suitable place since it has a history of hosting events dealing with racial issues, religious and cultural issues, and has been highly involved in matters of African and African American history. Although it had only one event for the time examined that dealt with Christianity specifically, it did host an event that included Christian ministers, and has had several more events in that time examined that involved racial issues, and Islam, along with one event specifically addressing the subject of slavery being used by prestigious American colleges. This lecture on these colleges also addressed the fact that these colleges are still involved in taking over urban areas throughout the United States.²⁷

²⁷ New York Public Library, "Talks at the Schomburg: Slavery, Universities, Inner Cities," New York Public Library, <https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/12/09/talks-schomburg-slavery-universities-inner-cities> (accessed February 4, 2018).

Schomburg events scheduled from September 2014 to February 2014-2015
1. September 30, there will be an event entitled Ordinary People given by Alexis De Veaux and others to discuss her literary work and impact on Black women's and Black lesbian cultures. https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/09/30/ordinary-people-alexis-de-veaux
2. October 2, the Schomburg Education department will host a series entitled Conversations in Black Freedom Studies: Education for Liberation and Freedom School. During this time the Schomburg will be dealing with "black freedom studies." https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/10/02/conversations-black-freedom-studieseducation-liberation-and-freedom
3. October 3, the Schomburg presents its annual "Fall Open House & First Fridays: Black Mecca, Collective Memory" to provide visitors with a sample of programs at the center. The event will feature manuscripts, books, video, audio, art, and photographs concerning "the history of black urban centers." https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/10/03/fall-open-house-black-meccas-collective-memories
4. October 4, there will be a program called "Conversations on Self Determination: Funk and Jazz" where music will be discussed in relation to social justice. Here leading Brooklyn artists will engage in the discussion. https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/10/04/conversations-self-determination-funk-and-jazz
5. October 6, the Schomburg will hold its annual "Harlem Arts Alliance & Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce Meeting." This will involve a discussion on cultural assets strategic partnerships and a tourism initiative. https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/10/06/harlem-arts-alliance-greater-harlem-chamber-commerce-meeting
6. October 7, there will be an event entitled the "Women in Islam: Social Justice Lecture" to address the advancement of women as "dynamic participants in civil society..." while dealing with human rights and social justice. https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/10/07/women-islam-social-justice-lecture
7. October 11, there will be a "Films at the Schomburg: The Liberation Series (Felix)." This event will include a screening of an award-winning film called "Felix" by Roberta Durrant. It will address the story of a young aspiring jazz artist and his struggles. https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/10/03/fall-open-house-black-meccas-collective-memories
8. October 11, there will also be an event called "Conversations on Self Determination: God and Medicine." It will address the health issues of Black bodies and souls while considering the effects of discrimination on Black people's health. The event will include the subject of spiritual tradition's correlation to wellness. Dr. Samuel Roberts, the director of the Columbia University Institute for Research in African-American Studies, will be one of the event's moderators. https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/10/11/conversations-self-determination-god-and-medicine
9. October 11, will also be the date for the "Films at the Schomburg: The Liberation Series (Miners Shot Down) screening. This event will address the August 12, 2012 state police shooting at the Marikana mine in South Africa where thousands of Black miners had been protesting poor wages for their labor. https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/10/11/clone-films-schomburg-liberation-series-miners-shot-down
10. October 14, and the New York Times columnist Charles M. Blow about Muhammad's book entitled "Fire Shut Up in My Bones." The event will be presented as "Between the Lines: Charles Blow & Khalil Muhammad." https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/10/14/between-lines-charles-blow
11. October 15, "Talks at the Schomburg: Ntozake Shange" will be presented by Ntozake Shange, the creator of the poetic work and theatrical production entitled "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf." https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/10/15/talks-schomburge-ntozake-shange
12. October 20, pianist and composer, Abdullah Ibrahim and three others will present a concert at the Schomburg's Langston Hughes Auditorium. Ibrahim is a world-renowned jazz musician from South Africa. https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/10/20/carnegie-neighborhood-concerts-abdullah-ibrahim-and-friends
13. October 22, a discussion will be hosted between the cultural activist Xenobia Bailey and the Schomburg's assistant curator of arts and artifacts, Tammi Lawson. This event will be entitled "Before 5: Xenobia Bailey and Tammi Lawson." https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/10/22/5-xenobia-bailey-and-tammi-lawson
14. October 23, a three-day international conference entitled "Afro-Latin@s Now: Race Counts!" This event will start off dealing with structural and ideological barriers to further representation of African Americans and Latinos and it will discuss "opportunities for positive social change." https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/10/23/afro-latins-now-race-counts

15. October 27, the Schomburg will have a screening called “Films at the Schomburg: Muslim Voices of Philadelphia and New York.” It will discuss the accomplishments, media tools, and issues of the history of Islam in Philadelphia and New York. https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/10/27/films-schomburg-muslim-voices-philadelphia-and-new-york
16. October 28, the funk musician George Clinton will discuss his book about his life and his career. https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/10/28/between-lines-george-clinton
17. October 29, the Schomburg will host the “Caribbean Lecture Series: Dr. Peter David Phillips” with Dr. Phillips, Jamaica’s Minister of Finance. The event concerns the CINTV broadcast that reaches over two million Caribbean Americans in the tri-state area and attracts diplomats, media personalities, business people, and religious leaders along with other notables of Caribbean descent. https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/10/29/caribbean-lecture-series-dr-peter-david-phillips
18. November 5, the “Talks at the Schomburg: The State of Black American Theatres” will be presented by Dr. Barbara Ann Teer of the National Black Theatre. This event will, of course, be dealing with Blacks in theatre. https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/11/05/talks-schomburg-state-black-american-theatres
19. November 7, the Schomburg will be hosting its “Ladies’ Night Edition” to commemorate the exhibit entitled “I found God in Myself.” https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/11/07/first-fridays
20. November 10, The Schomburg will host the “Question Bridge: Tell Your Story!” This program will involve an on-going project by the “Black Males’ team” to get people’s stories, questions, and answers recorded on video. https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/11/10/question-bridge-tell-your-story
21. November 13, The writer and critic, Albert Murray will be remembered by the Schomburg’s “Albert Murray: His Life and Work.” Murray was known for challenging the “folklore of white supremacy” and the issue of Blacks being “inextricably tied to” the Black (cultural) experience. https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/11/13/albert-murray-his-life-and-work
22. November 19, the little-known history of how slavery affected Morocco will be discussed by the author Chouki El Hamel’s in the Schomburg’s ““Before 5: Chouki El Hamel.” This event will involve a look at how Islam and ideology directs a society, and it will include Professor Michael Gomez of NYU’s Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies department. https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/11/19/5-chouki-el-hamel
23. November 20, the Schomburg will host the “Talks at the Schomburg: Black Art + Identity Politics” with several notables on the topic of how racial, gender, and class politics affects cultural productions. https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/11/20/talks-schomburg-black-art-identity-politics
24. November 22, the Schomburg will collaborate with the Changing Perceptions Theater to present a revival of “Homepage 3: Illmatic,” which is a play by Shaun Neblett. https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/11/22/homage-3-illmatic
25. December 2, the Schomburg will host a presentation on “Building A Vibrant Black LGBT Community: Using Kwanzaa Principles Every Day” to show how these principles can be used. https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/12/02/building-vibrant-black-lgbt-community-using-kwanzaa-principles-everyday
26. December 5, the Schomburg will deal with the Black Gay resistance movement and remember the contributions of Joseph Beam in the “Ordinary People: Dear Joe.” https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/11/03/ordinary-people-dear-joe
27. December 9, “Talks at the Schomburg: Slavery, Universities, Inner Cities” will be hosted by the Schomburg’s Lapidus Center for the Historical Analysis of Transatlantic Slavery. This is part of a series of lectures on how slavery helped build and sustain America’s prestigious colleges and how these institutions are still involved in taking over urban areas in the United States. https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/12/09/talks-schomburg-slavery-universities-inner-cities
28. December 11, “Visually Speaking: Who You Callin’ A Papparazzi?” will be hosted by the Schomburg. It will deal with what goes into getting work in this field and what goes into publishing digital images. https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/12/11/visually-speaking-who-you-callin-paparazzi
29. December 15, the Schomburg will present “Language & Culture: A Conversation and Interactive Installation” to showcase the interactive, bilingual mural representing the dichotomy between rich and poor societies. The show’s creator, Eduardo Palma, is a Communication Design at the Pratt Institute. https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/12/15/language-culture-conversation-and-interactive-installation
30. December 17, the “Before 5: Jann Parker and James Weidman” event, concerning mid-day events which include writers and artists, workshops and live performances, is to be hosted by the Schomburg.

https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/12/17/5-jann-parker-and-james-weidman
31. January 2, “First Fridays: Black Male Edition,” is scheduled to honor Black men from “diverse and contending backgrounds.” https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2015/01/02/first-fridaysblack-male-edition
32. January 12, the Schomburg will present an art exhibition entitled “Artist Talk: The Way Out is Through.” https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2015/01/12/artist-talkthe-way-out-through
33. January 17, the 3 rd Annual Black Comic Book Festival will be celebrated at the Schomburg. https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2014/01/17/3rd-annual-black-comic-book-festival
34. January 20, the Schomburg will host the “Between the Lines: Vintage Black Glamour” event to showcase photos of world-famous Black stars from history. https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2015/01/15/program-clonetemplate
35. January 22, the “Carnegie Neighborhood Concert: Gospel According to Gregoire Maret” event hosted by the Schomburg will present the musician Geneva-born Gregoire Maret’s with his virtuoso harmonica and his choir in a production “based on Gospel music.” https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2015/01/23/carnegie-neighborhood-concert-gospel-according-gregoire-maret
36. January 26, the Schomburg will host “Through a Lens Darkly: Screening and Talkback” to deal with the history of race relations and the ability to express oneself through photography. https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2015/01/26/through-lens-darkly-screening-and-talkback
37. February 4, the Schomburg will host “Films at the Schomburg: Invisible Heroes: African Americans in the Spanish Civil War.” https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2015/02/04/films-schomburg-invisible-heroes-african-americans-spanish-civil-war
38. February 5, “Conversations in Black Freedom Studies - 50 th Anniversary of the Assassination of Malcolm X: Malcolm X and Black Radical Women” an educational series by the Schomburg’s education department will be hosted. https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2015/02/05/conversations-black-freedom-studies-50th-anniversary-assassination

Schomburg Research Center Data	
Involving Christianity or religion	1
Involving race and racial issues	3
Involving stated African or African American issues	3
Involving history and historical issues	6
Involving Islam or Islamic issues	3
Involving Christian ministers	1
Involving churches	0
Involving cultural issues	6
Involving controversial issues	0
Involving college issues	1
Involving literature, books, journalism	5
Involving film and photography issues	7
Involving theatre and theatrical issues	3
Involving sexuality issues	0
Involving slavery issues	2
Involving gay, Lesbian, LGBT issues	3
Involving educational issues	2
Involving child and family issues	0
The data listed above is from select criteria on events that were to be held at the Schomburg Research Center between Sept. 2014 - Feb. 2015	

Chapter 4: Project Plan and Topic Research

The planning that went into this thesis project started with an exploration of several interests. One of which was the subject of slavery under Spanish colonial rule in the Americas. The interest initially had to do with the Roman Catholic involvement and position regarding the subjugation and enslavement of Caribbean and South American natives. While researching this, information was examined that showed a resistance movement in the Catholic Church to the enslavement and mistreatment of natives. This resistance was largely led by a priest named Bartolome de Casas in the 1600s who later became a bishop in a Spanish colony. His book provided a firsthand look at how a people could be subjugated, enslaved, and butchered because they were considered worthless barbarians.²⁸ Aside from several books ascribed to de Casas, research was conducted by reading other books about the Spanish conquest of the Americas. One such book was *Uncovering The New World Columbus Created*. Another book explored was entitled *Conquistadors*. Then the book called *Cortes: The Life of the Conqueror by His Secretary*, which provided an eyewitness account of Cortes, was read for further information.

But while these books provided details about the tragic plight of natives under Spanish colonial rule, they were lacking with respect to information in the immediate area which was going to be dealt with in the thesis. After reading these sources and others dealing with the same topic, it became clear that to get information on the African American exodus from Christianity, other books would have to be researched. The decision was made to read material that covered European American treatment of Native Americans and Mexicans. The reasoning behind this was that there

²⁸Stafford Poole, ed., *In Defense of the Indians* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974), 14, 18-19, 59.

would be information on African Americans in books such as *The Inconvenient Indian* and *Whiteness on the Border* that would be useful.

After reading these books, the research moved towards material that dealt directly with African Americans. The research included online articles on radical African American groups such as MOVE and the Black Panthers. With the computer and Internet, an extensive search for sources covering African American religious groups was conducted. Over twenty digital articles and books were located and read. Some of them yielded information which was useful. Others, of course, did not.

Aside from reading books on colonial slavery in what became known as Latin America, the Caribbean, and North America, and reading material on radical African American groups, the plan to acquire information for this thesis research paper has also involved searching archives online for primary sources of information on African American slavery and its connection to Christianity in the western hemisphere of North America. This quest for more information has led to online to archived audio recordings of former slaves. The preliminary results did not provide any data to support the idea that racism in Christianity has contributed to an exodus from Christianity. However, Elijah Muhammad's *Message to the Blackman in America* marked a turning point in the research. It not only provided the radical, anti-Christian rhetoric of a major African American cult leader who was apparently disgusted with Christianity. This book even contained a letter written by a Ku Klux Klan leader to this individual. It was with Elijah Muhammad's book, that this research acquired an early segment of proof that that was an effort being made to pull African Americans away from Christianity into an alternative religious ideology.

After reading the various books and articles that were accessed, a draft proposal was submitted my draft for peer review. Suggestions from several peer reviewers were downloaded and read. A summary of these suggestions was composed and reviewed. Afterwards, an effort was implemented to make the modifications based on seven points made in the reviews.

It was determined that the first point of interest, which involved the hypothesis, did not need to be addressed.

Since the fourth and seventh point were dealing with the same issue from two different reviewers, they were recognized as one point. The sixth point indicated a need to confirm arguments made with more sources. This was taken into consideration and implemented along with the other points made in the critiques determined as necessary.

The goal of this research is to go beyond talking about the issue of racism, black nationalism, and slavery as done in previous historical and sociological works on these issues. The goal here is to point to the need for recognizing the problem of a Black exodus from the Christian Church. And beyond recognition of this historical reality, to point out the redeeming attributes or qualities of Christianity so that those in the African American community could be given an alternative to the radical, racially-charged, hate-filled, anti-Christian message and ideologies outside of biblical Christianity. ⁽⁷⁾

During the research process, some trips were made to the Schomburg Research Center to access information from books in its archive that were not readily available in the other libraries. After checking for more sources online and having some difficulty in locating primary sources, it became apparent that the assistance of a librarian online was needed. While on the college website's online library resource, a librarian was contacted. But after sending the library an email, she provided a list of sources and links that contain information which will help to further this project.

In addition, to these sources, several primary sources that provide proof of support for slavery by European American ministers have been located. One source is a book written by a European American pastor named Ichabod S. Spencer during slavery who used his interpretation of Christianity to justify slavery.²⁹ Another primary source comes from Fredrick Douglass, a former African American slave, who became one of the main advocates in the abolitionist movement.³⁰ Other sources like these two were located online and will be used in the project to show that slavery was indeed advanced by European Americans. On the other hand, information has also been researched that will show readers that the views of Reverend Spencer and others like him were not universally accepted. Quakers, clergymen, and European American women such as Elizabeth Stanton eventually came to oppose the institution of slavery.³¹

²⁹ Ichabod Spencer, *FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW. The Religious Duty of Obedience to Law: A Sermon, Preached in the Second Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, Nov. 24, 1850* (New York: M. W. Dodd, 1850), <https://archive.org/stream/fugitiveslavela00spen#page/n0/mode/2up.pdf> (accessed January 15, 2018).

³⁰ Fredrick Douglass, "Love of God, Love of Man, Love of Country" Delivered at Market Hall, New York City, October 22, 1847, American Slavery, TeachingAmericanHistory.org: A leading online resource for American History teachers & students. <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/american-slavery/> (accessed 12/17/2017).

³¹ U.S. National Park Service, *Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the Underground Railroad*, <https://www.nps.gov/wori/learn/historyculture/elizabeth-cady-stanton-and-the-underground-railroad.htm> (accessed January 8, 2018).

Besides accessing information from books, articles, and magazines, an effort was made to obtain direct information from individuals who had left the Christian religion for an alternative religious experience or ideology. But instead of interviewing random people, the individuals chosen selected based on several qualifying factors. These individuals had to be working or self-employed, they had to be known to the interviewer, and they needed to have displayed the attributes of a reasonably sensible person with a civil disposition and be able to participate in a dialogue of this nature without being becoming contentious.

Of those who were approached about doing an interview, only a few were able to be reached for the interview. And of those that did consent to doing an interview, one individual did not follow up by completing the consent form required to use his information. Two other individuals agreed to an interview but did not return the consent forms that were sent to them. At a later period when further research is done on this subject, those who are to be interviewed with be given the consent forms in person and be asked to complete these forms prior to being interviewed.

From interviews that were conducted, it was determined that everyone who left Christianity did not have strong feelings against Christianity or with the African American Church. Neither of the individuals interviewed appear to be bent on violence or destruction. But what was determined was that the door is open for anything once an individual has concluded that Christianity is adamantly opposed to one's well-being, and or that a religion which espouses peace selectively is not worth following.

One individual that was interviewed, who can be called Mashaka, indicated that he departed from Christianity while searching to find people who were true to their beliefs. And

while in a community where Five Percenters were popular, Mashaka decided to become one himself.³² His decision may have been hastened by the fact that he made some missteps which brought him into contact with the other side of the law. But his conversion may have taken place prior to being incarcerated. This was not specifically stated nor discussed during the interview. What was discussed was the fact that he was not pleased with what he saw in the lives of those who professed to be Christians.

But Mashaka's spiritual journey, unlike that of the first individual who was interviewed, did not end with one religious ideology when he left Christianity. According to this individual, while being in the Five Percent religion, he eventually saw those in this religion as being untrue to what they had professed. He decided to explore Islam from a more orthodox angle and became a Muslim.

This is where many who leave Christianity in the African American community go to and stay. Mashaka's was different. He wanted something more than just a religion. His search involved what appeared to be a deep-seated desire for integrity among those in the two religious paths he had sampled in his lifetime.

And while everyone's situation is unique. There are similarities among those who decided to join the ranks of those who decided to exit the realm of Christianity for other religions. One such individual was a woman, who can be referred to here as Dada, has a story of her own. She grew up in a conservative Christian home and later embraced Buddhism. Her decision to let go of Christianity for Buddhism was partially due to her feeling of being limited or restricted while in her Christian community.³³

³² Thomas Austin, interview by author, New York, November 25, 2017.

³³ Maggie Brown, interview by author, New York, January 19, 2018.

This is not unusual. Growing up in a religion that has rules is sometimes seen as restrictive. But to make matters worse, what has been presented as Christianity in the United States was most often influenced by those who historically did not have the best interests of minorities at heart. The restrictiveness felt in the religion coupled with the feeling of not being recognized by those claiming to be Christian sometimes drives people to find alternative religious and philosophical ideologies.

Sometimes the switch is from one religion to another. At other times, the switch is from one denomination to another. Either way, the decision to examine and depart from a one church denomination where one is familiar to another religious group, in or out of Christianity, can be unsettling. And whether the departure is from one church to another, or from Christianity to another religion, the transition can lead to social problems with one's family and friends.³⁴

In addition to these interviews and the rest of the narrative aspect of the project, the information from the project will also be conveyed to a larger audience by way of the internet as an online presentation. Besides researching information for the thesis, an online search was made to determine what options would be best suited for the presentation aspect of this project. After reviewing information about various presentation software programs, two presentation programs were considered. One was PowerPoint because it was recognized as useful in providing a straightforward linear presentation of the information deemed suitable for online viewers. It has been the standard for countless presentation projects for years.

Two other programs considered were Prezi and Omeka. Both programs are online presentation programs. Prezi affords its users and viewers a non-linear presentation experience.

³⁴ Paul Hunter, *Prophets and Profits: What's to be learned from Daddy Grace and others like him*, rev. ed. (New York: Revelation Books, Inc., 1995), 70-75.

Omeka required more time but was eventually decided upon because of some technical difficulties experienced with the initial work done in Prezi. Currently, Omeka will be utilized for presenting the excerpts selected from this research and Prezi can be used when the presentation of the research will be given in a public forum for an audience viewing a large movie screen.

During the process of determining what photos, drawings, and text would be included in the slides for a presentation, a list of 150 points were gleaned from the narrative portion of the thesis project. A review of these items will be made. From these 150 points from the narrative, a determination was made on which points in the text would work with pictures. An online search was made for possible drawings or photographs related to the text. Two sites which provide royalty-free images were considered but very few images correlated to the subject of this research and the points of text considered for presentation purposes. A further search proved to be more helpful but with limited numbers of images.

The decision was made to have the drawings and photographic images reproduced as illustrations. This decision was made to avoid copyright infringement issues that would result from using these online images without permission from their copyright owners. After the pictures were reproduced as illustrations, they were scanned into the computer and saved as JPEG images. Afterwards, they were resized and uploaded to the Omeka website created for this research project and data pertaining to them and the sites they originated from were recorded in Omeka.

Excerpts from the research will be incorporated into the PowerPoint program for the presentation portion of this project. To facilitate this, a list of 18 points has been created that can be included in the section about why slavery and racism was wrong. These points, which can be referred to as “Contradictions Regarding Slaves and Slavery,” can be used along with the excerpts

from the narrative that were selected along with the illustrations. In addition, a list of 14 points regarding the history of Christianity were also to provide viewers with other matters that were not specifically addressed in the main body of the thesis.

Since the thesis is about the exodus of African Americans from Christianity, the research needs to have data that collaborates the theory of an exodus from Christianity. There appears to be no current data in circulation from the U.S. Census Bureau regarding specifics on religious compositions of African American families.³⁵ At the present, the proof of an increase in the number of African Americans getting involved in alternative religions has had to come from other sources. Other data is also being researched to correlate with that provided by the Census Bureau, which no longer continues to provide an update on such figures.³⁶ However, what the bureau did indicate was that there appears to be a decline in the number of people attending most of the mainstream churches in the United States, except with the Eastern Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Church, which has had an influx of Catholic immigrants coming into the U.S. from predominantly Catholic countries.³⁷ But despite this apparent increase in numbers, the Catholic Church is losing members to other religious groups and it has become a concern in the Catholic Church.³⁸

³⁵ “Frequently Asked Questions: Does the Census Bureau have data for religion?” U.S. Census Bureau, https://ask.census.gov/prweb/PRServletCustom/YACFBFye-rFiz_FoGtyvDRUGg1Uzu5Mn*!/STANDARD?pyActivity=pyMobileSnapStart&ArticleID=KCP-5050 (accessed 1/14/2018).

³⁶ Daryl Johnson, “Return of the Black Nationalist,” Intelligence Report. *Southern Poverty Law Center*, 2017 Fall Issue, August 8, 2017, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2017/return-violent-black-nationalist> (accessed January 15, 2018).

³⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, Table 75, “Self-Described Religious Identification of Adult Population: 1990, 2001 and 2008.” <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/2010/compendia/statab/130ed/tables/11s0075.pdf>.

³⁸ Thomas Reese, “The hidden exodus: Catholics becoming Protestants,” *The National Catholic Reporter*, (April 18, 2011) <https://www.ncronline.org/news/parish/hidden-exodus-catholics-becoming-protestants> (accessed January 21, 2018).

The Roots of Slavery in America

In the Matrix Revolution, Agent Smith told Neo that everything has a beginning and an end. While no one can account for the demise of everything that exists, this statement is certainly true with regards to living organisms and governments. In biological science, there is birth, growth, decline, and death among living organisms. Likewise, while observing history, one will notice that there is a creation, rise, decline, and death of dynasties and other forms of government that have come existed. And although the institution of slavery is not a government, it was connected to the system of government known as colonialism. It had a beginning, a period of growth, and a painfully slow decline which led to its death.

Our focus here will be the roots or beginning of slavery. Like plants and other organisms, slavery needed something to feed on at the root. It found this nourishment in the lie promoted that non-Europeans living in countries around the world, particularly in places such as Africa, that the native people were barbarians and sub-human.³⁹ This belief was advanced by some in the Roman Catholic Church to promote the enslavement of natives in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean.⁴⁰ Not everyone in the Catholic Church agreed with this; however, those that did had the support of the Spanish crown.⁴¹ But beyond the support of the king, they had the support of the Church of Rome.⁴² With this support, Spain, Portugal, France, and other countries set sail for Africa, Asia, and the Americas to secure wealth for God and country.

³⁹ Stafford Poole, ed., *In Defense of the Indians*, (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974), 14.

⁴⁰ Poole, ed., *In Defense of the Indians*, 38-39, 42.

Paulo Friere, "*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*," New Revised 20th Anniversary Edition, (New York, NY: Continuum Publishing Co. 1995) 38.

⁴¹ Michael Wood, *Conquistadors*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000) 76-77.

⁴² Poole, ed., *In Defense of the Indians*, 14.

⁴² Francis Augustus MacNutt, *Bartholomew de Las Casas; his life, apostolate, and writings*, (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark, November 13, 2007), 16, 101 (accessed 8/13/2016) Project Gutenberg EBook no. 23466.

⁴² Poole, ed., *In Defense of the Indians*, 14.

Originally, these European countries sought to enrich themselves by trade. But it became evident that the acquisition and enslavement of humans from Africa would advance their cause much more than any other cargo. With this knowledge, Europeans involved in enriching themselves by colonialism became entangled in the business of the slave trade with Arabs and Africans. At first, they relied primarily on the use of natives from the Americas. But when it became evident that the natives were not as well suited for the climate, and their numbers had declined dramatically due to the Spanish decimation of the native population in Central America and the Caribbean, the African became the obvious choice.⁴³ And the argument against enslaving Africans was met with a counter-argument that kept the business of enslaving Africans in place for the next few hundred years.

It seems that making money was more alluring than treating one's fellow human beings with dignity. Besides, the Church had already determined who civilized and who were barbarians. And those who were deemed to be barbarians were justifiably enslaved since enslaving them was said to be in their best interests.⁴⁴ By being enslaved, the natives of America and Africa were given the opportunity to become Christian and serve their Christian masters. In other words, enslaving these natives was supposedly done for their own good. At least that was the lie that was perpetuated to justify this barbaric system.

⁴² Francis Augustus MacNutt, *Bartholomew de Las Casas; his life, apostolate, and writings*, (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark, November 13, 2007), 16, 101 (accessed 8/13/2016) Project Gutenberg EBook no. 23466.

⁴⁴ Poole, ed., *In Defense of the Indians*, 14.

Christianity's Justification of Slavery

The roots of slavery in the western hemisphere and the justification for slavery were dealt with partially in the preceding section. More evidence concerning this justification will be covered in this section. And while elaborating on the justification for slavery by Europeans, it will be shown that Christianity was one of the means used to validate slavery. With the support of their religion, Europeans felt more secure in their commitment to slavery than they would with only the words of philosophy to support their noble cause.

Christianity provided the final nail which helped to secure the institution which became a major cause for slavery's advancement. As with any venture, those involved need a reason. And the reason that slave traders and slave owners had for their trade and use of human cargo was the Bible, or at least that what they believed. To further justify their xenophobic, racist practices, European American Christians resorted to promoting the idea that said God had cursed Ham, one of the sons of Noah.⁴⁵ The curse was said to be his black skin. This made perfect sense to those who had no dark pigmentation of their skins. But since one verse may not have been enough to satisfy everyone, another verse was secured. This one involved the curse upon Cain, Adam's son, who had killed his brother. Slave traders and others who justified enslaving Africans saw these pseudo-religious theories as justification for having Africans carted off to America and imprisoned like animals. They had the Bible to back up their dirty deeds.⁴⁶

Maybe everyone was not convinced that the indictment of Cain and Ham were enough to justify slavery. Further proof was given by showing that God's chosen people in the Old

⁴⁵ Fredrick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass an American Slave* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2002), 28.

⁴⁶ Douglass, 71.

Testament, the Jews, had slaves.⁴⁷ But what the slave traders and slave advocates did not bother to take notice of was that the slaves in the Old Testament were usually prisoners of war or individuals who were indentured servants paying off a debt that they owed.⁴⁸ What started out as a means of extracting gold from the mines of natives in the Americas turned into a permanent institution which involved the planting and harvesting of tobacco, sugar cane, rice, cotton, whatever other crop Europeans became dependent upon.

One might wonder why they did not work their own fields and harvest their own crops. This was a thought that was entertained; however, since the indentured whites did not seem to have the enduring ability to withstand the sun like African slaves, and natives of the Americas had become too scarce from dying or fleeing into the woods, the African seemed like the perfect solution.⁴⁹

Those who supported slavery and white supremacy had more than theories and obscure verses from the Bible to support their position. They had churches and white ministers to help advance their noble cause. Not only did their ministers proclaim their disdain for the freedom and alleged equality of the African from their lofty pulpits in their churches. These men of letters, also made of their pens to put their “Christian” ideas in support of slavery in print.⁵⁰ Fortunately, there were men like Fredrick Douglass around, along with some white ministers with some sense and

⁴⁷ Karl W. Giberson, *Saving the Original Sinner: How Christians Have Used the Bible's First Man to Oppress, Inspire, and Make Sense of the World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015), 141.

⁴⁸ Lev. 25:39-40 (New American Standard Bible), <http://biblehub.com/leviticus/25-39.htm> (accessed 1/14/2018). 2 Kings 4:1 (New American Standard Bible), http://biblehub.com/2_kings/4-1.htm (accessed 1/14/2018).

⁴⁹ International Slavery Museum, “Slavery in the Caribbean,”

<http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/slavery/archaeology/caribbean/> (accessed 1/14/2018).

⁵⁰ Orville Dewey, “The Works of the Rev. Orville Dewey, D.D.” Simms and M’Intyre, Aldine Chambers Paternoster Row, and Donegall Street, Belfast. (1844) Digitized March 20, 2008.

real Christian love, to expose the folly of their way by pointing out that the ministers who supported Christianity were themselves being un-Christian.⁵¹

The Slaves' Response to Slavery

Someone once said that it is easier to tell the truth than it is to tell lies because with lies you must keep track of them. Besides that, when you lie, you run the risk of someone catching you in the lie. And no one likes to be caught telling a lie. That truth is no less so in the case of the slave industry. Those in the business of buying, stealing, selling, trading, or keeping Africans enslaved were also in the business of lying to themselves and others about their dirty business.

The lie, of course, was that slaves were supposed to be slaves, and free men were supposed to be free men. This theory or belief system was only meant to apply to African slaves of course. Those whites who had met the unfortunate fate of being enslaved in Europe and transported to the Americas had the fortune of having what is commonly referred to as white skin. This white skin was a "get out of town" ticket for them when they decided that they could not bear the burden of being slaves any longer. So, when they ran away, they were able to often avoid recapture and continued enslavement because they were white and could mingle with the whites who were free without being suspected of being a fugitive or runaway slave. So, the theory that slaves were supposed to be slaves did not quite work when it came to whites because they did not accept it.

Another problem with the idea that slaves were supposed to be slaves was the fact that the Bible never specifically said that Africans were supposed to be slaves. And besides that, the scriptures that spoke about slavery were usually dealing with indentured servants who were paying off a debt that they could not pay except by working off their debt by any other legal means. This

⁵¹ Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass an American Slave*, 28, 71.

was not something that the European in the slavery business wanted to know about. His primary concern was maintaining slaves and finding out or telling others that slavery in the Bible was primarily about paying off a temporary debt was not something of interest to him. How could he justify slavery with such information? He could not, so he was forced to lie to others and himself. And after lying for so long about his right to enslave and abuse others, particularly those of African ancestry, he could not handle being exposed as a liar.

Nevertheless, there were those among the African population who had become slaves physically whose minds were free enough to reject this idea mentally. And not only reject this idea mentally, but oppose this damnable institution of slavery verbally and physically. This was done by various means. One was to avoid doing the work. This rejection of one's assigned task was met with violent opposition from the slaveowner. Slaves were whipped and killed for refusing to work for their masters. And as a matter of fact, slaves were whipped and sometimes killed for any infraction or perceived infraction against their white slave masters.⁵²

This did not stop the slaves from resisting though. Another means of resistance was to run away. Unfortunately, because the slavery became associated with Africans of color, those who had run away were easily identified and returned to their masters. Those in Brazil along with some other regions in the Caribbean and South America had more success for a longer period than those in North America when it came to running away from their masters.⁵³ The Africans who had run

⁵² Fredrick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass an American Slave* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2002), 42-3, 90.

⁵³ Laird W. Bergad, *The Comparative Histories of Slavery in Brazil, Cuba, and the United States* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 216, 234.
Alfred N. Hunt, *Haiti's Influence on Antebellum America: Slumbering Volcano in the Caribbean* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 49.

away in Brazil and elsewhere other than the United States were so successful, that white slavers had to use militia consisting of Africans and natives to track them and flush them out.⁵⁴

The fact of the matter is that the slave master had perpetuated the false idea that the slave was better off in slavery than as a free man. And besides this, those espousing slavery had claimed that the slaves were not smart enough to survive without their masters. This lie probably would have held up if it were not for the fact that former slaves successfully eluded capture in South America until the slaveowners realized that these so-called ignorant slaves were too smart to capture without the aid of more Africans and natives as trackers and a militia composed of South American natives and Africans.⁵⁵

The other lie that the slaveowners and pro-slavery advocates promoted was the slaves were happy to be slaves.⁵⁶ This ridiculous lie was proven false by the slaveowners themselves by the very fact that slaves were chained, beaten, threatened, and killed to keep them from running away. If slaves were happy being slaves, they would not be running away and there would be no need to beat and chain them.

Another lie perpetuated was that the slave was not smart enough to learn how to read, write, or think for him or herself. Nor was the slave, according to this false logic, able to strategically defend himself against those who opposed him. This lie was brutally exposed when the Africans of Haiti under Toussaint Louverture and others of African descent vanquished the elite French army under Napoleon Bonaparte in the 1800s. But instead of accepting defeat, the French set out to secure Haiti afterwards, only to be beaten again by Haiti's African forces and malaria.

⁵⁴ Bergad, *The Comparative Histories of Slavery in Brazil, Cuba, and the United States*, 216.

⁵⁵ Laird W. Bergad, 216.

⁵⁶ Reverend E. W. Warren, *Nellie Norton: or Southern Slavery and the Bible, A Scriptural Refutation of the Principal Arguments Upon Which the Abolitionists Rely, A Vindication of Southern Slavery from the Old and New Testaments* (Macon: Burke, Boykin & Company, 1864), 26, <https://archive.org/details/53950989.4112.emory.edu> (accessed January 14, 2018).

This setback did not deter the United States from continuing its system of slavery. Nor did the sound defeat of this lie about the slaves being incapable of thinking and successfully defeating opposing military forces prevent white Americans from holding onto their lies about slaves and slavery. Instead of acknowledging that African slaves were indeed humans with intelligence and a right to be free, Thomas Jefferson and others sought to maintain an even stronger hold on their slippery and most shady enterprise to perpetuate their ill-gotten gain.

Not only was the South making money from the slave business, the city of Boston, which was held to be the cradle of American democracy, was profiting from this undemocratic venture.⁵⁷ How could the European Americans give it up?

Blacks were accused of sleeping and being lazy by those who advocated slavery and supported segregation and other forms of racism. Ironically, Blacks did not take the accusations against them laying down. They took a stand and opposed what they rightly accessed to be inhumane treatment. More specifically, African Americans proved that they were intelligent by learning to read, write, and speak up for themselves. Individuals such as Fredrick Douglass, W.E.B. DuBois, and Booker T. Washington showed whites and other African Americans that they too could read, write, and speak up for themselves. And to add insult to injury, African Americans even had Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth as witnesses to the illogical attitude and mistreatment of the African Americans by whites. No one likes being opposed, having a Negro woman stand before an audience of whites and declare that she was woman who desired rights and fair treatment may have been too much for some whites to handle. It was bad enough that a woman

⁵⁷ Jennifer Smith, "Event Notes Boston's History of Slavery," *Boston Globe*, August 23, 2015, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2015/08/23/boston-history-slavery-remembered/1WDkhBD6ilLvdcrgsy3jeL/story.html> (accessed January 14, 2018).

of African ancestry born into slavery named Phillis Wheatley had learned how to write and was writing poetry and being given attention by the first president of the United States.

But then the unthinkable occurred. It was as if all hell had broken loose and demons had finally taken hold the entire planet. An African American man by the name of Barack Hussein Obama was elected president of the United States. This was the latest of frightful experiences to shake up the racist white community.⁵⁸

This act of electing an African American was preceded by some other fearful events in the history of this country. Another thing that was a cause for alarm among some in the media and white community was an outspoken and articulate young African American by the name of Malcolm X. This individual was gathering support from African Americans to join a radical religious organization called the Nation of Islam.⁵⁹ If this was not enough, another African American in the national and international spotlight was making news with his boxing skills, his outspoken nature, and his unpatriotic decision to not fight in Vietnam. This young man, whose name was Cassius Clay, had even decided to drop his “Christian” name for the Muslim name “Muhammad Ali.” Whites did not know what to think. Here was a negro standing with white reporters telling them that he was not going to accept what whites had expected of him. For his opposition to the draft, and possibly his defiance of white supremacy, Muhammad Ali was stripped of his heavyweight boxing championship title and sent to prison during the Vietnam War.

But if the whites thought that this would deter Ali or others from seeking to assert themselves against white oppression, they were wrong. In Chicago, an African American group

⁵⁸ Walter Rodgers, “A Year into Obama’s Presidency, is America Postracial?” *The Christian Science Monitor*, January 5, 2010, <https://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/Walter-Rodgers/2010/0105/A-year-into-Obama-s-presidency-is-America-postracial> (accessed January 15, 2018).

⁵⁹ Robert L. Harris Jr, Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, ed., *The Columbia Guide to African American history since 1939* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

established itself. Its members began an ill-fated campaign against those in their community and the United States. Subsequently, their efforts were met with the brutal force of the law under the direction of a mayor, which ironically, was also African American. This mayor, whose name was W. Wilson Goode, who had their compound bombed and caused a fire that spread for blocks in the city of Chicago.⁶⁰

The group that Muhammad Ali belonged to called itself the Nation of Islam. It was at one time one it was considered a dangerous Anti-American Black cult in the United States which gained attention from the Assistant Attorney General, although not officially on the federal government's watchlist.⁶¹ Not surprisingly, it was at the same time, one of the most respected by many in the African American community because of its strong stand of self-respect and self-empowerment.⁶² Aside from this, what made the Nation of Islam respectable in the African American community was the fact that its leaders spoke out against racism and injustice that was being perpetuated against Blacks by whites. And while the Civil Rights Movement was officially viewed by white America as an effort by the African American church, the African American church still had not proven itself to be as assertive or independent minded in speaking against racism on the level seen in the Nation of Islam. Transcending that, the Nation of Islam had vowed to support Blacks by physically opposing whites if necessary. This was unheard of in the African American church for the most part.

Others in opposition to the lies were a group of African Americans who called themselves Hebrew Israelites. This group and others like them, set out in cities across the United States in a

⁶⁰ William K. Stevens, "Police Drop Bomb on Radicals' Home in Philadelphia," *New York Times*, May 14, 1985, <http://www.nytimes.com/1985/05/14/us/police-drop-bomb-on-radicals-home-in-philadelphia.html?pagewanted=all>.

⁶¹ Alfred Balk and Alex Haley, "Black Merchants of Hate," *Saturday Evening Post*, January 26, 1963, Issue 15, 68-75.

⁶² The Legacy of Alex Haley Now and Forever, "Black Merchants of Hate," http://www.alex-haley.com/alex_haley_black_merchants_of_hate.htm (accessed January 15, 2018).

grass roots campaign to public denounce Christianity and white supremacy.⁶³ And, despite the crudeness of their speeches and weirdness of their “Hebrew” attire, this group attracted and continues to attract young and middle-aged African Americans and Hispanics.⁶⁴ Their message, for the most part, is that whites do not represent God, Blacks are the true Hebrews, and that God is going to destroy white people and that Blacks will eventually take over.⁶⁵

Besides the Hebrew Israelites, there was also another “Israelite” group that caused a stir for a time back in the 1990s. This group, led by a man who called himself Yahweh Ben Yahweh (or “Jehovah, son of Jehovah”) came onto the scene. He was the son of a Church of God in Christ minister. But rather than remain in this fundamentalist Christian denomination, this man decided to establish his own religion and position himself as its God incarnate. But unlike the Nation of Islam, this group went around killing and beheading people.⁶⁶ Fortunately, the government paid more attention to this Israelite sect and had its leader and those responsible for the murders jailed.⁶⁷ Yahweh Ben Yahweh organization’s popularity died down. Their acts of terror went largely unnoticed by the news media. And the only thing that some recall about them is that they wore white robes, had white turbans on their heads, and carried staffs as though they were herding sheep in the wilderness although they lived in places such as New York City.

⁶³ “The Israelites: What Church Has Been Hiding From Us! #OurHistory” Dec 19, 2015, 138:43 minutes, [IUCintheClassRoom Orlando](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=If3jWoV71VA), Youtube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=If3jWoV71VA> (accessed January 9, 2018).

⁶⁴ “Racist Black Hebrew Israelites Becoming More Militant,” Intelligence Report. *Southern Poverty Law Center*. 2008 Fall Issue, August 29, 2008, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2008/racist-black-hebrew-israelites-becoming-more-militant> (accessed January 15, 2018).

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Sydney P. Freedberg, *Brother Love: Murder, Money and a Messiah* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1994), 157-161, 192-221.

⁶⁷ Mike Clary, “Cult Leader Convicted of Murder Conspiracy: Crime: Yahweh ben Yahweh and six of his followers are found guilty in a Miami trial marked by testimony of beheadings, mutilation,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 28, 1992, http://articles.latimes.com/1992-05-28/news/mn-444_1_yahweh-murders-followers (accessed January 15, 2018).

The real fear that stroke the hearts of whites came about over a century ago when Haitians of African descent decided that they had had enough and violently took over the island of Haiti from their French slave masters. This news shook the colonial world from South America to North America.⁶⁸ And despite efforts by whites in the United States to suppress the news of Haiti's successful revolution, even illiterate African slaves in the North American colonies learned about the success of their brothers in the island nation. The thought of Blacks learning about this was scary enough for whites, but what caused them to become more alarmed was the fact that after the Haitian revolution, enslaved Africans elsewhere began to revolt. Their revolts and unsuccessful attempts at revolution were evidently spurred on by news of the successful Haitian revolution.⁶⁹ Whites realized that news of slave revolts in the U.S. and Caribbean could spur on revolts by slaves in the United States. When approximately five hundred slaves conducted a rebellion in Mississippi on January 8, 1811, the news was suppressed.⁷⁰ Other revolts against whites by disgruntled slaves and news of revolts were suppressed, ignored, or downplayed by the white community. Whites knew full well that they had lied to themselves about Blacks being content as slaves, incapable of reading, unable to organize, and not willing to revolt if the opportunity presented itself. To make sure that the nightmare in Haiti and Nat Turner's revolt did not become a reality across North America, whites began to impose harsher penalties against those who attempted to revolt against their white masters.

⁶⁸ Robin Blackburn, *Haiti, Slavery, and the Age of the Democratic Revolution*. *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 63, No. 4 (Oct. 2006), Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 667. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4491574> (accessed April 18, 2016).

⁶⁹ Duke University, "Haiti's Revolution and the United States," *Duke Office of News & Communications*, Duke University, <https://today.duke.edu/showcase/haitideclaration/haitiusa.html> (accessed January 15, 2018).

⁷⁰ Marissa Fessenden, "How a Nearly Successful Slave Revolt Was Intentionally Lost to History," *Smithsonian.com*, January 8, 2016, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/its-anniversary-1811-louisiana-slave-revolt-180957760/> (accessed January 15, 2018).

Possibly the only other thing besides Barack Obama, the Nation of Islam, and the Haitian Revolution that caused widespread concern among whites was the Black Panther Party. This organization was known for its blatant disregard for the police by having its African American members, male and female, carry rifles or other firearms in plain sight in broad daylight in front of the white police and in front of a courthouse.

Whites have long-feared Blacks without guns since slavery days, which was the reason that during the Civil War Blacks were originally not allowed to carry guns or be actively involved in the fighting.⁷¹ This, of course, was counter-productive, and whites fighting for the Union decided that they needed all the help they could get, which included Blacks with guns who were willing and able to fight the Southerners. Over a century later, white fear of Blacks with guns was reignited when they witnessed African Americans in the Black Panther movement carrying guns on national television news networks.

But the problem was not the guns alone. It was the fact that African Americans had defied white America and basically said that they could and would care of themselves, help their own people, and had abandoned the slave master's religion for their own Afro-centric ideology. This too must have been something that the whites were unprepared for. The United States government did not take this lightly and the FBI were put to work to handle the situation.⁷²

Cutting off the heads of a giant hydra do not necessarily prevent other heads from growing in its place. And when the white society believed itself to have been relieved of one African American nuisance, others popped up. These groups do not necessarily walk around with signs

⁷¹ Adam Winkler, "The Secret History of Guns," *The Atlantic Daily*, September 2011 Issue, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/09/the-secret-history-of-guns/308608/> (accessed January 29, 2018).

⁷²Jessica C. Harris, "Revolutionary Black Nationalism: The Black Panther Party," *The Journal of Negro History* 86, No. 3 (Summer, 2001), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1562458.pdf> (accessed: October 16, 2017).

advertising their agenda. Nor do they openly carry loaded firearms. But there are groups which formed into street gangs and have become notorious for spreading mayhem through drugs and guns sales that have replaced the once more visible Black Panthers and once radical Nation of Islam. But, unlike the Panthers, these gangs do not have a code of honor to protect and serve the African American communities. Their agenda is to take care of themselves, their fellow gang members, and their immediate families if they have any.

This is the result of whites not providing African Americans in Los Angeles and elsewhere with an opportunity to become a productive part of their community youth organizations in the 50s and 60s.⁷³ The younger African Americans' role models and potential role models had been either jailed, killed, or discouraged from community rehabilitation and advancement. Without positive role models, many young African Americans, including Tookie Williams, turned to street gangs. And although Tookie Williams was executed under the governorship of Arnold Schwarzenegger, the violent street gang called the Crips that he helped to establish is still operating in LA, New York, and across the United States.

Segregation Replaces Slavery

When slavery was finally put out of its misery officially after the American Civil War, the South and North had another problem. That problem was what to do with those pesky Negroes that were roaming the country, hanging around the farms, and showing up everywhere – including Congress. The South decided that it was time to enforce segregation using what became known as Jim Crow laws.⁷⁴ This policy, which involved a greater separation of Blacks from whites, would

⁷³ *Crips and Bloods: Made In America*, DVD, Stacy Peralta, docuramafilms, New York, 2008.

⁷⁴ C. Vann Woodward, William S. McFeely, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 7.

ensure that African Americans their inferiority to whites and to ensure that African American men would not be copulating with white women and bringing the white race down.⁷⁵ The problem with this idea was that whites had been copulating with Blacks since they first got their hands on the African women at the slave fort of Elmina on West Africa's Gold Coast.⁷⁶ And they did not stop engaging in sex with Africans after they arrived on the shores of the mainland and the Caribbean. The problem became such an issue that laws were established to prevent cohabitation and inheritance of property to mixed-race children in the Caribbean. There was even a colonial law in place that prohibited Africans and whites from sitting in the theatre together in the Caribbean.

But as time passed, the countries in South America opted to deal with their slavery issue by changing their laws and allowing assimilation between the various ethnic groups. The United States, which was still being run by those who adamantly opposed any idea of assimilation, cohabitation, intermarriage, or integration decided that it was better for Blacks and whites to remain "separate but equal" in their schools and elsewhere.

This did not work out to well for those in the southern part of the United States, particularly since there was little to no equality in the schools or on the buses that they had to take. By the 1950s African Americans, who were then called Negroes, decided that they were not going to continue paying the same fare as whites while being made to pay, get off the bus and walk to the rear before getting back on and sitting in the back of the bus. What became known as the Civil Rights Movement was brought to the forefront because of this racist bus policy in southern states, voter registration issues, and cases of repeated lynching of African American men.

⁷⁵ Charles Frank Robinson II, *Dangerous Liaisons: Sex and Love in the Segregated South*, Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 2003, 80.

⁷⁶ African Heritage: A blog about African history, and heritage, through audio and video files, "Reclaiming African History: Elmina Castle – West Africa's Oldest Slave Fort," Youtube. 5:12, posted by Dr. Y., November 26, 2014, <https://afrolegends.com/2014/11/26/reclaiming-african-history-elmina-castle-west-africas-oldest-slave-fort/> (accessed December 26, 2017).

African Americans Embrace Other Religions

Ever since Africans first came to the western hemisphere, whites have looked on them with suspicion. Their hair was curly or coarse, their noses and lips were sometimes wider, their skin resembled the brown and near-black soil of the ground, and their voices were of a heavier tone. Aside from these things, the whites noticed that these individuals had strong cheek bones, piercing eyes, and a strong resilient nature that was not easily broken despite the chains, metal bars, and beatings meted out to them during or after their transport from their “Dark Continent” to the blessed shores of America.

The whites could not help but notice that many Africans wore less clothing than did the whites. This lack of clothing, strange language, and peculiar customs helped whites to justify their mistreatment of these strange people from Africa. These things also helped to some of them conclude that being white was superior to being African. Even whites who had not lived around or near Native Americans had either seen pictures, read books, or heard stories of Native Americans and natives from Central, South America, and the Caribbean wearing little or no clothing. The same justification for classifying the so-called “Indians” as barbarians, after such an observation, could be used to justify the African as a barbarian or sub-human. And that is what the whites did. They classified the African as a cursed people who rightfully deserved to be enslaved. And since the African slaves were considered somehow lower than whites and in some way comparable to wild beasts, whites felt that they were not obliged to treat them with the same respect afforded to other humans. African slaves were made to sleep on the floor of their living

quarters.⁷⁷ They were given leftovers like dogs, or worse. They were not given as much as the whites' dogs.

Ironically, the African women and girls were raped by the whites whether they were slaves or freed. The slave master considered the African to be his property. And as his white master's property, the slave was not afforded any rights. But if he or she was given any right or privilege, the slave knew that such could be revoked at any time for little or no reason. And if the master wanted to have sex with a female or male slave, there was no one on the property or anywhere else that could help the slave. But to make matters worse, the master was even free to have sex with a female whether she was married to someone else or not. In the twisted mind of the slaveowner, he was the owner and the slave had no right above or beyond what he or she allowed. Besides that, the slave master claimed that slaves loved to have sex with them, and either stated or believed that all female slaves were whores.⁷⁸ This was a way of justifying the abuse and rape of these girls and women, married or single.

The slaves, of course, did not take to kindly to this behavior or attitude towards them. And when they got the chance, some slaves took it upon themselves to repay their masters and their masters' wives, which were sometimes called mistresses, by doing the same thing in return during revolts. This type of reprisal does not appear to have been the norm, but it was one of the fears which whites had of slaves.

There was a more pressing issue on the minds of those who had become enslaved in the United States. This issue had to do with the religion of the slave master. Douglass and some

⁷⁷ Fredrick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass an American Slave* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2002), 32.

⁷⁸ Henrice Altink, "Deviant and Dangerous: Pro-slavery Representations of Jamaican Slave Women's Sexuality, c. 1780-1834, *Slavery and Abolition*," 26, no. 2, (August 2005) <http://eds.a.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.snhu.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=2&sid=c36925da-caa0-46bd-934e-55ac4f9a42c2%40sessionmgr4009.pdf> (accessed January 15, 2018).

others wondered out loud how the white slave master could proclaim himself or herself Christian but commit actions that appeared to be contrary to what the slave had learned about Christ. Some enslaved peoples resolved this issue with the belief that whites who supported slavery could not really be Christian. This sentiment was echoed by some white ministers who were abolitionists. But then there were others who could not fathom anything to be right about a religion that could allow the enslavement and abuse of another people.

In centuries past when most American-born slaves only knew about Christianity, the idea of being anything other than Christian may not have been a consideration. But with the passage of time, particularly in the early 20th century, the 1950s and 1960s, and more so as technology and information has increased in the more recent past, there are more African Americans leaving Christianity to embrace other religions. This would not be a problem so much if the religious ideology that they were embracing were democratic and not adamantly antagonistic against the established religion – Christianity. The problem is that those leaving Christianity are not necessarily getting into a religion that supports the core values advocated in Christianity.

Now this is not to say that there is a major decline in church attendance in the African American community. And everyone in the African American community that is leaving Christianity is not necessarily joining another religion. Nor is it true that everyone who departs from a Judeo-Christian ideology is now embracing an ideology that advocates violence or destruction. But what is known is that there is an increase in radical black nationalism.⁷⁹ Compounding this issue, those involved in such ideological organizations are attracting African

⁷⁹ Daryl Johnson, “Return of the Black Nationalist,” Intelligence Report. *Southern Poverty Law Center*, 2017 Fall Issue, August 8, 2017, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2017/return-violent-black-nationalist> (accessed January 15, 2018).

Americans now to be a cause for alarm. Even one religion or ideology which promotes violence that is attracting individuals should be reason enough for concern.

Christianity's Position of Slavery and Racism

Christianity is a religion that is now over two thousand years old. During its existence during these past two millennia, the faith has drawn support and the ire of various factions opposed to its existence. The first group that opposed its existence was the group that ironically also gave Christianity its start. That is the religion of Judaism. But like Christianity, Judaism has also been plagued with its own demons. Suffice it is to say neither religion should be judged based on the actions of individuals who had nothing to do with its origin. Christianity was started by individuals who followed the unorthodox rabbi whom the world now calls Jesus Christ. Judaism creation was credited to Abraham and Moses.

The actions of Abraham and Moses, the two patriarchs who were considered founders of Judaism, have come into question time and time again. As humans, even these two patriarchs associated with Judaism were not exempt from making mistakes. Among other things, Abraham was recognized as being in error for having a child with his servant Hagar rather than trusting God for a son with his wife Sarah.⁸⁰ Moses, on the other hand, has been criticized for speaking to his people in a disparaging manner while striking a rock.⁸¹ Both men were also noted by critics for engaging in warfare. The religion which is now known as Christian evolved from Judaism. And like Judaism, Christianity has not been without its own issues. But despite attempts to castigate or vilify Christianity by associating it with Paul, Christianity's origin is not officially linked to

⁸⁰ Gen. 16:16.

⁸¹ Num. 20:10-12.

Paul, but to a young rabbi commonly known today as Jesus.⁸² The problem in Christianity over the past two to four hundred years is not the result of an unintentional error, mistake, or oversight on the part of those in positions of power within the religion. For the past two to four hundred years, Christianity in the western hemisphere has been linked to the enslavement of humans. The acceptance and promotion of slavery in Christianity in the western hemisphere should not be viewed as a case of benign misjudgment. The acceptance of slavery within western Christianity is nothing short of a deliberate act of gross negligence and an example of the hateful barbaric subjugation of human beings seeking to perpetuate self-centered ambitions which neither reflect Christ or the Christian principles embedded in the teachings of his apostles in the New Testament of the Greek codex.

Now in the twenty-first century, the light of justice is shining on Christianity and all of those who have donned Christian robes along with those who claimed Christian sympathies. With the light of history shining matters which were once avoided or excused, the time has come to give an account of what has been done in this body called Christianity. And no excuse can validate the injustices of slavery or racism against individuals in the past or present. Neither is there any excuse that can save a nation when its young people freely allowed to be coaxed into a life of crime and rebellion against all that is good.

Christianity must give an account of itself from every corner in every church organization and denomination. And when called into question, will all be able to say like the Quakers that it recognized the evil of slavery and racism during the early days of colonialism in America? Can the Baptists and Methodists, Catholics, and Episcopalians all be able to truthfully say that they and

⁸² Mark 2:15, Acts 11:26.

their organization had no part to play in slavery, or that they dropped it soon after beholding its filthy smell?

Maybe some cannot say or do not know what to say. But based on the evidence of history, most churches that existed in America prior to President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation did not actively oppose slavery.⁸³ However, it should be noted that the Methodist Episcopal Church did have a rule in place by 1784 stating that members of its church who retained slaves would be expelled from their denomination.⁸⁴ This official ruling did not seem to impact those in slave states before the slavery was abolished by the federal government. Church leaders in these southern churches advised their junior ministers to refrain from meeting with abolitionists.⁸⁵ Members were also forbidden from reading and distributing the abolitionist newspaper known as *Zion's Watchman*.⁸⁶

And although it is argued that the Church of Rome was opposed to the unjust treatment of individuals and that it did not officially support slavery, the actions borne out in history speak much louder than words by Catholic scholars defending Rome.⁸⁷ One of the last of these to speak out against the evil of racism is the Roman Catholic Church. There is more to be said by this organization and which should be said by this organization along with those who embrace Judaism who may have profited from the slave trade. And, although not necessarily discussed openly or

⁸³ James Gillespie Birney, "The American Churches, The Bulwarks of American Slavery" [Excerpts]: Electronic Edition, (Charlottesville: Stephen Railton; Institute for Advance Technology in the Humanities; Electronic Text Center, 2006), <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/chrstn/chesjgbat.html> (accessed January 29, 2018).

⁸⁴ Birney, "The American Churches, The Bulwarks of American Slavery."

⁸⁵ Birney, "The American Churches, The Bulwarks of American Slavery."

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Steve Weidenkof, "Did the Church Ever Support Slavery?" September 18, 2017, <https://www.catholic.com/magazine/online-edition/did-the-church-ever-support-slavery> (accessed January 25, 2018).

talked about in Christian circles, there is the past and ever-present problem of the slave trade among those who claim Islam as their religion in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.

Chapter 5: Recommendations and Ethnical Considerations

This research has presented information about the painful history of slavery, racism, and the involvement of the Christian church in the United States and beyond. Slavery and racism, like diseases that lay dormant for years and become more apparent after doing extensive damage to their host bodies. The end of which still may not fully be realized or admitted by those who have a stake in preserving a sanitized history of the United States and the churches which by their action or inaction helped to promote these evils.

But for those who would dare to better understand and appreciate about the complexities of this subject, it is suggested that the narrative of Fredrick Douglass be read in its entirety. It is also suggested that interested individuals access the slave journals and other records of those who were enslaved during the 1800s. The Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture may also serve as a location where individuals can get to see more of what African Americans have experienced in the United States throughout the country's history. The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, which is in New York City, can provide readers with a wealth of information about the African American experience in this western hemisphere. Aside from these things, further research may need to be implemented to provide more accurate or indebt demographic data on the number of African Americans enjoining themselves to non-traditional, radical, and non-Christian religious organizations and ideologies.

As for ethical concerns, one issue would be that of adding fuel to the fire. Or, in other words, there is a concern about providing information about Christianity to an already hostile or anti-Christian public who would possibly make use of the information in the research to further their anti-Christian agenda. It is for this reason, possibly, that so many ministers have

avoided dealing with subjects that such as these. However, because it is no secret now what has transpired in the history of the United States with regards to slavery and the support which was provided by those claiming to be Christian, it is imperative that those who want an even-handed presentation of history be willing to provide both sides and allow people to make the choice to decide which path they will take religiously and otherwise.

Chapter 6: Budgeting and Staffing

Whether a business or organization is large or small, a profit or non-profit company, the one thing that those running a business or organization will have to deal with at some point is budgeting. And if the business or organization is serious about staying in business and growing, having the staff on board will certainly be another area of consideration. And although these two issues do not always go together, they do so often enough for them to be taken into consideration jointly.

For this project the subject of a budget and staff may not be as important initially since the presentation aspect of the project will entail only a video presentation of what was dealt with in the thesis. On the other hand, the project may be expanded and having either a staff or budget for its growth and maintenance will be a necessity.

Currently, the software that is being used is PowerPoint and Omeka. While many people are familiar with PowerPoint since it is an application in Microsoft Office Suite program, not as many are familiar with Omeka. The cost for renewing the subscription to PowerPoint must be taken into consideration. This is important because this program will cease to function if the license to use it is not renewed. And with regards to Omeka, the software is initially offered for free, but an upgrade involves purchasing the online presentation service.⁸⁸

There will not be a need for regular staff to maintain the site; however, staff will be needed for assist in the facilitation of a presentation at the Schomburg Center for a presentation to be given during Black History Month. The cost of this presentation will include use of the theater in the Schomburg. Along with the charge that will be incurred for the use of this theater,

⁸⁸ Center for History and New Media, George Mason University, "Upgrade Your Plan," Omeka.net, <http://www.omeka.net/dashboard/upgrade-plan> (accessed January 28, 2018).

there will be a need for a technical director, audio engineer, lighting operator, and stage technician. Aside from these individual expenses, there will be a need for maintenance workers, and security personnel. There is also a fee for the facilities director. The following table below lists the cost to host a presentation which will entail elements of the research from this thesis.⁸⁹

Schomburg Rental for Theater to Non-Profit Organizations

Personnel / Space Rental	Fee for 10-Hour Period*	5-Hour Period	Hourly Rate
Technical Director	\$550	\$275	\$55
Audio Engineer	\$500	\$250	\$50
Stage Technician	\$450	\$225	\$45
Facilities Director	\$1,059	\$529.50	\$105.90
Maintenance	\$450	\$225	\$45
Security Officer	\$125	\$125	\$25
Security Supervisor	\$857.60	428.80	85.76
Security Manager	1,037.70	518.85	\$103.77
Total cost:	\$5,029	\$2,577	\$515
*Technical Rates are based on a 10-hour period. Overtime is time and half after 10 hours and double time after 12 hours for both individuals and nonprofits.			

The presentation online may be used as a learning tool for those taking a college or seminary class in history where the topic is Christianity or Christianity and its connection to slavery in the United States. As the need arises due to a demand for lessons on this subject, a lesson or series of lessons based on the project's thesis or presentation aspect of the thesis can be created with the individuals depicted on the Omeka website with excerpts from the research project and additional information. The cost for such an endeavor has not been factored into

⁸⁹ New York Public Library, "Schomburg Rental Rates and Process," New York Public Library, <https://www.nypl.org/spacerental/event-spaces/schomburg/rental-rates> (accessed January 25, 2018).

the cost for a public presentation and upgrade associated with the research information being hosted by the Omeka company.

Rental time from the Schomburg should not take any more than three hours so that cost should fall within the range of \$1,545 when all elements are factored in. Beyond this cost, an upgrade cost for Omeka needs to be included in the budget for this research project. And based on the current information provided by the Omeka.net site, an upgrade to its “plus” status will cost \$35 annually.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Center for History and New Media, George Mason University, “Upgrade Your Plan,” Omeka.net, <http://www.omeka.net/dashboard/upgrade-plan> (accessed January 28, 2018).

Conclusion

There is still much to learn about the intricacies and mental mindsets of those who espouse racism and hatred in the name of God or Christianity. But what is known, and which can be substantiated is that none of the hatred which is spewed from these anti-Christian groups, Black or white, need be a reason for disenchantment or a mass exodus among those of the African American community. My research will show that the lies promoted by these groups which are leading more and more African Americans away from Christianity are just that – lies. Christianity is not bound by the race or ethnic group that used it to perpetuate slavery and the near-extinction of Natives throughout the Americas. Christianity is a continuation of the Hebrew religious faith held by the Old Testament patriarchs, New Testament Apostles, and countless Christians that lived in various parts of Europe that refused to submit to the centralized, authoritarian rulership of any Roman pontiff. Christianity, in its various forms, helped to create this great country what is now call the United States of America. And as this nation looks for answers to the world's hate-filled racists and terrorists, what it needs to do is take another look at the values, teachings, and examples set by those in Christianity that were not marred by the white supremacists and colonialists who claimed this religion.

There are many types of Christianity. These types, often called denominations, hold views which sometimes overlap with other denominations, but in some cases, do not. What can learned from research into this topic is that not all Christian groups promoted or participated in slavery. And, although slavery was part of the lives of individuals under the Old Testament of the Mosaic Law, and mentioned in the New Testament, what the Europeans called slavery had little or no real connection to that which existed in the Bible. In the Bible, slavery in the Hebrew community was a temporary institution which allowed individuals to function as indentured servants. In the New

Testament, slavery was not mentioned often. But when it was, the practice was not inherently Christian, be the result of Christians living in a Roman imperial system. And when addressing an instance of slavery with a brother in the church, the Apostle Paul, far from condoning it, recommended that the servant be freed. This is not what was promoted or even discussed by most of those Europeans who relished in their positions as masters over Africans and others that they had subjugated as perpetual slaves in what is now called chattel slavery. With this and other evidence, this research aims to show that Christianity is not diabolically inspired, opposed to equality, or the white racist institution that it is made out to be by those wishing to draw minorities into an ideology that will have adverse consequences for us all.

Appendix A: Interview Transcripts

Interview with Thomas (Basheem) Austin

Conducted by Paul Hunter

11/25/2017

Question 1: What was your experience growing up in Christianity?

Answer: My experience in Christianity. I think my experience with Christianity was a lot of confusion. I guess it was due to so many mis-educational pointers... because I was taught I was one of the cursed people. Some preacher said we were supposed to be one of the gentiles. I had an abused childhood and then I got a falsified confirmation of being cursed.

After my confusion in Christianity I moved on to Islam. So basically, I was disappointed and seeking other means to who God really is.

Question 2: What positive and/or negative experiences have you had in church or Christianity that may have led to your exodus?

Answer: Okay well (the) positive... was the more I studied and spoke to the people who were sincere, the more positive outlook I had on it. These were rare occasions.

Question 2B: Since you had that positive experience, why did you leave then?

Answer: The negatives started to outweigh the positives.

Question 3: Why did you leave Christianity?

Answer: I left Christianity by way of curiosity... as to what else can I find out about God... is there some better way to find out about God.

Question 4: What has been the strongest thing that has caused a disconnect with Christianity?

Answer: People. Insincerity. I often find myself when I get into something. I like dive in to the pool. Being submerged when I come up I find that everyone ain't swimming in the same direction.

Like whatever it is that I'm trying to learn about, I find out that everyone is not being a team player. I got discouraged and that's what led me to walk away.

These are things that I want to discuss for a while... I imagined myself interviewing myself.

I went from Christianity to five percenter, to Nation of Islam, from there to Sunni Muslim.

And from Sunni Muslim back to Christianity.

And funny, throughout all of those ideologies, when I found that the love is not there, I left them.

So it wasn't just Christianity.

Question 4B. Is that all?

No, that's about it.

I actually do appreciate it because like I said....

I would like to have had a minister in one of the churches that I was in (and) tithing to, to find out what's going on. A shepherd's heart.

I know what's going on... even though you know what's going on...

That's possibly somebody's out because you don't speak on it, you might find out that somebody else went through.., you might say maybe I can make it.

Testimonies... communication is really key.

My return to drugs was a big part of it. You need a release. You're not supposed to hold on to stuff... to bottle up your pain... like walking around with a dead person strapped to your back stinking.

Interview with Ms. Brown

Conducted by Paul Hunter
1/19/2018

Question 1: What was your experience growing up in Christianity?

Answer: As a small child I felt a lot of love and care because I was small. This was a fundamentalist group that didn't take a name and didn't espouse dealing with churches and so we met in the homes. I didn't know for a long time how the missionaries were supported...the way you see donations in other churches. I was told that "friends" (or members and "workers" or missionaries) give money to support the work of the missionaries.

Question 2: What positive or negative experiences have you had in church or Christianity that may have led to your exodus?

Answer: I was always kinda of I guess kind of limbo... when I was around nineteen or twenty. I remember asking one of the workers about homosexuality and was quite stunned by their responses. I had personal encounters with other people at school... But then I wanted to know if I was marked. I wanted to know if I was marked by God as some kind of sinner. But I couldn't get answers (directly). They didn't want to talk about it and said that God has his way of dealing with sinners. Your faith was supposed to help you get some kind of answers but I was always lost and so I said this thing wasn't for me.

The negative experience..., maybe I shouldn't call it a negative experience, I was having trouble making my own decisions. Everything seemed to be a fight. I wasn't supposed to use my own judgment and but depend on the workers or the bible. I couldn't get my questions answers. I found out this was also the case in other churches. I had several cases where I almost had a nervous

breakdown and decided that this thing was not for me. At least I didn't have a nervous break-down, and I didn't go crazy.

My parents were upset with me for being such an open-minded thinker.

Question 3: Why did you leave Christianity?

Answer: Why did I leave Christianity? Like I said, I couldn't... I already felt excommunicated. I literally was not talking to me... I couldn't hear the voice. I couldn't feel the guidance. Everybody seemed so happy. I said what's wrong with me. What's wrong with me? I couldn't get none of that. I felt like I had already been pushed out and I felt I was already out. I always felt like I was on the outside. Why can't I feel this good and this sense of praise. How are you supposed to get this feeling? People always claimed to be born again... what does it mean. I really had a problem with the abstract nature of Christianity. The metaphoric way of talking. I didn't hear any voices. I didn't feel anything in my heart. I always felt longing and suffering in my heart.

Question 4: What has been the strongest thing that has caused you a disconnect with Christianity?

Answer: The specific disconnect was not getting answers about homosexuality. Not getting answers or getting negative answers. I get answers that conflict... that made it seem like half the population were doomed.

EXTRA QUESTIONS:

Question 5: Do you know of any people who have left Christianity who have any feelings of hostility or aggression because of their feelings about Christianity?

Answer: Generally hostility or hostility against the church? I don't know them personally, but if you go online, you're going to find them. But if you go online, you're going to find them. There are people who have left the church...who felt betrayed, brainwashed. Like other churches that express joy... In the church I was raised in there was no joy. It's like you're waiting to go to heaven

to get joy. Mostly you're supposed to go to church three or four times a week, because if you're thrown out, your salvation is gone. If you do something outside of it, your salvation is gone. Every week, we'd reiterate the same restrictions and guidelines every Sunday.

They used to call it "The Way." Now that you've joined the church, you're professing the truth. So you ask them any other church, what about Methodists, Catholics, Anglicans, or any other church, they (would say that they) are lost. Any other faith was suspect... any other Christian branch was suspect. Only this version of Christianity had the "way" or the "truth." So if you practiced any other version, you were (considered) deceived by the Devil.

Question 6: Do you the age range or educational level of this or these individuals?

Answer: For the most part, they were all ages. You can profess from age five or six. I know people who were one hundred.

Most of them were not very educated. Many of the young people (were) decided not to go to college, especially women. Girls were expected to get married. But many are going to college now more recently in the latter half of the 20th century. But less of them are continuing in the faith. In the Caribbean, people were expected to go to college. But it was still the style in America, in Canada, in Ireland, and Great Britain (for people not to go to college).

Most of the church was middle class in the Caribbean, (and) in Guyana. But that was less true in America, Canada, Ireland, and Great Britain. Especially in the central part of America, all across the South, many were not going to college. They were taught that all you needed was the Bible.

Why go to college? But there was always a small group of Blacks who went to college.

Because people who went to college had their minds opened. Their perspectives changed. The church was trying to limit exposure. I think they knew that. All of these things are negative impetus to remain in the church.

But they didn't use the word "church," they would say let's go to the meeting. And they'd say in the "faith."

Question 7: What makes a person have such feelings?

Answer: I did have anger because the people didn't have any decision-making skills. Children become adults and need to have their decisions heard at least before they are dismissed. If you're not allowed as a teenager or as a child to have your decisions heard... and if you don't have a decision-making process, you can't function as an adult. You basically arrive as an adult without knowing how to make decisions. You can't function as an adult, you just follow things because others do it. You arrive at adulthood with a flawed personality. I didn't know how to make decisions as an adult... or have a sense of identity. I had a very flawed sense of identity. That to me is a direct result of growing up in the faith. In Christianity, you didn't have to worry about how to make a friend (in the church)... because all of your friends were already there (in the church). They were already there, already made... and no one had a personality that stood out. You were supposed to blend in. Some were more jolly... Question 8: Is there anything that can prevent such feelings, and if so, what?

What is this paper all about? What are you doing your research on? (After telling the interviewee that the research was on why people left the church and on the racism in the church, she said that "you didn't ask me anything about racism.")

Yes, there was racism in the church.. and the whites received more attention than those who were dark. They got more props. Race was kind of a back seat. But it was more about class.

Appendix B: Exhibit Panels

Omeka Web-Publishing Platform

Located at phunter10.omeka.net

Omeka.net Sites ▾ My Dashboard My Account

Slavery, Christianity, and the Exodus from the Church Plugins Appearance Users Settings Welcome, Paul Hunter Log Out

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<input type="checkbox"/>	 Bartolome de las Casas (Bartholomew de las Casas) (Private) Details - Edit - Delete	Dichone Hunter	Still Image	Jan 28, 2018
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<input type="checkbox"/>	 <p>Bible (Private) Details · Edit · Delete</p> <p>The Bible contains the accounts of how the God of the Hebrews interacted with them and dealt with other groups of people. It provides an account of what is believed to be the history of the Hebrew people and... Collection: No Collection Tags: No Tags</p>	Paul Hunter	Still Image	Jan 28, 2018
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<input type="checkbox"/>  <p>Quaker - William Penn (Private) Details · Edit · Delete</p> <p>This is an illustration of William Penn, a member of the Christian Church during the colonial period which initially was involved in slavery, but later opposed it. Collection: No Collection Tags: No Tags</p>	Paul Hunter	Still Image	Jan 28, 2018		
<input type="checkbox"/>  <p>Bartolome de las Casas (Bartholomew de las Casas) (Private) Details · Edit · Delete</p> <p>This is an illustration of the Spanish conquistador who became a monk and later a bishop in the Catholic Church during the early Spanish colonial conquest of the Americas. He became an outspoken advocate of the natives and called...</p> <p>Collection: No Collection Tags: No Tags</p>	Dishone Hunter	Still Image	Jan 28, 2018		
<input type="checkbox"/>  <p>Hernan Cortes (Private) Details · Edit · Delete</p> <p>Description - This is an illustration of the Spanish conquistador Hernan Cortes. He was born in 1485 and died in 1547. He is remembered as the Spanish conqueror who, with his soldiers, was most responsible for destroying most...</p> <p>Collection: No Collection Tags: No Tags</p>	Dishone Hunter	Still Image	Jan 28, 2018		

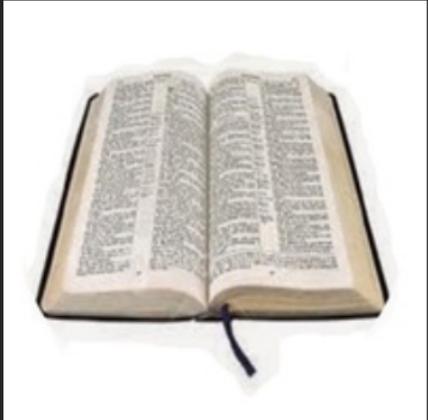
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BARTOLOME DE LAS CASAS (BARTHOLOMEW DE LAS CASAS)



Dublin Core

Title
Bartolome de las Casas (Bartholomew de las Casas)

Subject
Spanish conquest of the Americas

Description
This is an illustration of the Spanish conquistador who became a monk and later a bishop in the Catholic Church during the early Spanish colonial conquest of the Americas. He became an outspoken advocate of the natives and called for a halt to their inhumane treatment and extermination by his fellow conquistadors. He is believed to have been born in 1484. His death occurred in 1566.

Creator
Dishane Hunter

Source
Gustavo Flores Quelopena, "Fray Bartolome de las Casas: El Humanista Teologico de Bartolome de las Casas y la Neoescolastica Barroca," (June 29, 2014) <http://guaflores.blogspot.com/2014/06/fray-bartolome-de-las-casas.html> (accessed January 28, 2015).

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FREDERICK DOUGLASS



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SARAH FORBES BONNETTA



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 The Bible contains the accounts of how the God of the Hebrews interacted with them and dealt with other groups of people. It provides an account of...

MUHAMMAD ALI

 This is an illustration of the suspicious heavy-weight boxing legend Muhammad Ali. He was known for his fighting skills, his quibbled remarks...

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MARTIN LUTHER KING



Dublin Core

Title
Martin Luther King

Subject
Civil Rights, history

Description
This is an illustration of the civil rights leader Martin Luther King. It is based on the photograph of Dr. King taken during his march on Washington, D.C. in 1963. The civil rights activist was born in 1929 and died in 1968.

Creator
Paul Hunter

Source
Jill DiSanto, "Penn Presents 2018 Annual Symposium on Social Change Honoring Martin Luther King Jr.," Penn News, January 4, 2018, <https://news.upenn.edu/news/pennpresents2018annualsymposiumsocialchangehonoringmartinlutherkingjr/> (accessed January 29, 2018).

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This is an illustration of the outspoken heavy-weight boxing legend Muhammad Ali. He was known for his fighting skills, his quoteworded remarks...

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MUHAMMAD ALI



Dublin Core

Title
Muhammad Ali

Subject
Nation of Islam, human rights activist

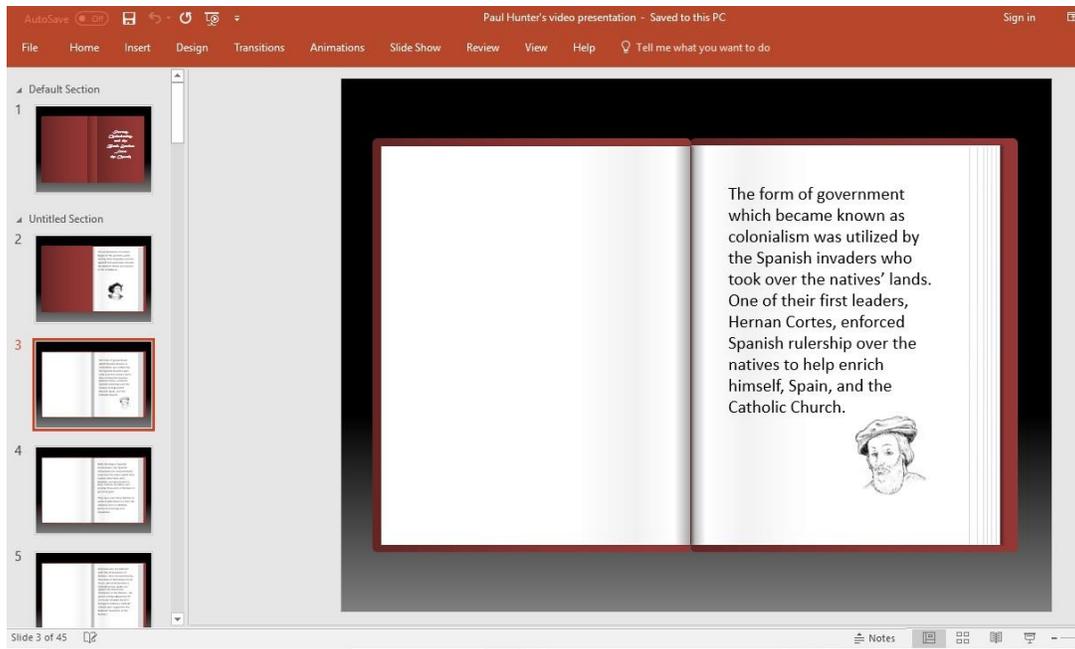
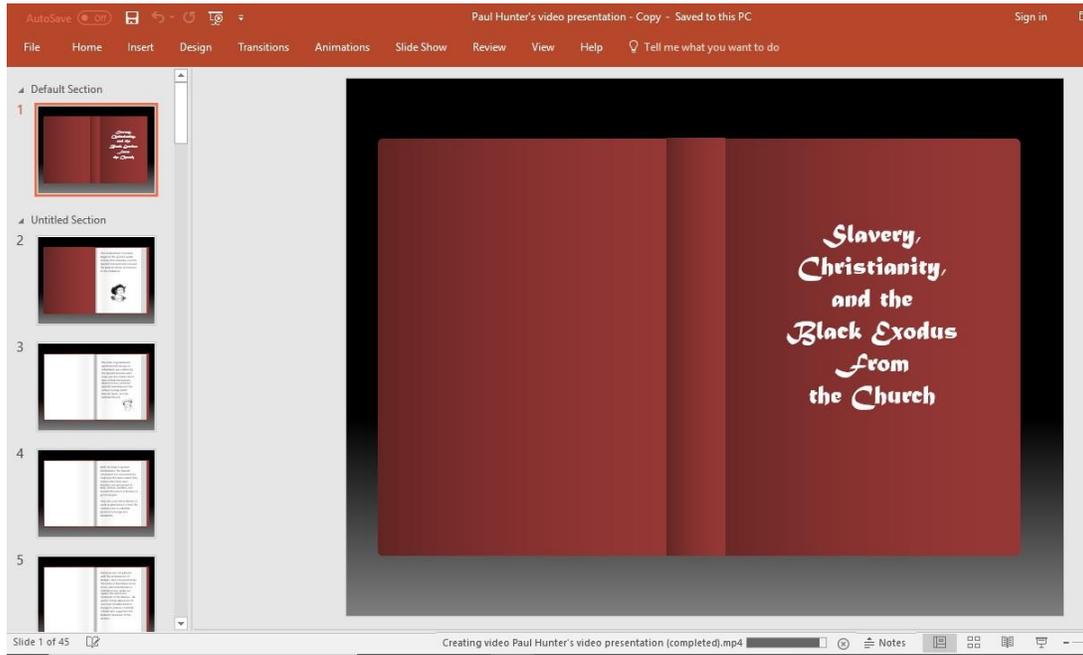
Description
This is an illustration of the outspoken heavy-weight boxing legend Muhammad Ali. He was known for his fighting skills, his quoteworded remarks, anti-warism view stand, and his connection to African American religious organisation known as the Nation of Islam. He was born in 1942 and died in 2016.

Creator
Paul Hunter

Source
NDTV Sports, "Muhammad Ali, Greatest Boxer Of All Time, Dies," NDTV Sports, June 4, 2016, <https://sports.ndtv.com/boxing/photos/muhammad-ali-greatest-boxer-of-all-time-dies-22169> (accessed January 28, 2016).

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2

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5

Slide 2 of 45

Notes

The enslavement of natives began in the western world shortly after Columbus and his Spanish Conquistadors crossed the Atlantic Ocean and landed in the Caribbean.



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Slide 4 of 45

Notes

With the help of Spanish missionaries, the Spanish conquerors (or conquistadors) took over the island which they named after their saint, Dominic, and proceeded to beat, torture, mutilate, and murder thousands of Natives to get more gold.

They also used these Natives to work on plantations to feed the colonists and to sell their produce to Europe and elsewhere.

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