

# **GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE?**

## **A CRITICAL INVESTIGATION OF DISCOURSES IN NORTH AMERICAN BLACK AND PAN-AFRICAN THEOLOGIES**



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**WESTERN CAPE**

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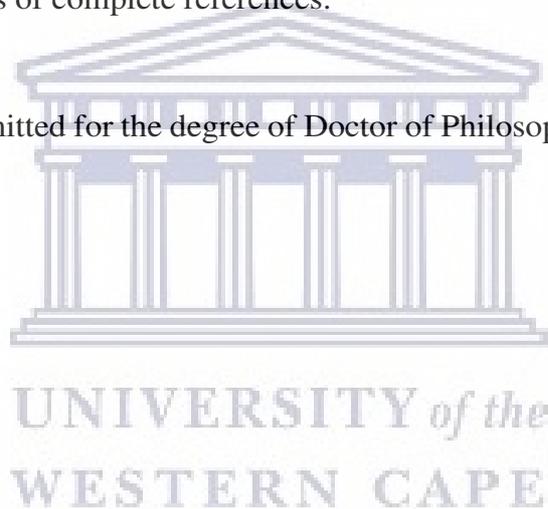
# Declaration

I declare that *God's Chosen People? A Critical Investigation of Discourses in North American Black and Pan-African Theologies* is my own, unaided work.

That this work has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university or institution.

That all the sources I have used or quoted in this work have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

This work is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of the Western Cape.



André Potgieter  
Woodstock, Cape Town  
23 September 2021

# Dedication

This thesis is in honour of my late daughter Adelaide. It was my greatest wish that she would get to see her father graduate. She told me how loud she would cheer...

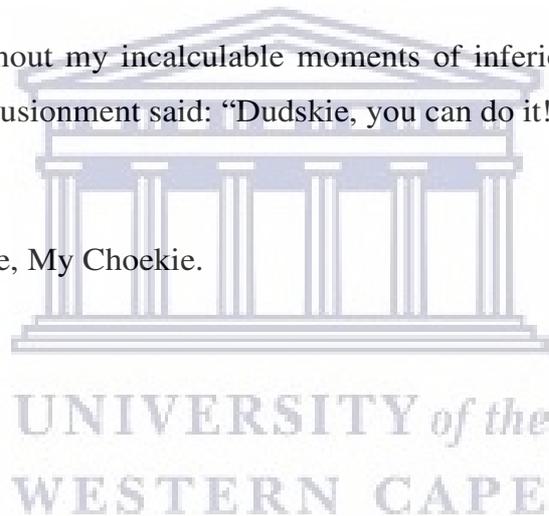
Adelaide was **One-of-a-Kind!** A larger than life being! A tour-de-force!

Adelaide, who apart from hours and hours of formatting and slogging never ceased, not for a second, to encourage me and without whom this project would have never been completed.

Adelaide who throughout my incalculable moments of inferiority, incompetence, fear, despair and disillusionment said: “Dudskie, you can do it!”

I love you with my life, My Choekie.

JCIG!



André Potgieter

# Acknowledgements

To the gifted and erudite, Professor Ernst Conradie, for his extreme patience and guidance right up, and until, the very last punctuation mark.

The administrative personnel, with special the chief librarian and her competent assistant Jackie Denton. UWC for its patience with such an antiquated student.

My brothers, especially Sollie (and his wife Elize), Avril and Eugene for their generous support.

M.K. Kambule, although an I.T. Engineer, I prefer to call him “The Space Man”!  
Thank you, MK for your kindness and for always giving me “space”!

Adelaide, the dear mother of our children, for her love and continuous words of kindness.

Solomon my son, for saying daily prayers and providing me with needed edification.

Mbuyi, my companion, for her passion, energy, generosity and for putting up with me through this strenuous journey.

JCIG!

André Potgieter

# Abstract

In Black and African theology, especially in the North American and African contexts, there is consensus that claims of people of European descent being regarded as God's chosen people, are heretical and serve to legitimise the domination in the name of differences with regard to race, class and culture. Such discourses may be understood to be a sustained critique, rejection, and even condemnation, of the injustices of imperialism, colonialism, human subjugation like slavery, and racial supremacy. In constructive responses to racial supremacy, claims have been made in certain political discourses, cultural philosophies and theologies, that instead, Black Africans who currently reside in Africa and those Black Africans whose ancestry is vest in Africa, may be regarded as God's chosen people, and Africa as God's chosen country. Such views are also expressed in some Christian circles and are discussed in the context of certain historical and contemporary North-American, and Pan-African theologies.

This study seeks to explore a notion of Black Africans being regarded as God's chosen people and Africa as God's chosen continent. How is this notion being addressed and assessed in certain contemporary discourses on North American Black and Pan-African theologies? A brief survey of literature with specific reference to certain individuals is provided. These individuals in no order of preference are W.B.E. du Bois, Edward W. Blyden, Gayraud Wilmore, James Cone, Alexander Crummell, Marcus Garvey, James Africa Beale Horton, Mensa Otabil, Ulysses Young III, Clifford Clarke and others. A survey of the ways in which the "notion" of being God's chosen people is understood, requires further reflection.

# Key Words

Chosen people

Election

Black Africans

Pan-Africanism

Pan-African theology

Pan-African theologies

North American Black theology



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# Abbreviations

<b>AACC</b>	All Africa Conference of Churches
<b>AAC</b>	Africa Apostolic Church
<b>AMBI</b>	Acceptance of the Myth of Black Inferiority
<b>AME</b>	American Methodist Episcopal (Church)
<b>AUA</b>	African Union Authority
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>CORE</b>	Congress of Racial Equality
<b>DRC</b>	Dutch Reformed Church
<b>ECGCP</b>	Exclusivist claims to be God's chosen people
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GC's</b>	German Christians
<b>HSRC</b>	Human Sciences Research Council
<b>ICGC</b>	International Central Gospel Church
<b>IOA</b>	International Organisation for Migration
<b>KCA</b>	Kikuyu Central Association
<b>KJV</b>	King James Version
<b>NAACP</b>	National Association for the advancement of Coloured People
<b>NGK</b>	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk
<b>NIV</b>	New International Version
<b>NOI</b>	Nation of Islam
<b>OAIC</b>	Organisation of the African Historic Churches
<b>OAU</b>	Organisation for African Unity
<b>PAA</b>	Pan African Association RSV
<b>PACCS</b>	Pan African Clergy Council and Bible Seminary

<b>PATS</b>	Pan-African Theological School
<b>RSV</b>	Revised Standard Version
<b>SCLC</b>	Southern Christian Leadership Conference
<b>UGCC</b>	United Gold Coast Convention
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNIA-ACL</b>	Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League
<b>UNIA</b>	Universal Negro Improvement Association



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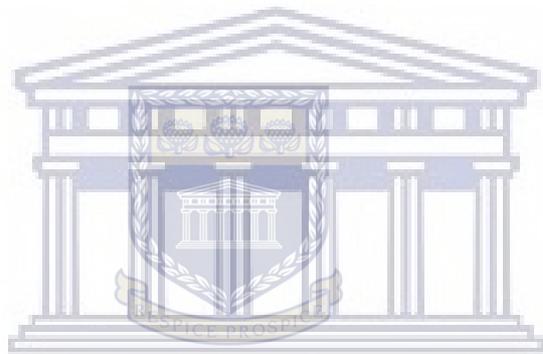
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## GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE - CONTEXT AND RELEVANCE

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### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The study; with regards to certain traditional and contemporary, discourses, views, foundations and ideological positions, within and on North American Black and Pan-African theologies; explores notions held of the various designations, Africa, Africans, African Blacks, and finally Black Africans (*see 5*), being God's chosen people and Africa being God's chosen continent.

Historically there has been a tendency to identify a particular group or race as the chosen people of God, regardless of culture and pigmentation. This is therefore not a new phenomenon. This has for centuries raised serious questions about divine election and exclusivism. The idea of a particular ethnically demarcated country being God's chosen territory and its inhabitants being God's chosen people, is a contentious one.

It is not an ideology that has suddenly descended upon an appointed people in some designated European, African, or North American, or any other geographically demarcated figurative "upper room." It is an ideology which has manifested itself through many centuries, among many countries and its peoples in the world, either in an evolutionary, patriotic, fanatical, racially superior, reactionary, or even revolutionary manner.

What prompted or inspired me to engage the topic of Pan-African theology? I read Mensa Otabil's "best seller" entitled *Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia – A Biblical Revelation On God's Purpose For The Black Race* (1993). Otabil is the head pastor

of the International Central Gospel Church in Accra Ghana, with a membership of several thousand.

In my view Otabil in *Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia*...makes numerous claims to the divine exclusivity of Black Africans. One senses these claims to an extent being a vindication of perceptions and atrocities, understandably so, which have, throughout history, been inflicted on Black Africans by unscrupulous Western colonialists.

And yet, Otabil through his extolling of the “*Black Race*” and his various distinctions of “*God’s Purpose for the Black Race*”, as that of divinely ordained and superior and chosenness, began to crystallise for me the concept and designation of “Black Africans”. A designation bound intrinsically, in my view, to exclusivist claims of divine election, particularly, as the exclusive chosenness of Black Africans as God’s chosen people.

I further came across an interesting article by Professor Clifton Clarke (2013), a lecturer at King’s College in London, entitled *Pan-Africanism and Pentecostalism in Africa: Strange Bedfellows or Perfect Partners?* Clarke’s (2013) inspiration for the latter paper stems from three sources:

- i. His reading of the various nineteenth and twentieth-century prominent Pan-Africanists.
- ii. The idea of a Pan-African political theology came to Clarke’s attention through the reading of Josiah Young III’s (1992) book entitled *A Pan-African Theology: Providence and Legacies of the Ancestors*.
- iii. Otabil’s (1993) book *Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia. A Biblical Revelation on God’s Purpose for the Black Race*.

At that time (2016), the concept of a ‘Pan-African theology’ was an academic field that I had not encountered before. However, I proceeded to read Josiah Young III’s work eagerly, and in conjunction with this, engaged in a study of the historical and contemporary contents and status of Pan-Africanism and its relationality to exclusivist claims of chosenness of Black Africans as God’s chosen people.

## **1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND AIM OF THE STUDY**

### **1.2.1 The Particularity of Election**

In the Jewish-Christian tradition, the idea of God's chosen people was traditionally associated with the people of Israel that is, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (and Sarah, Rebecca and Lea/Rachel). In Christian theology, this has prompted further reflection on divine election. The particularity of God's election was often interpreted in an exclusivist way regarding a particular group. Apt examples of these claims to divine chosenness may be found amongst others with the Zionists, the British, the Germans, the Afrikaners, and the American nations.

### **1.2.2 The Contentiousness of Election**

Given the obvious dangers of exclusivism, many have abandoned the idea of divine election altogether, while others have searched for more inclusive interpretations. The concept of whether God's chosenness is perceived as a divinely ordained endowment, akin to a particular group or nation, is contentious.

### **1.2.3 The Motivation for the Methodology of the Study**

For this study, I chose to not feature extensive discussions on the biblical accounts of divine election as there are numerous such scholarly works that have been produced. Instead, the first step in my methodological clarification of divine election was based on the writings of certain of the church fathers, and most pertinently, St. Augustine's interpretation of what the doctrine of divine election constitutes. The second step, focused on quite an extensive period, spanning from the reformation and post-reformation through the enlightenment and revolution until the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century era in Christian history. This period features some of the most outspoken interpretations of divine election by prominent theologians, the likes of John Calvin, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Søren Kierkegaard, and Karl Barth. The latter theologians' respective interpretations of the divine election I consider as important and are thus briefly referred to in this study. The third step looked at more modern and contemporary figures such as Daniel Migliore, Alister McGrath, Willie Jonker, Cornelis Van der Kooi, and Gijsbert van den Brink whose works, amongst others,

focus on the topic of divine election and are widely read in South Africa. Two other notable contemporary works included in this topic are *God Has Chosen* (Lindsay, 2020) and *God's Favourites* (Coogan, 2019). This brief historical reflection is the focus of Chapter 2.

Divine election is not simply confined to individuals per se but is also rooted in countries, denominations, and movements, laying claim to have come into being through divine election. These latter entities include, amongst others the movements known as the German Christians, British Israelism, and countries such as America, South Africa and others. These claims are taken up in Chapter 3 of this study.

The gospel, as argued by some scholars, rather than having entered Africa, was predestined to be spread “from” Africa “to” the rest of the inhabited world. The gospel according to the advocates of Black Africans and Africa’s chosenness, constitutes no original news about Africa, as it has been vested within Africa since the beginning of time. These claims will be discussed in terms of the rise of Pan-Africanism as a political and embryonic theological movement, North American Black theology, culminating in Pan-African theologies.

I refer to the convictions of the protagonists and provide appropriate passages where such claims for being God’s chosen people are articulated or discussed. I consider the sources on which they draw explicitly, that is, references in their texts, and secondary literature on those selected.

I also draw comparisons and assessments of the positions of some representatives of Pan-Africanism, North-American Black, and Pan-African theologies. The “notion” that Africa is God’s “chosen” continent and that Black Africans together with Black Africans abroad who stem from African ancestry, are God’s “chosen people,” elicit pertinent questions about divine election and exclusivism. All of which is the focus of Chapter 4-6 and forms the bedrock of the research proposal.

#### 1.2.4 The Research Problem

The research problem that will be investigated in this study may be formulated in the following way:

**To determine whether and to what extent exclusivist claims to be God's chosen people can be identified in North American Black theology and Pan-African theologies**

#### 1.2.5 The Designation, language, reasoning and prejudices – A Disclaimer

It is proper form at this point to briefly deal with the question of my choice in selecting the predominate designation of the study. No scholar is without their own prejudices, social histories, cultural influences, religious persuasions and theological leanings. We will always in manner of speaking be 'subjective'. That being said, I approached the research study under the counsel of an unspoken oath, to be erudite, honest, open, balanced and most importantly 'scholarly'. It will be remiss of me to not re-iterated my own personal feelings of shame, sorrow, heartache and often just helpless incomprehensibility to the evils of racial injustices in any and all its devilish guises. I do however remain a firm believer in the importance of dialogue, reflection, critical discourse in life and academia, and to challenge ideologies be they political, religious, social or theological. The study has been undertaken in this spirit.

The designation "Black Africans" is used A-Politically and without prejudice. Instead the designation is used rather as an economy of agency. What in the modern sense would be referred to as a *Trademark*. Dealing distinctly with the duality of a distinguishing *origin/ownership*, on the one end, and *identity-character-feature*, on the other. It is not an attempt to be opprobrious, and even less to be mistaken for controversial language. In fact, both the individual words and the combined designation are used, and intended to be viewed, as empowerment announcements.

I concede that the term Black Africans could be found confusing and potentially be prone to misinterpretation and in that light I took serious consideration to those advisers who contended that "African" would have been the more appropriate designation, I found that it failed to fully render the interpretive depth and breadth

I intended to convey, for which further reasoning is provided hereunder.

An extract from Steve Biko's evidence given in the SASO/BPC trial in the first week of May 1976, in my opinion, highlights the designation "Black", as bearing a pigmentary and ethnic stamp. Biko (1987:104) states:

When you say, "black is beautiful" what in fact you are saying to him is: man you are OK as you are to look upon yourself as a human being". Now in African life especially it also has certain connotations: it is the connotations for women prepare themselves for viewing by society, in other words, the way they dress, the way they make up and so on, which tends to be a negation of their true state and in a sense a running away from their colour they use lightening creams. They sort of believe that their natural state which is a black state is not synonymous with beauty .... So, in a term the term "black is beautiful" challenges exactly that belief which make someone negate himself.

Whilst I am cognisant of the detrimental connotations appertaining to the designation "black", Biko observed several examples of the term "black" being posited as a key characteristic and beatific feature, more precisely, an identity of pride. Arguably one of the greatest men in history, Nelson Mandela, himself in no uncertain terms, in his defining of the physical appearance of the African designates it as reflecting the colour "black". Mandela, in the same vein as James Cone, in defence of designating the African as physically reflecting the pigmentation "black", substantiates his defining of the physical appearance of the African by specifically referring to the *skin colour and the hair texture*, as those defining physical features which distinguish an African from other races. Mandela (2001:49) states:

To say that race is a myth and that in our country there are Africans, Coloureds, and Indians but only words is to play with words. The main ethnological divisions of mankind are acknowledged by bourgeois and Marxist anthropologists and those from the so-called uncommitted world. People observe them with the naked eye. Physical characteristics the colour of the skin and the texture of the hair – can be observed by merely looking at a painting of Chaka and one of Napoleon, at Tambo and Dadoo Kotane and Reggie September. In addition to the colour of their skins the texture of their hair they differ in historical origins and in their culture and languages . . . But race as such exists in the world, and in our country there is nothing wrong with using the terms African Coloured and Indian in appropriate cases.

### 1.2.6 The Classification of distinct Theological views of Divine Choseness

I indicate throughout this study if, and where, claims of Black Africans and Africa's, superiority and exclusivist divine chosenness (ECGCP), feature in my opinion. These are based on a classification of distinct theological views. I used these classifications as an instrument to interpret the positions of the authors discussed in this study:

- i. An affirmation of cultural identity (which is necessarily particular although claims for an underlying African worldview need to be noted).
- ii. An affirmation of human dignity which is almost by definition universal, applying to all various forms of African humanism, and notions that “black is beautiful” and “black lives matter”.
- iii. Decolonial resistance against an internalised sense of inferiority.
- iv. Claims for superiority i.e. that some aspects of traditional African culture and also religion is superior to Western or Christian notions (which rhetorically may be a response to the decolonial resistance).
- v. Claims to be God's chosen people, i.e. that Black Africans are part of the household of God (rhetorically aimed at persuading Black Africans that they are loved by God, also in response to colonialism).
- vi. Cases where there are claims for corporate agents to have a special mission and task (akin to that of Israel amid the nations), i.e. chosen for a special task.
- vii. Claims of God's preferential option for the poor, oppressed and marginalised (which could be interpreted in different ways, but is rooted in, the election of run-away slaves to become God's chosen people).
- viii. Claims in liberation theology for the epistemological privilege of the poor as those on whose side God is and who therefore know God better than the rich.
- ix. Exclusivist claims to be God's chosen people.
- x. Claims for superiority in the African culture and religion often manifest themselves as indicated in the literature in this thesis.

Works for further reading are invaluable tools for further reflections on the notion: Teel (2017), Bantum, Carter and Jennings (2017), Ware, Daymond and Williams (2019), Coogan (2019), and Wood (2018).

### **1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

To investigate the research problem, I followed the logic of the discussion above. In the introductory chapter some background to the study, the demarcation of the study, and the clarifying of the research problem is to be examined. The following steps are pursued: Firstly, there was a need to situate some scholars' claims, of Black Africans being God's chosen people, within a wider context and against the background of theological reflections on the doctrine of divine election. Secondly, to situate such claims against other historical claims to being God's chosen people in an exclusivist way.

Although it must be noted that the scope of such a comprehensive undertaking is not possible within the framework and focus of this study. However, a brief survey is necessary in each case to situate certain North American and Pan-African theological claims within a wider context and to situate claims of Black Africans (who reside in Africa and those of African descent) and Africa, as God's chosen people and continent respectively.

In chapters 2 and 3 brief surveys are provided on the divine election and on historical claims of being God's chosen people. The literature as indicated above, and some standard works are proffered to provide brief descriptions of the background.

Chapters 4 to 6 will discuss claims of, Black Africans being God's chosen people, Africa being the origin of the gospel and the seed from which it will spread, in terms of the rise of Pan-Africanism as a political movement, North American Black theology and Pan-African theologies. I refer to the convictions of the protagonists and provide appropriate passages where such claims for being God's chosen people are articulated or discussed. I consider the sources on which they draw explicitly (i.e.) references in their texts, and secondary literature on those selected. I draw comparisons and assessments of the positions of the representatives of Pan-Africanism, North-American Black and Pan-African theologies.

The Conclusion provides critical reflections and questions on the claim to be God's chosen people, considering the polemical rationale for exclusivist claims of this

nature. This will entail the posing of several questions, together with relevant empirical data, which in part will hopefully serve as a critical reflection on these issues. Pitfalls appertaining to one countries claim to be divinely chosen whilst the modus operandi of such claims often confirms the exact opposite with regards to corruption, self-enrichment, and socio-economical behavioural patterns. Since this study reflects on Black Africans, I chose to relate such behavioural patterns from within an African context. I briefly refer to the calamity of “migration” and as to whether such calamities justify the comfort of having as a result of their trauma, evoked God’s divine chosenness.

To identify the signals, traits, contentions, and assertions of divine chosenness, I conceptualized an identi-plate called the “exclusivist claims to be God’s chosen people (ECGCP).” This identi-plate will be inserted into the contents, or after the reference, if and where instances where the “notion” of Black Africans, namely, those whose ancestry is vested in Africa, and Africa as a continent, are by some historical, and certain contemporary scholars, depicted as God’s chosen people, and chosen country.

During researching the notion, I discerned signals of Black Americans reflecting a Black American superiority towards Blacks who reside in Africa. If and where such superiority claims manifested themselves, I employed an identi-kit called “Black like América”.

# THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE ELECTION – A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

## CHAPTER

# 2

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### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I provide a brief overview of the views expressed by some theologians in the history of the Christian tradition on the teaching of divine election. I aim to indicate through this brief synopsis that the exclusivist claims to be God's chosen people-ECGCP, are not novel, but have manifested themselves in the history of Christian doctrines in a plethora of interpretations. To me, it is reminiscent of King Solomon's fatal expression that there is nothing new under the sun. I provide brief descriptions of Augustine, Calvin, Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard and Barth, as predominantly reflected in the respective editions of *The Cambridge Companion* on these respective theologians. These publications are respectively: *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine* (Stump & Kretzmann, 2005), *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin* (McKim, 2004), *The Cambridge Companion to Friedrich Schleiermacher* (Marina, 2005), *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard* (Hannay and Marino, 1997), *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth* (Webster, 2000).

The theologians who are discussed in the abovementioned publications have amongst others provided influential and widely used overviews on the doctrine of election. After that, I feature the views of certain contemporary theologians who have produced widely used textbooks on the topic. They are Daniel Migliore, Alister McGrath, Willie Jonker, Cornelis van der Kooi & Gijsbert van den Brink, who provide a substantial overview on divine election which are relevant in my opinion. I acknowledge that there are other contemporary textbooks on the topic which are of similar acclaim. A brief list of some of these writings is recommended in this study.

## **2.2 AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO (391-430)**

Augustine is noted, amongst many other of his theological contributions, for his transformation displayed in his interpretation/exegesis of the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans. Augustine in his initial exegesis, where God's preference of Jacob over Esau features, took it for granted that election must be based on foreknowledge of faith (Wetzel, 2005:53). To Augustine God foreknew that Jacob and not Esau would put his faith in the Lord in the near future (Wetzel, 2005:53). Augustine however, revised his earlier reading of Romans 9 in the second part of his first book, which is the one in which he responded to Simplicity. To his own amazement he concluded that Paul could not have been speaking of an election grounded in foreknown faith, in the abovementioned reference, since that would have signified that divine favour was being imparted on the merit of people's works, and the measure by which such works exceeded those of others (Wetzel, 2005:53). Through a thorough reading of Paul, Augustine drew the conclusion that election and God's manner of bequeathing it, had to be completely gratuitous (Wetzel, 2005:53). For God to have favoured Jacob over Esau, both formed in Rebecca's womb, God decided for reasons only known to God, that Jacob and not Esau was the one worth choosing (Wetzel, 2005:52). Jacob's redemption was thus foreknown and predestined by God (Wetzel, 2005:53). Thus, human beings favoured by God's redemption, by God's redemption, receives it in such a way that it invariably elicits a faithful response (Wetzel, 2005:53).

God under no circumstances relies on human beings to manifest faith on their own (Wetzel, 2005:53). Those who are unfavoured, and are referred to as the "condemned heap" (*massa damnata*), (Wetzel, 2005:53), as was the case with Esau, were simply never called in the appropriate way (Wetzel, 2005:53). Paul's despairing confession found in Romans 7:18: "Wanting the good, that I am near to, but doing the good, no", came as a shock to Augustine, in that even Paul the apostle, graced with Christ's divine favour, could on occasion, and maybe even on numerous occasions, lack the ability to behave in accordance with his better nature (Wetzel, 2005:54). It took Augustine twenty-five years to accept that Paul's confession was indeed based on Paul's own interpretation (Wetzel, 2005:54). This resulted in two developments in Augustine's thought patterns:

- i. It made him think that no human being has a desire for God, “not a scintilla of it” (Wetzel, 2005:54), specifically, those whom God had not predestined to possess such a desire. On the contrary, the nature of the desire which has its origin in human beings is in each and every instance the soiled, ungodly desire of ungraced freedom (Wentzel, 2005:54).
- ii. Augustine had come to the conclusion that this latter kind of desire, considering its human origin, represents an ungodly desire of ungraced freedom, and that it is exactly this latter desire what was damning humanity (Wetzel, 2005:54).

Augustine, whilst acknowledging that human beings stem from Adam, argues that our Adamic nature is not the virtual imprint of the original Adam (Wetzel, 2005:55). Adam, says Augustine, is present in the human being in “some mysterious and mystic” (Wetzel, 2005:55) way, but cannot be regarded as the paradigm of what human beings consist of (Wetzel, 2005:55). The fundamental difference then for Augustine between Adam and human beings, is that the original choice Adam had is not currently vested within human beings, that is to say, if it ever has dwelt within human beings? (Wetzel, 2005:55). Adam was given the choice to succumb to fleshly desires or to overcome them (Wetzel, 2005:56). In the case of all human beings after Adam, one either serves the carnal flesh, not possessing any motive to be guided herein, or is guided by the spirit to abandon all promptings for gratifying the flesh (Wetzel, 2005:55). To Augustine, there is no middle way (Wetzel, 2005:55). If with one’s Adamic nature one feels exposed to a conflict between the spirit and the flesh, and one is sincerely not being tricked by the flesh, one is already equipped with grace in a manner which Adam was not endowed with (Wetzel, 2005:55). Adam had the choice to abandon God and perish, whilst to Augustine, the human being according whilst being bound to die does not possess the freedom to separate himself from God (Wetzel, 2005:55).

The mere issue of human beings’ struggles against the flesh, is a confirmation that one has already been possessed and predestined by the Spirit, transformed into incarnate incorruptible flesh, being that of an incorruptible body (Wetzel, 2005:55). Those whom God wishes to possess he never abandons to corruptible flesh (Wetzel, 2005:55). Regardless of the extent of the freedom of choice which Adam possessed,

according to Augustine, it was less than the freedom that the saints were receiving through Christ (Wetzel, 2005:55). Deliverance from the flesh is the portion of the saints since they have been inaugurated into the freedom of new flesh. The “flesh” still retaining the mortality of the old flesh, but delivered from sin, and therefore equipped to be resurrected (Wetzel, 2005:55). This experience according to Augustine, is impossible to contemplate by virtue of what Adam had to face in terms of the choice of discarding the forfeiture of it (Wetzel, 2005:55). As regards those human beings who reject the freedom from the flesh through Christ, Augustine denounces this rejection to the status of reprobation (Wentzel, 2005:56). To Augustine, these were the ones who were not predestined to be redeemed, and to such, he maintains God assigns a double punishment (Wetzel, 2005:56). The only concession that Augustine confers upon the reprobates, here denoting those who deprived themselves of God, through their choosing to gratify the flesh, is that they qualify only for half of their wish, which amounts to God’s deprivation of them (Wetzel, 2005:56). To Augustine, the latter referred to as “the condemned heap” (*massa damnata*), are quite frankly never incited to the right way (Wetzel, 2005:53).

Regarding the issue of moral decision and choice, Jackson notes that Augustine, much in a similar vein to Plato and Neo-Platonism, endorses the classic preeminence of reason (Jackson, 1998:246). As the body is being governed by the soul, so to Augustine, reason exercises control over the soul (Jackson, 1998:246). Actual experiences, moral, and theological affirmations, are revealed through reason, which in the final analysis, reveals God as the ultimate object of our sincerest expressed love, thus constituting the “unchangeable” *Summun Bonum* (Jackson, 1998:246). To Augustine reason activates the will to choose or imitate that which is truly noble (Jackson, 1998:246). Sin then to Augustine is when the human will rejects what was prescribed by reason (Jackson, 1998:246). When the human being permits reason to rule the non-sensical emotions, then the human being executes the fulfilment which the eternal law dictates (Jackson, 1998:247).

Calvin’s resolution to this question was that to some people the gospel remained external, thus ineffectual, while to others the external invitation to repentance and faith was accompanied by their inner calls together with the witnessing of the Holy Spirit (Hesselink, 2004:83). Whilst Augustine acknowledges that present within us

at all times is free will, it is only through the empowerment of God that the human being can execute the commands of God (Jackson, 1998:246). To Jackson (1998:248) it appears that Augustine discards any doctrine that presupposes a mutual agreement between grace and free will. To Augustine, the elect are, by God, “made to will” (Jackson, 1998:248) that which they will inevitably achieve (Jackson, 1998:248). The non-elected, being referred to as the “mass of perdition” (Jackson, 1998:248), simply do not have the capacity to persevere, regardless of the efforts they make (Jackson, 1998:248). Jackson (1988:248). concludes that this leaves Augustine with an almost arbitrary view on predestination. To Augustine, some people are activated inescapably by the grace to love God, yet there are those who are not activated so that according to Augustine, those who are elected cannot be lost, and then there are the reprobates who simply cannot be saved (Jackson, 1998:248). Both Christ and the saints are predestined. The differences reside in Christ being predestined as the head of humanity, while the saints are the limbs (Wetzel, 2005:56). Jesus Christ is the only human being whom Augustine contracts in the Gospels whose life is perfectly pleasing to God. (Wetzel, 2005:50). To Augustine, Christ’s pleasing of God does not stem solely from him having overcome the temptations of the flesh, thereby earning God’s favour, but because Christ at heart had always been the person God wanted him to be (Wetzel, 2005:50). God’s grace at work in the predestination of Christ, concretized Jesus into a human who would never be persuaded to conduct his life in any other matter than that behoving to God’s son (Wetzel, 2005:50). In the case of Jesus’ predestination by God, perfect equilibrium existed between what God foreknew and what he predestined (Wetzel, 2005:50). To us human beings; elect and damned simultaneously; there will always be degrees of divergence, manifesting itself in an “all-too-human” inclination to sin (Wetzel, 2005:50).

I conclude this brief exposition on Augustine’s view on predestination and foreknowledge, with a quote from Wetzel (2005:5) which in my view provides a good synopsis of Augustine’s thinking in this regard:

Augustine’s idea is that regardless of whether a particular expression of will is foreknown, the will retains its character as a cause of action if a will can be foreknown as such, foreknowledge implies no impediment to free will... God predestines some wills but only foreknows others. Those whose lives are foreknown, but not predestined, inevitably come to a bad end. The rest are made holy and redeemed.

### 2.3 JOHN CALVIN (1509 – 1564)

Philip Melanchthon, the author of *Lost Communes* (1521/2020), who was a theologian himself, acclaimed Calvin as not having his equal when it appertained to the discipline of theology. Melanchthon, who was a close friend and colleague of Martin Luther, designated Calvin as “the theologian” (Hesselink, 2004:74).

Calvin’s reputation stems from the favourable reception of his “magnum opus”, the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* which is hailed as a book that has transformed the world (Hesselink, 2004:74), with the final edition; which is five times the size of the first edition; published in 1569 (Hesselink, 2004:74). Calvin’s ultimate aim with the *Institutes* as pointed out by Calvin himself (Hesselink, 2004:74) in his preface to the final edition was:

- i. To present a summary of Christian doctrine.
- ii. To be a guide to the Scriptures.

The predominant theme of the *Institutes* is the knowledge of God and ourselves (Hesselink, 2004:77). Calvin toiled with the question of how it could be possible upon hearing the gospel that, some would accept it, while others would reject it (Hesselink, 2004:83). Calvin’s resolution to this question was that to some people the gospel remained external, thus ineffectual, while to others the external invitation to repentance and faith was accompanied by their inner calls together with the witnessing of the Holy Spirit (Hesselink, 2004:83). Calvin from this interpretation concluded that God had elected those ordained for salvation from eternity, and rejected those destined for damnation (Hesselink, 2004:83). This teaching of Calvin came to be referred to as the doctrine of “double predestination”, which was first featured in Calvin’s catechism of 1538 (Hesselink, 2004:83). What Calvin did not advocate, was a view that there existed a parallel between election and reprobation, neither did he theorize about who would qualify as elected and who was non-elected. (Hesselink, 2004:84). Calvin warns: “Let us not, seek to penetrate into heaven itself, and so fathom what God from eternity decreed for us. Such thinking can only vex us with miserable anxiety and trouble” (Calvin quoted in Hesselink, 2004:84). Calvin on the other hand, notes Hesselink (2004:84), contended for a moratorium on “fruitless speculation” and urged his audience to look unto Jesus Christ, who is the

pledge of our election and in whom we had been chosen before the foundation of the world (Eph.1:4) (Hesselink, 2004:84). Calvin when appealing to the former text, as did Augustine, employs what is regarded as one of his favourite metaphors, this being “the mirror,” applying it to Christ as regards our election (Hesselink 2004:84). Calvin (quoted in Hesselink, 2004:84) in this regard states:

If we have been chosen in him [Christ], we shall not find assurance of our election in ourselves; and not even in God the Father, if we conceive him as severed from his Son. Christ, then, is the mirror wherein we must, and without self-deception may contemplate our own election.

Hesselink (2004:80) is of the opinion that one instead of attempting to discover the “hermeneutical key” (Hesselink, 2004:80) to Calvin’s theology in a particular doctrine or common theme such as Christocentricism, one should rather pursue the route, which many German theologians have followed. This being one of seeking ways to identify features in Calvin’s theology that typifies Calvin’s thinking (Hesselink, 2004:80). Hesselink in this regard mentions Walter Kreck, who argues that the distinguishing features of Calvin’s theology are vested in Calvin’s “understanding of the motifs vesting in the Word of God” (Hesselink, 2004:80). One of these motifs to Kreck notes Hesselink (2004:83) is Calvin’s view on the Word of God as the electing and rejecting word. Whilst Kreck rejected Calvin’s teaching on double predestination, Kreck maintained that one must acknowledge that the issue of unbelief remains clouded in an incomprehensible mystery. To Calvin and his followers, the doctrine of double predestination, furthermore, did not imply fatalism (Hesselink, 2004:84). Calvin did not allow his doctrine on election to adversely influence his zeal for preaching, nor gave rise to indifference or complacency.

The doctrine of election to Calvin has both personal and corporate ethical consequences (Hesselink, 2004:84). To Calvin and particularly to the French Huguenots, the doctrine of election evoked the will and vigour to face persecution and countering all forms of tyranny (Hesselink, 2004:84; see also Conradie, 2016:3; Van der Kooi and Van den Brink, 2017:702). To the Huguenots, the doctrine of election reassured them that their salvation and their mission were rooted in God’s eternal election, and not seated in their own faith, encouraging them to witness without fear (Hesselink, 2004:84).

Contrary to views held that the Puritans regarded earthly prosperity as confirmation of being elected by God, Calvin emphatically did not equate worldly success with election (Olson, 2004:169). This is confirmed when Calvin (quoted in Olson, 2004:169) states:

It is an error which is by far common among men, to look upon those who are oppressed with afflictions as condemned and reprobate [that is damned] ... Most men, making judgments about the favour of God from an uncertain and transitory state of prosperity applaud the rich, and those upon whom, as they say, fortune smiles; so, on the other hand, they insult contemptuously the wretched and miserable, and foolishly imagine that God hates them.

Election, according to Calvin, must not be the breeding ground for chauvinism but must reflect servility (Olson, 2004:176). To brand some people as “reprobate” and designate others as “elect” is a temptation which is to engage in what can be referred to as triumphalism, denoting a “cleansing” of the political order, under the cloak of the elect, which Calvin grasped very well (Olson, 2004:176). In this study, I provide several instances which epitomize Calvin’s designation of chauvinism. Calvin, while observing God as prompting believers to engage constructively in the world, acknowledged that God is still the possessor of the encouragement construct (Olson, 2004:176).

Gerrish (2004:293) notes that Calvin entertained the notion that babies, infants, and those still being in their mothers' wombs, were tainted by original sin. Calvin however, defied the Augustinian view that unbaptized babies could not be included among the elect, thus condemned to hell (Gerrish, 2004:291). Election to Calvin has precedence over the sacrament of baptism (Gerrish, 2004:293). Calvin (quoted in Gerrish, 2004:293) states: “God declares that he adopts our babies as his own before they are born [that is, the babies of the elect, the people of the covenant]. When he promises that he will be our God and the God of our descendants.”

God can call his elect even without the traditional methods of preaching, and to Calvin, God certainly does it this way sometimes (Gerrish, 2004:291). To Calvin (Gerrish, 2004:293), it was only the doctrine of election which could secure the sovereign freedom of grace and establish the assurance of salvation. For, assurance of faith, one should according to Calvin, not pry into the hidden ordinances of God,

but look to Christ. “One gains access to the kingdom of God” through one’s faith in Christ (Calvin quoted De Greef, 2004:54). Those who are at ease with the clear promises of the gospel need to also acknowledge “that their eyes have been opened by God”, because they were elected by God to remain faithful to him, even prior to having been conceived in their mothers’ wombs (Calvin quoted in De Greef, 2004:54).

Calvin held the opinion that the antithesis of those who do, and those who do not, belong to the fellowship of redemption, here denoting that the kingdom of God, was unalterably ordained by an irrevocable foreordination of those who were elected for the kingdom, blessedness, and those who were not, damnation (Gerrish, 2004:301).

## **2.4 FRIEDRICH DANIEL ERNST SCHLEIERMACHER (1768-1843)**

Friedrich Schleiermacher is regarded by some scholars to be among the top theologians of all time, ranking him in the same league as Augustine and Calvin (Marina, 2005:1). Schleiermacher acknowledged the importance of Calvin’s doctrine on election, but reserved the right to reform it (Gerrish, 2004:301). Schleiermacher exercised great constraint in evading individualism in the understanding of Christian doctrines (De Vries & Gerrish, 2005:190). Grasping Schleiermacher’s position on election and justification necessitates a thorough understanding of God’s providence (De Vries & Gerrish, 2005:190). God’s providence is a prerequisite for His divine grace in the justification of the sinner/s and the establishing of the church (De Vries & Gerrish, 2005:190). God’s executing of His providence is of a corporate nature aimed at humanity as a whole, and to Schleiermacher, providence is not applied by God in individual portions and fragmented into a plethora of individual-related, specific occasions and supernatural interventions (De Vries & Gerrish, 2005:190). Schleiermacher distinguishes between the term “providence” and “preservation” (De Vries & Gerrish, 2005:191), choosing to use the latter instead (De Vries & Gerrish, 2005:191).

To Schleiermacher “preservation” is a concept that stems from the Christian consciousness of the “divine world-governance” (*Weltregierung*) (De Vries & Gerrish, 2005:191) through which the world is transformed into the kingdom of God (De Vries & Gerrish, 2005:191). Nature’s entire composition; with special reference to human nature; has a divinely designated objective which is the quest for the self-imparting of the deity (De Vries & Gerrish, 2005:191). Schleiermacher’s view may according to De Vries and Gerrish (2005:191-192) be captured in the following way:

Because there is no division or opposition anywhere in the divine causality and we can only regard the governance of the world as a *unity* directed towards a *single* goal, the church or the kingdom of God... is the *one* object of the divine world-governance... [W]e stray from the right path as soon as we assume that for the individual thing there is a special divine causality somehow separate from its connection with the whole.

De Vries & Gerrish (2005:192) observe that theologians who employ the term “providence” are prone to the same pitfall with their differentiation between “general”, “special” and “most special,” providence. Schleiermacher drew attention to the fact that the term “providence” (*Vorsehung*) does not feature in the prescriptive texts of the Christian religion. Schleiermacher argues that this “term” emanated from pagan writers, and was subsequently used by later Jewish writers, and was only afterwards adopted by Christian theologians. De Vries & Gerrish (2005:192) entertain that confining oneself to the terms used in scripture; here denoting “predestination, foreordination” (*Vorherbestimmung, Vorherverschung*), is more appropriate, since these terms give expression to the distinct relation which each separate component has to the connected whole, thus representing God’s “governance” (*Weltregiment*) as an innate coherent design.

Schleiermacher sees a danger in juxtaposing that which is caused by God and that which is natural (De Vries & Gerrish, 2005:192). Schleiermacher (quoted in De Vries & Gerrish, 2005:102) states:

... with the completion of our knowledge of the world [of nature] ... development of the devout self-consciousness in normal life would cease... [and] the love of religion would resist every inclination for research and any extension of our knowledge of nature.

The Christian faith must according to Schleiermacher accept in advance that God’s actions in the world are holistic, thus implying that whatever has ever existed or will

still exist in the future, is ordained and sustained by God for his objective to fulfil the divine decree of redeeming humanity in Jesus Christ (De Vries & Gerrish, 2005:196-197). To Schleiermacher it is incorrect to make a distinction between “free causes” and “natural causes,” this to imply that “free causes” are in some way less dependent on God than “natural causes” (De Vries & Gerrish, 2005:195). While Schleiermacher acknowledges that all living creatures are endowed with a degree of freedom per the distinctness of their particular beings, the freedom of human beings does not distinguish them from what is referred to as natural causes (De Vries and Gerrish, 2005:195). The extent of human freedom and all other living things allows action concerning their particular kind of being (De Vries & Gerrish, 2005:195). This relative freedom is to Schleiermacher not a contradiction of their absolute dependence, whether human or “non-human” (other living creatures), (De Vries & Gerrish, 2005:195). The question is posed by De Vries & Gerrish (2005:192), whether Schleiermacher’s reinterpretation of the doctrines of justification and the predestination of the elect, hold significant implications? Rather than positing the two latter beliefs on the individual, Schleiermacher contends that the exercising of these beliefs is executed within the whole since the divine activity is an operation that works “naturally” in conjunction with the law-governed course of nature (De Vries & Gerrish, 2005:197).

Whilst not disregarding conversion, here referring to human beings born and baptized in the church, Schleiermacher argues that salvific experiences do not in every instance need to be a dramatic chronological (day and date) experience (DeVries & Gerrish, 2005:198). A specific chronological date on which some humans rejected the gospel is by Schleiermacher attributed to God’s divine governance, which in effect only implied that their time had not yet dawned (De Vries & Gerrish, 2005:204).

Schleiermacher defines justification as being absorbed into a communion of “life-giving” (*Leben gemeinschaft*) with Christ, this being tantamount to a person’s relation to God being radicalized - the converted individual undergoes changes in human behaviour (De Vries & Gerrish, 2005:200). What justification to Schleiermacher does not imply, is the averting of God’s wrath or punishment from a sinner in particular, and the belief that God through a legal fiction pronounces the

unrighteous righteous (De Vries & Gerrish, 2005:201). A God who revels in executing wrath and divine punishment is to Schleiermacher akin to a primitive perception of the deity being an irritable being who is susceptible to feeling insulted (De Vries & Gerrish, 2005:201). Schleiermacher is of the opinion that election implied that at some stage, each nation will convert to the Christian faith, with every citizen being vested with the “predestination to blessedness” (De Vries & Gerrish, 2005:203). God assays each human being as elected in Christ exclusively (De Vries & Gerrish, 2005:203). Schleiermacher rejected election as denoting exclusivity. Whilst acknowledging that divisions were prevalent in humanity, Schleiermacher assigns a decree of temporality between the “elect” and the “not yet elect” (De Vries & Gerrish, 2005:204). Schleiermacher as quoted in De Vries and Gerrish (2005:204) states a “vanishing contrast” between the regenerate – the “elect”, who have been picked out of the world – and the “not yet” regenerate.

Schleiermacher’s interpretation of election has the potential to engender increasing approval since Schleiermacher rescued the teaching of election from the dualism in which Calvin’s dogma of “double predestination” had always been brandished. A potential pitfall in Schleiermacher’s “vanishing contrast” between the regenerate and those who are unregenerate, exposes his doctrine on election to universal salvation, with the hope of a second opportunity after death (De Vries & Gerrish, 2005:204).

## **2.5 SØREN KIERKEGAARD (1813-1855)**

Søren Kierkegaard would not generally be included as one of the pioneers of the exposition of the doctrine of divine election. I, however, specifically opted to include Kierkegaard’s exposition with particular reference to his exercising of restraint as regards the positing of divine election within the merit of human beings’ claims of qualifying for it.

Kierkegaard according to Jackson (1997:235), displays careful prudence as regards the matter of divine election. Kierkegaard’s concern is how to balance the contingency and unreliability of human decisions and choices with the indispensability and trustworthiness of divine providence (Jackson, 1998:235).

Kierkegaard chooses not to deal with these issues in an abstract or isolated manner (Jackson, 1998:235). In his *Journals and Papers*, Kierkegaard warns against human subjectivity, saying that human beings are thoroughly instructed that no one can receive salvation through good deeds, but by grace through faith (Jackson, 1998:236). Kierkegaard emphasizes that the human being does not have the capacity to become a believer through him/herself (Jackson, 1998:236). Kierkegaard reasoned that this inability of the human being to become a believer through his/her own merit must be rejected with an unconditional “no” because human beings are subjected to the notion of a fatalistic election by grace or the provision of a “little concession” must be allowed for (Jackson, 1998:236). The human being is to Kierkegaard naturally subjective and is therefore suspect (Jackson, 1998:236).

Salvation being conferred through the faith of the human being gives rise to Kierkegaard to an immediate suspicion of too much having been conceded (Jackson, 1998:236). This necessitates an addition, yet, faith cannot be acquired by the human being through himself. It is given by God as a gift through prayer (Jackson, 1998:236). Kierkegaard subsequently detects a dilemma, namely whether one may argue that a human being, him/herself should pray, or whether even praying for faith is a gift from God, which the human being cannot earn through him/herself, but has to be granted as a gift (Jackson, 1998:236). To Kierkegaard, this poses a further dilemma which is that the human being has to be given the right to pray for faith legitimately (Jackson, 1998:236). It would then appear that to Kierkegaard human beings are “absolutely dependent” on God, but simultaneously, “equally accountable” to God (Jackson, 1998:236).

According to Jackson (1998:238), Kierkegaard rejects what Jackson refers to as “all narrow doctrines of election”. These include metaphysical types staking claims of their being compatibility between determinism and free will:

In terms of the universality of a human being’s accessing of religion, Kierkegaard is uncompromising when Kierkegaard in Jackson (1998:239) states: “I cannot abandon the thought that every man, however simple he is, however much he may suffer, can nevertheless grasp the highest, namely religion. I cannot forget that. If that is not so, then Christianity is real nonsense.

It would appear that Kierkegaard's view on salvation is exclusively one of applying to human beings as individuals, thus not corporately. Kierkegaard (Jackson, 1998:240) in "One who prays aright" in this regard states:

No human being can give an eternal resolution to another or take it from him. One human being cannot be indebted to another.

Employing the pseudonym Climacus, Kierkegaard attests to the view above when he in *Philosophical Fragments* states:

... one human being, in so far as he is a believer, owes nothing to another but everything to the God.

Kierkegaard's approach concerning the issue of individualism is further featured in his interpretation of salvation. Kierkegaard frequently seems to reflect that a human being in ethical-religious matters is not indebted to any other human being at all (Jackson, 1998:242). Despite being a Lutheran, Kierkegaard rejects the concept of 'inherited guilt', since to him, it does not explain (Jackson, 1998:250). Any form of a predestinated grace or condemnation, which would require agents, thereby denying the freedom of choice, is regarded by Kierkegaard as "a thoroughgoing abortion" (Jackson, 1998:250). Kierkegaard acknowledges the possibility of a devout believer straying from virtue, thereby making a "leap" from sin opposing the grace of God (Jackson, 1998:250). Kierkegaard (quoted in Jackson, 1998:240) prescribes such a transgression as follows:

The most tremendous thing conceded to man is – choice, freedom. If you want to rescue and keep it, there is only one way – in the very same second unconditionally in full attachment, give it back to God and yourself along with it. If the sight of what is conceded to you tempts you, if you surrender to the temptation and look with selfish craving at freedom of choice, then you lose your [true] freedom. And your punishment then is to go around in a kind of confusion and brag about having – freedom of choice.

To Kierkegaard, true freedom in noble terms is to individualize "*Libertas*" (Jackson, 1998:252) when a voluntary "yes" to grace is manifested through a passionate leap, a "yes" to a gifted reality, that, if viewed objectively, would seem paradoxical (Jackson, 1998:252). Kierkegaard concedes that impulsive lusts and desires are misplaceable and are mistakenly pathetic, and dominated choices (Jackson, 1998:252). Faith, however, to Kierkegaard is "beyond reason" (*supra rationem*),

instead of being in “opposition to reason” (*contra rationem*) (Jackson, 1998:252). Kierkegaard’s objective is that the human being has universal access to matters supreme together with the peculiarity of having individual faith before God (Jackson, 1998:252) and that the individual is accountable to God who is Love and is the vessel for God’s gracious up building (Jackson, 1998:252). Humans must exercise “freedom of choice” (*liberum arbitrium*) and “genuine personal freedom” (Jackson, 1998:252).

## **2.6 KARL BARTH (1886-1968)**

Barth was driven by a motivation to rework the biblical and historical grounds for dogmatics (Webster, 2000:6). Barth’s leadership role in German church life was weakened due to him having been dismissed as a lecturer, resulting in him returning to Switzerland in 1935 (Webster 2000:6). He was to lecture at Basel for the rest of his life. His primary vocation at the academic institution was the compilation of his *Church Dogmatics* (Webster, 2000:6). He was inspired to reconstruct certain crucial aspects of Reformed teaching of which his interpretation of election is a classic example (Webster, 2000:7). It was during this time when the traditional doctrine of election, as indicated above, had become a *cul-de-sac*, that Barth, deployed a different approach in Reformed theology (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:706). To Barth, Jesus Christ’s message was a joyful one that conflicted with the chronic uncertainty reflected in the “classic interpretations of the gospel” (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:706). To Barth, the only true God is the one who engaged in history in Jesus Christ, becoming flesh and thus assumed human flesh and blood (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:706). There is no knowledge of God other than this one, and this is stated emphatically by Paul, when he, in his epistle to the Galatians states: “if anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed” (RSV Gal 1:8,9), (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:707).

To McCormack (2007:93) Barth caused a major shake-up in the traditional Reform interpretation of election. Barth substituted Calvin’s interpretation of “double predestination with universal election” (McCormack, 2007:93). Barth’s contention

for universal election constitutes the foremost consequence of Barth's teaching on this topic, and would for those who were reared on Reformed teaching remain a primary focus in this regard (McCormack, 2007:93). For Barth, Jesus Christ is both the Subject and the Object of election (McCormack, 2007:93). Christ is the electing God and the elect human (McCormack, 2007:93). Barth's teaching of Jesus Christ posited as the "Subject of election" enjoys no direct substance in the New Testament (McCormack, 2007:94). The manner in which Reformed theologians have through the ages perceived the election of Jesus Christ was that he, Jesus Christ, was to be the Mediator between God and human beings featuring as the "foundation" (2007:94) of others who were to be elected (2007:94). This view implied a considerable rectification of the traditional Reformed doctrine of predestination, this being the decree that some human beings were elected, and others rejected, also commonly referred to as elected and being regarded as reprobate, preceding the decree to confer election through the provision of a *mediator*, here denoting Jesus Christ (McCormack, 2007:97).

If this view is upheld, to Barth it leaves us none the wiser of who the *logos* are in and for himself (McCormack, 2007:97). Upholding such a view raises the question of whether the affirmation of Jesus Christ as Mediator is simply accidentally related to what he, as Logos is, in and for himself (McCormack 2007:97)? Would Jesus Christ then be "fully God" or not (McCormack, 2007:97)? For Barth, the electing God is not an unknown entity (McCormack, 2007:97). On the contrary, God is a God whose essential being vesting in eternity, is defined, determined, through what He, who is a loving and merciful God, who in Jesus Christ, reveals himself to the entire human race, is (McCormack, 2007:97-98). To Barth (McCormack, 2007:99), the essence in God is manifested through his electing act. God's being is according to Barth, a being-in-act, constituted of a preceding being-in-act eternally, and then a being-in-act in time (McCormack, 2007:99). As Barth (quoted in Webster, 2000:11) himself declared: "I am a child of the nineteenth century" and Barth engaged with his nineteenth-century heritage through occupying himself with the mystery of God's relation to humanity (Webster, 2000:11).

In his early writings, Barth expressed this preoccupation with the relation of God to humanity, through serious attempts at finding a satisfactory answer to the question:

“How is God for us?” (Webster, 2000:11). As Barth’s thinking developed and matured, he became increasingly convinced that an answer to the question of God’s relation to humanity, could only be addressed satisfactorily through the reality of God’s presence in Jesus Christ (Webster, 2000:11,12). Schwöbel (2000:19) points out that to Barth, for theology to remain true to Jesus’ message of the kingdom, instead of meditating on the standpoint of the human being’s thinking towards God, it must engage in the task of thinking from God towards the world. God says Barth, is only known by God (Schwöbel, 2000:25). For human beings to know God, they must turn to the point where God reveals his knowledge through self-revelation (Schwöbel, 2000:25). Sin estranged human beings from God, thereby preventing us from discovering God other than where he wants to be found, this being through the gracious address of the Word of God (Schwöbel, 2000:27). Barth (Schwöbel, 2000:27) notes that theology, which reveres the gross impossibility of creating a synthesis between truth and reality, realism and idealism, is compelled to speak of predestination. To Barth (Schwöbel, 2000:27), God’s grace must be the preeminent item on the theological agenda. This, says Barth (Schwöbel 2000:27), does not imply a beginning where a distinction is made between the elect and the reprobate, but rather to commence where Christ commenced in the manger.

For theology to be an authentic theology of the Word, of the election, and faith, it needs to be Christology fully and truly (Schwöbel, 2000:27). While Barth acknowledges the triune being of God, God in his Word, remains the condition to know God, being conditional only in the actuality or reality of God in Jesus Christ, thus constituting the concrete universal from which all theologies must start (Schwöbel, 2000:32).

Barth’s doctrine of election is regarded by scholars, such as McCormack (2007:92) as the most profound contribution to the development of church doctrine. McCormack (2007:92) in this regard states:

When the history of theology in the twentieth century is written from the advantage point of, let us say, one hundred years from now, I am confident that the greatest contribution of Karl Barth to the development of church doctrine will be located in his doctrine of election.

Barth's accomplishment with the doctrine of election established a hermeneutical principle that would enable the church to speak with authority about what God was doing, and what and who God was/is, "before the foundation of the world", this without being speculative (McCormack, 2007:92). The question "to whom does election apply", or who its intended beneficiaries are, is secondary for Barth (McCormack, 2007:93). What is paramount to Barth is who the God is who elects and what knowledge of this God informs us about the nature of election (McCormack, 2007:93). God, through his covenantal relation established through his eternal act of self-determination, is one of a relation with the human Jesus only, and with others "in Him" (McCormack, 2007:105). God's covenant of grace signifies a history of encounters between God and a people chosen by him. This history culminates in the relation which Jesus of Nazareth, herein representing the relation which all human beings have with God (McCormack, 2007:105). God's rule as revealed in Jesus Christ, does not resemble a Self-seeking, but rather a Self-giving to the creature (McCormack, 2007:105). Jesus' election as the election of humanity existing in union with the Logos, is an election of a sharing in the suffering of both the wrath and the judgment, which God had ordained eternally for himself in order for human beings to be redeemed (McCormack, 2007:105). In saying that Jesus of Nazareth was subjected to God's wrath and judgment is correct, yet does not reflect the whole truth (McCormack, 2007:105). Jesus through free obedience, subjected himself to his Father's will (McCormack, 2007:105). This is aptly defined when Barth (quoted in McCormack, 2007:105-106) states:

The man Jesus is not a mere puppet moved this way and that way by God. He is not a mere reed used by God as the instrument of His Word. The man Jesus prays. He speaks and acts. And as He does so He makes an unheard-of claim which makes Him appear delusional and finally brings down upon Him the charge of blasphemy. He thinks of Himself as the Messiah, the Son of God. He allows Himself to be called *Kyrios*, and, in fact, conducts himself as such. He speaks of His suffering, not as a necessity laid upon Him from without, but as something He Himself wills.

Humanity's covenantal relationship with God is an exaltation of the human being. That portion willed and chosen by God is ordination to blessedness consisting of the free attestation of God's overflowing glory wherein the human being is afforded a share (McCormack, 2007:107). Jesus Christ embodies the royal human being through whom God's realization of what He has ordained for all, was affected

(McCormack, 2007:107). An analogy of being exists between God's eternal divine act of "Self-determination" and the "being, divine and human" which is constituted in each human being (McCormack 2007:109). The human being through the act of faith and obedience in response to the covenant of grace responds to the being of the gracious God (McCormack 2007:109). Human beings are conferred with an indelible determination through God's eternal election in Jesus Christ, which always is preeminent through God over the enactment of their lives. Furthermore, there is no abstract being who is innate to the human being. In addition, human beings, according to Barth (McCormack 2007:164), are not neutral, mystical "essence" becoming conscious of themselves in radical questionability. Human beings, on the contrary, are summoned by God to execute their existence as God's partner (McCormack, 2007:164). Barth notes that a human being is summoned to answer with its own human "Yes", this being the "Yes," which God has spoken and speaks again to the human being (McCormack, 2007:164). Freedom for Barth does not designate freedom to sin (McCormack, 2007:164). According to Barth, this does not imply that God has arbitrarily imposed it upon the human being to make the correct choice, for this would simply make the human being God's puppet (McCormack, 2007:164). Should the human being decide to make a false choice, here denoting the rejecting of the electing God, he or she destroys the freedom bestowed on him or her by God (McCormack, 2007:164). God's counteract to the human being's disobedience, which is called by Barth an "impossible possibility". From the very beginning, God had decided to intervene and fulfil this "impossible possibility" through the life and death of the man Jesus (McCormack, 2007:165). Thus, God has ascribed to Himself reprobation, condemnation and death (McCormack, 2007:165). This is aptly captured when Barth (quoted in McCormack, 2007:166) avers:

In the absurd way which in all that is possible this connection, man is [not] able [to be] absolutely and ontologically godless. It's terrible enough that he can and actually become relatively godless. But he cannot really escape God. His godlessness ... cannot make God a "manless" God ... Man has not fallen lower than the depth to which God humbled himself for him in Jesus Christ. But God in Jesus Christ did not become devil or nothingness.

What in my opinion captures the essence of Barth's teaching on election is a citation in which Barth (quoted in McCormack, 2007:88) explains:

The election of grace is the eternal beginning of all the ways and works of God in Jesus Christ. In Jesus Christ God in His free grace determines Himself for sinful man and sinful man for Himself. He, therefore, takes upon Himself the rejection of man with all its consequences and elects man to participation in His own glory.

Heinrich Emil Brunner says McCormack (2007:92) had no problem with Barth's attempt to position the "noetic ground of election" in the revelation which materialized in Jesus Christ and was even happier with Barth's rectifying of Calvin's teaching through Jesus Christ being the "eternal ontic ground of election" (McCormack, 2007:92). Brunner argued that to position Jesus Christ as Barth did, the subject of election was tantamount to locating the eternal pre-existence of Christ as the God-human to such an extent that it rendered the incarnation redundant as a historical event (De Vries & Gerrish, 2005:191; McCormack, 2007:92).

Throughout the history of theologizing on the subject of Jesus Christ's election as the mediator between God and human beings, Jesus Christ's election served as the tenet for the election of others (McCormack, 2007:94). McCormack (2007:94) contends that Barth's view of Jesus Christ, the God in the flesh through this divine-human unity presented as the subject of election, is a conviction that enjoys no New Testament substantiation (McCormack, 2007:94). In the history of theology, the technical term "extra Calvinisticum" was construed to designate the adoption by Reformed theologians that after the "hypostatic union of the Logos with a human nature" in Mary, the virgin mother's womb (McCormack, 2007:95), the Logos still inhabited the heaven and earth, but in the capacity of the "Logos asarkos" this implying that Christ's human nature need not be omnipresent, and is also referred to as the "Logos asarkos" (McCormack, 2007:95). This view was opposed by the Lutheran polemics, since to them, it resembled a "fatal Nestorian separation of the two natures in Christ" (McCormack, 2007:95). The Nestorians argued that for the hypostatic union to be of any consequence, it would imply that the Logos would not be able to be omnipresent void of Christ's assumed human nature (McCormack, 2007:95). Barth's issue with Calvin's view on the "*Logos asarkos*" is that it would imply to Barth the existence of a "*Logos asarkos*" who existed and functioned independently of God's presence and action as incarnate Word (McCormack, 2007:96). Calvin thus advocated a "*Logos asarkos*" constituting a being who was

independent of the existence/being of Christ the Redeemer/Logos (McCormack, 2007:98). McCormack (2007:98) notes that Calvin's view on the "*Logos asarkos*" by implication implies that divine "essence" is completely void, hidden and unknowable to the perception of human beings.

Barth is widely regarded to support the notion that it is Christ that was elected and that in Christ, the whole of humanity is included. Barth's positing of the salvation of all humans having been affected in Jesus Christ exclusively, has since Barth's formulation in this regard been a bone of contention. Whilst from the Göttingen stage of his theology, Barth (1991:475) made it explicitly clear that "election and not rejection is the goal of the ways of God . . . is the most that we can say...the idea of apokatastasis, of the elimination of rejection, cannot derive from knowledge of God."

The doctrine/heresy of the apokatastasis pantom; all will be saved; is attributed to Origin. The unanswered question to date is whether Barth built on Origin? Berkouwer (1956:290) in *The Triumph of grace in the theology of Karl Barth* 1956, in terms of universalism, suggests that Barth was at a cross-road. Berkouwer comments:

At this point, Barth stands at a cross-roads in his thinking. He can move to the right or to the left, not in terms of the demands of a logical system, but in terms of centrally religious considerations. The one way that is open is that of the apokatastasis in which the reality of the divine decision which has been taken is without qualification declared to be identical with universality of reconciliation. The other way is that of renewed reflection on the seriousness of the human decision which, according to the overwhelming testimony of Scripture, is associated with the kerugma that goes out to the world. Up to now [1956], Barth has rejected the first possibility. To accept the apokatastasis would, in his view, make the existential seriousness of God's decision turn election into a self-evident matter and prejudice man's subjection to election as grace. Barth has not entered the second way either. He has indeed impressively shown the relationship of faith to salvation but, on the score of unbelief, his conception makes him oppose sharply the idea that it is a "possibility". So long as Barth declines to accept either alternative, however, he must remain standing at the crossroads. This standstill characterizes the present situation in his theology on the score of the universality of the triumph.

## 2.7 CONTEMPORARY TEXTBOOKS ON DIVINE ELECTION

Daniel L. Migliore (2014:88) proffers a serious critique of the common understanding of God's predestination or election. His criticism is based on the definition of predestination as featured in the Westminster Confession, where it states that "some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death" (Migliore, 2014:88). Migliore's (2014:88) response to the above definition is that such a doctrine of election seems to make God an arbitrary tyrant and enemy of human freedom. The result of this teaching as Migliore (2014:88) argues, appears to be virtually indistinguishable from fatalism. "Far from good news, the doctrine that from eternity God has decreed some to salvation and others to damnation" is "dreadful" as Calvin himself described it (Migliore, 2014:88). To Migliore (2014:89-90), God's electing graces' objective is to pave the way for human beings to enjoy the blessings and responsibilities of life in a community, which God has made new. Election is thus an expression of God's will through the bringing into existence a community that obeys and glorifies Him. Whereas, according to the Old Testament, the people of Israel are the beneficiaries of election (Leviticus 26:12), the object of election in the New Testament is Jesus Christ, and all those who are in union with him. In Jesus Christ, God wills a new humanity in which individuals and entire peoples would be liberated from a preoccupation with themselves, for a thankful service to God and in solidarity with others. The elected human being is a fulfilment of God's purpose for humanity (Migliore, 2014:89-90).

Alister McGrath (2005:160) observed a re-emergence of scholarly interest in the significance of election and justification by faith in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but that many of the discussions linked to the earlier analyses of individuals such as Calvin and Augustine. McGrath (2005:160) maintains that Augustine declined to conclude in the context of the doctrine of predestination, that "God predestined some to eternal life, and others to damnation," or the related conclusion that Christ died only for the elect. There was considerable confusion about the concepts of "predestination" and "determinism", which was the cause of a loss of interest in the concept of 'divine predestination'. In part, Augustine is responsible for the concept of God's limitless

control over the imparting of salvation. It is Augustine's stance on election and predestination that posited the belief that the temporal election of humanity is the consequence of God's (eternal) election or predestination (McGrath 2005:17,159).

God's saving work must never be restricted to human preaching, as if the Holy Spirit was silent or inactive in God's world, or as if the actualization of God's saving purposes depended totally on human agencies (McGrath 1995:178-179).

Willie Jonker's work on divine election is in my view aptly captured by the publisher's ("*N.G. Kerkboekhandel*, Pretoria, 1989") synopsis on the back-cover page of the publication; which reads:

The confession of election is the heart of the church since it is the heart of the gospel. Denial or neglect thereof invariably leads to a disregard of the grace character of salvation. The confession of election in the Bible is a matter of joy and praise. The theological handling thereof has however caused the grasping of it to become a problem to many members of the congregation. It, rather than being experienced as a source of consistency and assurance has become a source of uncertainty. In preaching and ministry, it is often preferably not mentioned (my translation).

An outstanding feature of the biblical doctrine of election notes Jonker (1989:81-83), is its inextricable bond with the doctrine of the covenant. God does not operate in an individualistic manner in terms of his election. From its inception, election in Christ is communal in nature (Jonker, 1989:81-83). God's undeserved and gracious decree of, and condescension to, sinners is actualised in the mode of election with regard to: the covenant; a calling to the covenant being; and participation in the blessings of the covenant (Jonker, 1989:81-83). Election and the covenant are words of grace. No one is able to consider the Bible seriously without taking cognisance that election and the covenant occupy a decisive role in both the Old Testament and New Testament preaching (Jonker, 1989:81-83). In the Old Testament, everything revolves around Abraham and his descendants, the people of Israel, and the covenant, which God established with them, whereas, in the New Testament, it appears that Christ is the elected Saviour through the descendants of David, who elected the Church for eternal life (Jonker, 1989:81-83). In this regard, Jonker (1989:13,14) refers to Paul who pronounces that Christians, through their election by Christ, share in the covenant which God made with Abraham and his descendants (Rom.11,

Gal.3). Jonker (1989:115) regards the entire message of the Bible as nothing less than a message of election. This unfolds through God who, since the first narratives, drew a distinction between people of whom some were chosen for a special calling. These elected people included, amongst others, Noah, Abraham, the nation Israel, John the Baptist, Mary, Jesus, Paul and the church (Jonker, 1989:115).

In the same way, distinctions were made regarding the descendants of Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Ismael, and Jacob and Esau (Jonker, 1989:115). Since the earliest accounts of people, God assigned a distinct vocation to some (Jonker, 1989:115). Israel is chosen as God's elected people to whom the spreading of God's Name on earth was assigned (Jonker, 1989:115). David's lineage was distinctly elected as the tribe from which the Servant of the Lord would be born to bring peace to humanity (Jonker, 1989:115). At the fullness of time, there was only a single Jesus who was appointed as the mediator between God and human beings (Jonker, 1989:115). These cases of election serve as an indication for a particular service that needs to be executed for the sake of His kingdom in the name of God (Jonker, 1989:116). The Bible is outspoken on eternal election, yet no reference to an eternal rejection is mentioned (Jonker, 1989:142). The Bible is clear that God elects the worthless, the sinful, the human being who exhibits no merit, through his mere pleasing, even in the case where a human being exhibits no sign of earning God's love (Jonker, 1989:144).

Whilst not denying the reality of rejection, Jonker designates it as accidental and regards it as never having been the intended consequence of the gospel of God's grace. Jonker (1998:116) warns that election does not denote that the good are elected, and the bad rejected. Everybody is equally condemnable, but God in His freedom elects whom He wills and whom He passes by (Jonker, 1989:116). Election revolves around the revelation of the unmerited and surprising favour of God in His association with guilty and sinful people. The surprising and unmerited favour of God is evident in his chosen grace to the publicans, sinners, the ungodly, prostitutes, people of ill or no repute so that no-one will have anything to boast about (Jonker, 1989:116). Election can never be interpreted as a doctrine that makes the mission of the church redundant, based on a view that those who are elected will be saved regardless. One cannot simply regard those to whom God's Word had not yet come,

as the rejected ones since that would impair the vigour of the mission. We are called to proclaim to them the gospel of God in Christ. The billions that have died without having heard the gospel must be left in the hands of God. Being included in the Book of Life is exclusively dependent on the favour and grace of God, this election is eternally vested in God's eternal and immutable faithfulness (Jonker, 1989:168-169).

According to Jonker (1989:168), conscious faith is not a prerequisite for election and in a Calvinistic manner in support of his view, he mentions infants who pass away whilst being in the covenantal pool before they had developed any cognitive abilities. The multitudes who have died without having been exposed to Christ's gospel must be left in the hands of God's freedom and power who embodies the ability to save people in extraordinary ways (Jonker, 1989:168). Whilst God's grace is inclusive, here denoting all human beings, and that humans should live by grace alone, the reality of election indicates that only some human beings respond to being transformed by God's grace, whilst others alienate themselves from the grace of God, both through their stubborn self-righteousness and through their reliance on good works (Romans 9-11) (Jonker, 1989:118). For Jonker (1989:129), election, having materialized in Christ, means that there is no room for a hidden post-Christ election decision. This would assign to Christ more than just being the "mirror" or chief source of election. Christ is the Head, the Capstone of our election since our election resides in his election (Jonker, 1989:129). This makes the election of those in Christ eradicable (Jonker, 1989:129).

Kees van der Kooi & Gijsbert van den Brink (2017:701) note that "election" is a term used in theology and even though it is confounding and controversial amongst sanctification and justification, it is a crucial topic of theological reflection (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:701). Perseverance in the Christian faith is grounded in God having chosen us (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:701). Election is vested in the centre of the doctrine of God. God's act of election is the "headstone" (capstone) of the "ordo salutis" (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, (2017:701). Importantly, Van der Kooi & Van den Brink acknowledge that the latter designation ("capstone") is not original to them, but that they are pursuing an "ample precedent" (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:701). This is affirmative, regardless of

whether one had commenced with the classic “double” type of predestination, denoting the eternal decree of “election” of certain individuals together with the equivalent of eternal rejection “*reprobatio*” of other individuals (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:701). This affirmation even applies in the case where one has commenced with its Christological variant, where Christ is positioned as the One having been rejected, and the human race having been elected, as subscribed to by Barth (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:701). Van der Kooi & Van den Brink note that election is commonly most closely associated with Reformed Protestantism. Its early followers were exposed to severe persecutions because of their faith, ignorance about life’s conditions and the exorbitant mortality of new-born babies. Their source of comfort was the knowledge that despite these severe hardships, God had chosen them and therefore no circumstance or human beings were able to snatch them from God’s hands (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:702). The assurance of having been elected by God reinforced their persisting in the faith (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:702; see also Oberman 2003:147, 156-65; De Vries & Gerrish 2005:191).

Van der Kooi & Van den Brink (2017:702) note that Augustine entertained the opinion that a human being does not possess the morality to liberate him/herself from sin, and that deliverance from it was only possible through the intervention of God’s grace. This crucial, virtually indefinite issue appertains to those human beings who have not found God. Was this tantamount to a human being declining or resisting, God’s grace? To Augustine, human beings’ resistance may have been attributable to God’s imparting his irresistible grace to some human beings and not to others. However, he refrained from further probing into this issue (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:703).

With regard to Calvin's teaching on predestination, Van der Kooi & Van den Brink (2017:703) note that Calvin is said to have “introduced absolutely nothing new”. Therefore, it hardly justifies the designation of predestination as the “unique selling point” (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2007:703) of Calvinism, as has frequently been asserted since the nineteenth century (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:703). It could very well be that such an acclamation or reputation was not attributable to Calvin, but to the Canons of Dort which were compiled at the Synod

in Dort in 1618-1619 (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:704). Whilst discerning a compassionate pastoral spirit in Calvin's position, it to Van der Kooi & Van den Brink (2017:704) also reflects a harsh aprioristic tendency when Calvin writes that an election also presupposes a rejection. Election as formulated in the Canons of Dort is a counter to what Arminius referred to as a "predestination of attributes" (God elects those people who have the attribute of faith) (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:704). This would then imply that God's resolution to elect humans is subsequent "below", "further on" "infra", derived from "infralapsarian" (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:704), and God's resolution to permit the "fall" (lapsus) (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:704). In real terms, it would then mean that God originally decided to create free human beings who possessed the capacity to sin (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:704). Through his foreknowledge God then knowing that they would indeed commit sin, decided to save certain human beings from a particular eternal death (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:704). God then in accordance with His righteous judgement, "abandons" (leaves) other human beings in their error (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink 2017:704).

This construct was in opposition to that of the supralapsarians who advocated that God's decision of election preceded "was prior", "above" "supra" to when God decided to create the world and condescend to the fall (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:704). Prominent historical supralapsarians are Theodore Beza, William Perkins and Franciscus Gomarus (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:704).

The teaching on predestination in the course of time found its way into a "collective Reformed consciousness" (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:705) with devastating consequences, such as "spiritual apathy, indifference, despair and resistance" (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:705). A persistent conflict prevailed between what was called the "Remonstrants and Contra-Remonstrants" (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:705). This evoked the view that predestination occupied the focal point of Christian theology (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:705). The manner in which the doctrine of election was dealt with resulted in unfortunate vestiges in the Reformed expression of the Christian faith (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:705). If, in the final analysis, election is tantamount to our

salvation having been pre-determined by God's decree, how would one then acquire any "assurance of salvation" (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:705)?

Jesus' coming to save human beings is not an additional aspect that "also" occurred, as an "extra" facet of his identity, but to establish who He truly is (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:706). It is only when this view is abided by that human beings would have no need to fear (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:706).

Van der Kooi and Van den Brink's (2017:708) paramount objection to Barth's doctrine of election is the elimination of the human being's choice. This is because the human being's response to God's gift of salvation is then "absorbed into an all-determining choice by God for us" (Van der Kooi and Van den Brink, 2017:708). Contrary to Barth's contention of the doctrine of election needing to feature as the first word in the doctrine of God, human beings, here denoting believers are the mere "recipients of salvation" (Van der Kooi & Van den Brink, 2017:708).

## **2.8 CONCLUSION**

This brief history offers a survey of the points of division on the notion of divine election. It also indicates where things can and have gone wrong. Van der Kooi and Van den Brink's conclusion on the positioning and application of the doctrine of election, and here, with particular reference to Van der Kooi and Van den Brink's (2017:708) profound heeding that "We (this pronoun to me denoting the entire human race) are not in the central control room" regardless of who we are and from which ethnicity we stem, is to me paramount for an objective assessment together with heeding a warning regarding the claims to the "notion" of exclusivist claims to be God's chosen people (ECGCP), referred to in this study.

The next chapter serves as an example of what I deem the extreme notions of how divine election (ECGCP), exclusive claims of being God's chosen people, were and are employed in an exclusivist nationalism context.

# **CLAIMS OF GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE – COUNTRIES, MOVEMENTS AND DENOMINATIONS**

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## **CHAPTER**

# **3**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, I explore and discuss some human and nationalistic phenomena, whether politically, ideologically, or geographically positioned, which historically have been claimed by certain people, or who are currently still claiming some form of divine chosenness or divine election. The idea of divine chosenness as advocated by these various entities is as was described briefly in the previous chapter, not only a contemporary phenomenon. A case in point is the British-Israel Movement which holds the belief that the people of Britain are God's chosen race, and that the returning of the British and the Jews in exile so to speak, would signal the Second Coming (Simpson, 2002:1).

### **3.2 BRITISH ISRAELISM**

Josef Altholz defines British-Israel as a conglomerate of British nationalism, boosted by biblical references featuring “all the attributes of a religious movement, except religion” (Altholz, 1989:130). The constitution of the British-Israel movement was that Great Britain (UK) was the homeland of at least one, but probably of the entire ten lost tribes of Israel (Simpson, 2002:2). This implied that its inhabitants were God's chosen people, “rooting British-Israel in the Christian concept and placing monarchic authority in the House of David” (Simpson, 2002:2). British-Israelism served as the theological substantiation for the British Empire through the concept of “Birthright”, which was based on the premise of the prophecy that Abraham's descendants would be “an invincible great nation, numerous as the dust of the earth,” comprising multiple nations residing on an island that would rule the earth (Simpson, 2002:2). The apostasy of the ten tribes of Israel through their practising of idolatry

and their subsequent banishment to the wilderness, as God's punishment, served as the driving force for "British-Israel," here denoting the ten lost tribes, to follow them to the British Isles (Howlett, 1892:131).

British-Israelism is also referred to as B.I., Anglo-Israelism, and "The identity" (Richmann, 2015:2). The movement's founding principle is that the Anglo-Saxon peoples biologically stem directly from the offspring of the ten lost tribes of Israel (Richmann, 2015:2). These are the tribes who remained in Assyrian exile in the eighth century BC (Richmann, 2015:2). The "vanishing" of these ten tribes has been a source of frustration and concern to biblical scholars and archaeologists for centuries. From the mid-1930s up to the late 1940s, a small unofficial group of British authors and scholars announced that they had unravelled this ancient mystery (Richmann, 2015:2). When Jerusalem was conquered by the British on 9 December 1917, Max Nordau, who had co-founded the Zionist Movement in 1897, made an interesting confession during an interview with the *Evening Standard* in 1921. In an essay by Simpson (2002:1) as quoted by Nordau reveals: "We thought that the Messiah would be an individual, but I feel now as if it were a collective entity, and that its name might be the British Nation."

A literal interpretation of the Old Testament and a subjective assessment of the legendary history underpinned the conviction that the British were the direct descendants of the Davidic lineage, which originated through the tribe of Judah (Simpson, 2002:1). Apparent confirmation is found with reference to Gen. 22:17 for parallels between Israel's promises and the current blessings upon the Anglo-Saxon peoples, from which the British Israelites deduce that the descendants of Abraham must clearly gain supremacy over their enemies (Nettelhorst, 1979:1). British Israelites suggest that Gen. 28:13-14 indicates that Israel will spread worldwide (Nettelhorst, 1979:1). For the British-Israelites, Micah (4:7) predicts that Israel will become a powerful nation and Isaiah (24:15) according to the teachings of British Israelism, forecasts that Israel will be an island or coastal people (Nettelhorst, 1979:1).

In his published lectures on *Our Israelitish origin* (1840) concerning the British being God's "chosen people," John Wilson (1840) claims to have gathered as much

supporting data as was then available from the existent linguistic, archaeological, and historical sources, (Wilson, 1840:1). His book was circulated throughout the English-speaking world and received support from various Protestant bodies. The spiritual consequences that this implied was that both the British Empire and the Church of England “were modern manifestations of the Kingdom of God, justifying the British as God’s chosen people’s, rule of the earth” (Simpson, 2002:2). John Wilson’s teachings and his subsequent publication of *Our Israelitish origin* (1840) initiated the beginning and were the main stimulation of the British Israelite thought (Richmann, 2015:2). British Israelite discoveries became widely known, generating ardent apologists for their theories in America and England at the turn of the nineteenth century (Richmann, 2015:2).

According to Frank Sandford, a former minister of the Free Baptist Church in the US in 1890, and who became an adherent of British Israelism in 1895 (Richmann, 2015:3), the Anglo-Saxon peoples claimed to have a biblical blessing as well as a biblical mandate, and whilst not favoured, they were chosen (Richmann, 2015:4). The pre-eminence that Britain and America enjoyed on the global scene was a confirmation of this chosenness, as the post fruition of the prophecies regarding Israel (Richmann, 2015:5). According to Charles Parham who was an early advocate of the Pentecostalist’s baptism in the Spirit teaching, the only direction for those who wished to adhere faithfully to the Scriptures (Richmann, 2015:5). Equipped with the teaching of British Israelism in hand: “... the Old Testament will become a new book to you full of vital importance and interest” (Parham quoted in Richmann, 2015:6) For Parham, the faithfulness of God is verified by history (Richmann, 2015:6). In defence of the British monarchy being the heir of the sceptre of Juda, Parham as quoted in Richmann (2015:6): “Let us trace this sceptre; to find that not only does God keep His Word; but by so doing has wrought the romance of history.”

British-Israelism was not exclusive in its claim to be God’s “divinely elected”. Other countries and denomination/s have since followed in the footsteps of the United Kingdom, for example, America, the German Evangelical Church also known as “Volkskirche”, and South Africa.

It is interesting how God features prominently in the anthems of many nations. In the next section on “America” and its claim to being “the chosen people and country of God,” its anthem reads “God Bless America!”. In the case of the United Kingdom, it is more personalised, with its anthem concluding with the phrase: “God Save the Queen!” In British-Israelism, the Queen was designated as “The Royal Lion of Judah” (Simpson, 2002:4). Simpson acknowledges that it is difficult to ascertain how the Royal Family in the nineteenth century assimilated the British-Israelism movement and its claims to divine chosenness (Simpson, 2002:4). Princess Athlone was a member of the movement until she died in 1983 (Simpson, 2002:4). Significantly, at the 1897 celebration of the “Diamond Jubilee”, Queen Victoria accepted an illuminated scroll from the British-Israel Association (Simpson, 2002:4):

It’s the profound belief of your Memorialists that the high and pre-eminent position allowed by the British Nation and Empire under Your Majesty’s long and prosperous reign will ever continue and increase by virtue of our Abrahamic descent we being the chosen people of God, as daily proclaimed in our National Church Service.

British Israelism also had a missionary inclination. At its peak, British Israelism had gained in the region of two million followers, consisting of a “cross-section” of the respective population groups, towards the first part of the twentieth century (Richmann, 2015:2). Allen (1902:43) states: “Anglo-Saxons are pre-eminently the evangelists of the world.” The lost ten tribes of Israel were discovered in the US and England:

... The United States is a ‘great nation’: England is a ‘greater nation’, ruling over sixty colonies and three hundred and fifty million people – great, dominant power among the nations; and these two, the ‘greater’ nations are of the same *blood*, and in every particular meet the sevenfold description of the text. No other two nations on the globe meet the description. These two do. Our search is ended. The lost is found. (Sandford and Jennings 2010:62); see also Murray 1981:261).

### 3.3 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (USA)

Much has been published in the USA, also commonly referred to as “America,” perceiving itself as a “latter-day Israel” (Cauthen, 2004:26), and how the perception of chosenness has moulded the compilation of the American ethos (Cauthen, 2004:26-27). Governed by its chosenness, it considered itself to be a just and righteous nation. A national sense of divine identity had inspired its citizens with a vocation of exclusive ideals and served as the inspiration to develop its republican institutions by means of expanding its geographical borders (Cauthen, 2004:27). Their conviction of being a divinely elected nation motivated Americans to assess their history positively through religious criteria, culminating in zeal for socio-political mobilization (Cauthen, 2004:27; see also Cherry 1998:19). In this regard, Cauthen (2004:27) cites Ernest Lee Tuveson, who referred to the American’s divinely elected national spirit as reaching a climax. Tuveson (1968:187) reveals that:

Confidence in the ideal of America as the new chosen people reached a peak of enthusiasm in the years immediately preceding 1860.

America’s early New England Puritans firmly believed that they had been chosen by God to establish a sacred commonwealth in the New World (Stroh, 1979:2). Stroh (1979:2) indicates:

They believed they had a *covenant* with God which put them under the obligation to follow his laws and do his will; and in return, they would be strengthened in their faith and enjoy God’s help and deliverance from damnation.

Noll et al. (1989:43) argue that during the period between the American Revolution and the Civil War, the United States was notably the most “biblical nation in the entire world” (Noll et al., 1989:43). The scriptures to both the literate and illiterate, “was the story of all stories .... the controlling myth of American use” (Noll et al., 1989:43). Preachers of the Christian faith promoted a strong fascination and advocated that American nationalism and patriotism were the fulfilment of the biblical prophecy (Noll et al., 1989:44). Noll et al. (1989:44-45) contend:

This predisposition to read Scripture typically and to regard the United States as a New Israel naturally led ministries to stress the grand narratives of the Old Testament. Well into the national period, the public Bible of the United States was for all intents the Old Testament. During the Revolution just about the only ministers who preached consistently from the New Testament were pacifists and loyalists, trying – in vain – to overcome the power of Old Testament narratives about setting captive Israel free with straight-forward New Testament injunctions to honour the king and love one’s neighbours.

Both the above opponents in the Civil War had no doubt whatsoever that the collision “was the fulfilment of biblical prophecy and that the Almighty was certainly on their side” (Cauthen, 2004:27). Whilst there were different scenarios regarding what the fate of the prosperity of the American nation was to be, the notion of election was a persistent stimulus in discourses with regard to the conquering of colonial territories in 1898, the USA’s involvement in the First World War, and the period of the anti-immigrations National Origins Act of 1924 (Cauthen, 2004:27).

William Cobb points out that the Puritan myth of Americans as a chosen people featured prominently in the formulation of US policy with regard to Vietnam (Cobb, 1998:19). The traditional myth of chosenness continued to serve as an inspiration for America currently, with a zeal for a national mission that served as a dictate for the US foreign policy up until the 1980’s (Smith, 1999:348; see also Cauthen, 2004:27). Fousek (2000:7) in terms of America’s advocacy of chosenness states: “...Created a powerful anti-communist consensus which electrified Washington’s determination to confront Soviet expansion.”

America’s obsession with being the chosen people and the chosen country of God is classically displayed in an excerpt from a speech Barry Goldwater delivered when he in 1964 was nominated as the Republican’s Party’s candidate for President. Goldwater (quoted in Cauthen, 2004:28) claims:

The good Lord raised the mighty Republic to be a home for the brave to flourish the land of the free– not to stagnate in the swampland of collectivism, not to fringe before the bully of communism.

The claim of America’s “divine chosenness” received further impetus when Ronald Reagan delivered his inaugural speech in the White House in 1981, in which he

reminded the American citizens fervently that they were a chosen, elected nation and that the divine truce preached by their Puritan ancestors, was still intact and that it was the duty of all Americans to fulfil their providential vocation (Cauthen, 2004:28). To substantiate the USA's divine chosenness, pragmatically as part of his inaugural speech, Reagan (quoted in Cauthen, 2004:28) read the following passage of scripture from the book of II Chronicles 7:14:

... If my people which are called by name, shall humble themselves, pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will heal their land. (see also Schweizer 2003:120)

In justification of his country's intervention in Somalia and Desert Storm, Reagan's successor, George Bush, also resorted to referring to the USA's divinely chosenness (Cauthen, 2004:29). George W. Bush (quoted in Longley 2002:9-10), Bush's namesake, and successor followed in his footsteps when, during his inaugural speech, he declared: "...an angel still rides in the whirlwind and directs the progress of the nation."

The 9/11 terror attack was also spiritualised when two prominent American pastors, Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell, ascribed the catastrophe to God "chastising an increasingly apostate American nation for permitting abortion and homosexuality" (Cauthen, 2004:29). Several polls conducted after 9/11, indicated a substantial increase in religious fervour among Americans, resulting in membership growth of Protestant evangelical churches, an upswing in Christian music, phenomenal growth in ministries such as Young Life, and a dramatic expansion of missionary work (Cauthen, 2004:30).

In his *The Faith of Barack Obama* (2011), Stephen Mansfield notes that words such as "called," "chosen", and "anointed" are frequently featured in the contents of Barack Obama's 2008 election campaign (Mansfield, 2011:3). Bobby Rush, who was challenged by Obama for a seat in Congress in 1999, upon Obama's admission to the U.S. Senate, observes:

"... I think that Obama, his election to the Senate, was divinely ordered. I am a preacher and pastor; I know that's God's plan." (Obama quoted in Mansfield, 2011:3)

In his closing words in his inaugural speech, America's former President, Barack Obama, also exclaimed America's chosenness triumphantly. Obama (quoted in McGregor, 2012) declares:

And together with your help and God's grace, we will continue our journey forward and remind the world why it is that we live in the greatest nation on earth. Thank you America; God bless you. God bless these United States.

In 2017, Donald Trump, the then US President posited that America is a chosen country. I posit comments made by Professor Eric Mount, Emeritus Professor religion at the Centre College, and Ulrich Rosenhagen. These comments were published in the January 2019 edition of the Advocate-Messenger and the January 2019 edition of HuffPost. I concede that these comments are extremely emotive and sensational, but the question I pose is whether the issue of religious nationalism, divine geographical and ethnic chosenness, are not in all instances, the by-products of patriotic fanaticism and ethnic emotionalism and superiority? Rosenhagen provides an abridged assessment of what the Puritans' religious aspirations were, and how such commitments were being distorted then. Accordingly, Rosenhagen (2017:1) compares the two respective contexts, namely, that of the Puritans and that of Trump. He notes that the scriptural verse Micah 6:8 played a crucial role in America's history of religion. Its application to the American context dates back to 1630. That was the time of the immigration of a company of devout Calvinists who moved from England to North America. Under the masts of the Arbella, these Puritans departed from England to practise their faith in a new environment. Their vocation was to establish a community based on God and the Bible's prescriptions (Rosenhagen, 2017:1). John Winthrop, who subsequently became the governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, en route to their new homeland, from the deck of the Arbella applied the 8th verse from Micah, chapter six, to substantiate two further verses from Ephesians 4:3 and Matthew 5:14. The verse in the book of Ephesians speaks of the "unity of the spirit in the bond of peace" (Rosenhagen, 2017:1), whilst the scripture in Matthew relates to the instance where Jesus refers to his disciples as the "light of the world" that shines like a city that is set on a hill. Winthrop contends that the Pilgrim Puritans were that light of the world and that they had to be "like a city set on a hill" in a spiritual sense (Winthrop quoted in Rosenhagen, 2017:1), which subsequently became a legendary biblical quotation in the American political

vocabulary (Rosenhagen, 2017:1). Trump and America were still aspiring to be such a shining city (Rosenhagen, 2017:1). Yet there has been a paradigm shift characterized by “theatrics, deal-making, and deal-breaking,” with a tangible absence of “meekness, gentleness, patience, liberality” (Rosenhagen, 2017:1); in fact, these virtues have been disregarded and treated with contempt (Rosenhagen, 2017:1). The mind-set in America at that time is reflected aptly by Trump (Trump & Schwartz 1987) when he avers in the Art of the deal:

People want to believe in the biggest, the greatest, and the most spectacular.

In this thesis, I frequently provide claims made by individuals, movements, countries and churches claiming to have their or its “chosenness” confirmed by the “Spirit of God”. An apt example in this context is by Mark Taylor, the co-author of a book entitled *The Trump Prophecies: The Astounding True Story of the Man Who Saw Tomorrow . . . And What He Says Is Coming Next* (2011). Taylor’s Trump prophecy headed “Commander-in-Chief” in Taylor & Corbett (2017:43, 45) is claimed to state:

The Spirit of God says I've chosen this man Donald Trump for such a time as this. For as Benjamin Netanyahu is to Israel, so shall this man be to the United States of America, for I will use this man to bring honour, respect, and restoration to America. America will be respected once again as the most powerful, prosperous nation on Earth other than Israel. The dollar will be the strongest it has ever been in the history of the United States and will once again be the currency by which all others are judged. The Spirit of God says the enemy will quake and shake and fear this man I have anointed. They will even quake and shake when he announces he is running for President. It will be like the shot heard across the world. Then you will say what shall we do now? This man knows all our tricks and schemes. We've been robbing America for decades. What should we do to stop this? The Spirit says, has, no one shall stop this that I have started, for the enemy has stolen from America for decades and it stops now. For I will use this man to reap the harvest that the United States has sown for and plunder from the enemy what he has stolen and return it seven-fold to the United States. The enemy will say, 'Israel, Israel, what about Israel?' Israel will be protected by America once again. The Spirit says yes, America will once again stand hand in hand with Israel and the two shall be as one, for the ties between Israel and America will be stronger than ever and Israel will flourish like never before. The Spirit of God says I will protect America and Israel, for this next President will be a man of his word. When he speaks the world will listen and know that there is something greater in him than all the others before him. This man's word is his bond and the world and America will know this, and the enemy will fear this, for this man will be fearless. The Spirit says when the financial harvest begins so shall the parallel in the spiritual for America. The Spirit of God says in this next election they will spend billions to keep this president out.

It will be like money down the toilet. Let them waste their money, for where it comes from is being used by evil forces at work, but they will not succeed. This next election will be a clean sweep for the man that I have chosen. They will say things about this man, the enemy, but it will not affect him, and they will say it rolls off of him like a duck. For even as the feathers of a duck protect it, so shall my feathers protect this next president. Even mainstream news media will be captivated by this man and the abilities that I gift to him and they will even begin to agree with him, says the Spirit.

A film entitled “The Trump Prophecy”, based on Taylor’s book was screened in over 1000 theatres (Griffith, 2018:1). Trump in this film is depicted as a type of the ancient King Cyrus who had issued an edict commanding that all the Jews in exile in Babylonia could return to their homeland (Griffith, 2018:1). In this film, it is claimed that Trump, the 45<sup>th</sup> USA president and Cyrus’ anointing as the messiah of Persia being recorded in the 45<sup>th</sup> chapter of Isaiah, distinguishes Trump as God’s anointed (Griffith, 2018:1).

### **3.4 GERMAN CHRISTIANS – DEUTSCHE-VOLKSKIRCHE**

Karl Barth (1933a), Arthur Preisinger (1991), Peter Matheson (1981), Klaus Scholder (1988a), John Conway (1968), and Gunter Van Norden (1963) are the main sources for comments and references, whilst André Groenewald (2007) and Robert Ericksen (1985) are supporting sources for this section.

During the early 1930s, a group called the “German Christians” began to emerge in Germany. They worked hard to adhere to the reigning National Socialist Party’s “dictates” under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, concerning religion and its practice in Germany. As noted by Matheson (1981:1), these dictates were:

The tolerance of any religious confession in the German state “providing that they do not endanger its existence or offend the German race’s sense of decency and morality.” The Party “stands for a positive Christianity, without binding itself denominationally to a particular confession.” The Party would fight “against the Jewish – materialistic spirit at home and abroad.

On September 6, 1933, the “Church Law concerning the Legitimate Relations of the Clergy and Church Offices” (*“Kirchengesetz betreffend die Rechtsverhältnisse der*

*Geistlichen und Kirchenbeamten*”) was promulgated. The *Aryan paragraph* formed part of this official “Church law.” The contents of this *Paragraph* are:

Whoever is not of Aryan descent or is married to a non-Aryan person may not be called as a cleric or official in the common church administration. Clergy or officials who enter into a marriage with a person of non-Aryan descent are dismissed. (Preisinger, 1991:366)

The “German Christians” also known as the “Faith movement of German Christians” made concerted efforts to support the Nationalist Socialist Party and to mobilise other Protestant Christians to show similar support (Groenewald, 2007:1614). Their constitution, which was adopted on 6 June, 1932, contained regulations that state:

- i. The unification of the 29 churches under the umbrella of the German Protestant Church Federation into a united Protestant Reich Church (Groenewald, 2007:1614, see also Matheson, 1981:5, and Scholder, 1988:5).
- ii. The formation of a dynamic national denomination, commonly known as the “*Volkskirche*” in which the practising faith of the German people would be expressed (Groenewald, 2007:1614; see also Matheson, 1981:5 and Scholder, 1988:208).
- iii. The German Evangelical Church’s Confession of faith was to be expanded to include the Nationalist Socialist’s worldview (Groenewald, 2007:1614).
- iv. Blood and race were the criteria for membership of the German Evangelical Church (Groenewald, 2007:1614).
- v. Christian Jews were, according to the Aryan paragraph that was accepted on 4 January 1934, excluded from the German Evangelical Church (Groenewald, 2007:1615).
- vi. Membership of other race groups was prohibited (Groenewald, 2007:1615; see also Scholder, 1988a:208)
- vii. Evangelization among the Jews was considered a threat to the German culture (Groenewald, 2007:1614; see also Scholder, 1988:209).

Chancellor Hitler’s aim for German religion was to unite all regional Protestant churches into one “Church of the Reich” (Scholder, 1988:223). In 1933, Hitler’s aim of a nationalised Church through his appointment of Ludwig Müller as the

“Reichsbischof,” resulted in even greater assimilation of the German Evangelical Church by the State (Scholder, 1988:293,310,520-522). Müller had sole authority regarding the Church’s affairs (Green, 1989:148). What could be considered as the most distinct example of the German Evangelical Church vesting solely in the State was the *28 Thesen der sächsischen Volkskirche zum inneren Aufbau der Deutschen Evangelischen Kirche*, which was released on 10 December, 1933. Written by Walter Grundman, Supreme Consistory councillor and professor of New Testament at Jena, this thesis was acclaimed by the Saxon church government as reflecting great “church-historical meaning for the whole German Evangelical Church” (Preisinger, 1991:116). The dictates of this document were accepted during December, 1933 by the Land churches of Schleswig-Holstein, Braunschweig, Oldenburg, Necklenburg, and the provisional Reich leadership of the German Evangelical Church, respectively. These dictates, as stated by Preisinger (1991:116-118) amongst others include:

- i. The Deutschen Evangelischen Kirche (German Evangelical Church), stands in the state. It cannot be next to it, as if in a corner, as those who are the enemies of Christianity, would demand.
- ii. It cannot occupy a neutral position, as those who mistrusted National Socialism, would want.
- iii. It cannot be above the head of the state; as the Roman Catholic position would have; neither could it be under the state, as it was with the old state church. It could only be a Volk church if it was vested in the state.
- iv. The Volk church subscribes to blood and race and the members of this church including its office bearers are only eligible if they are members of the Volk according to the state laws. This was inclusive of the Aryan Paragraph; see above; the latter not denoting the exclusion of other Christians from the great Christian faith fellowship, but whilst a Christian of another race was not a Christian of a lesser rank but a Christian of a different kind.
- v. Because race is of a different kind, the Volk church subscribes to the prohibition of mixed marriages since such marriages are an offence to God.

- vi. Since God sets men in the orders of family, Volk and state, the Volk church as per the dictates of National Socialism, recognizes the call of God to family, Volk and state.
- vii. The New Testament is accepted but the Old Testament does not have the same worth.
- viii. German Christianity constitutes the unique foundation on which the German people can be one faith.

The Reich church's vocation was to "affirm the nobility of the state" (Preisinger, 1991:120). This was achieved by entering into a working relationship with the new socialistic state in which the state's perceptions and measures should be legally binding on the Church. The Church must be an expression of the "inner uniformity of the state" (Preisinger, 1991:121). Importantly, the Church had to become the "Church for the German people" (Pertierr, 1968:79). The inseparability between the Church and the state was not just simply supported by the proletariat of the "Volk," but, as noted by Ericksen, reflected the sanctioning of highly respected intellectuals, in the likes of Emmanuel Hirsch, Gerhard Kittel and Paul Althaus (Ericksen, 1985:86). The unequivocal support of the spiritual supremacy of the "German volk" and the Führer as maintained by Althaus (quoted in Ericksen, 1985:86), an ardent Nationalist Socialist, is captured when he, declares:

As a Christian church, we bestow no political card. But in knowledge of the mandate of the state, we may express our thanks to God and our joyful preparedness when we see a state which after a time of depletion and paralysis has broken through to a new knowledge of sovereign authority, of service to the life of the "volk", of responsibility for freedom, legitimacy, and justice of "volkisch" existence. We may express our thankfulness and joyful readiness for that which manifests a will for the genuine brotherhood of blood brothers in our new order of the "volk'... We Christians know we bound by God's will to the promotion of National Socialism, so that all members and ranks of the volk will be ready for service and sacrifice to one another.

German Christian theologians invariably accentuated the First Article of the 28 Saxon Theses, as the "orders of creation" that were the Volk, nation, race and "Volksnomos" (Preisinger, 1991:121). Concerning the 28 Saxon Theses, the Volk Church embodied blood and race, because the Volk was a blood and nature

community, whose community was none other than the Nationalist Socialist state in which God had revealed His holy will (Preisinger, 1991:121). The *Volk-blood-race*-community ideology implied that they (the Volk) had to also purge themselves from anything Jewish. This resulted in the German Christians continuing to persist with the execution of the Aryan Paragraph. Accordingly, anti-Jewish recommendations were implemented at both local and regional levels (Preisinger, 1991:122). An apt example of the application of anti-Old Testament, anti-Semitism, in the liturgy of the new unified Reich church is depicted in a recommendation by a DC congregation, which was based in Dortmund. These liturgical changes were:

All hymns and liturgical passages with the names and expressions such as “Lord of Zabaoth, “hosanna,” “Abraham’s seed,” “salvation from Jacob, “Jehovah”, “Zion”...will not be sung in worship in the future. The immediate goal is dejudaising that is, purifying our church songs. Our driving force is the faith of Christ, who was no Jew. (Preisinger, 1991:122-123)

With reference to the German Christians, Karl Barth’s comments on some of the denominational dictates are significant. Barth notes that the “Reichsbischof’s” function was similar to that of a Roman Catholic bishop. It entailed pre-eminence and special assigned decision-making authority on almost every subject. The “Reichsbischof” occupied the role of a government official in accordance with the dictates of Adolf Hitler (Barth, 1933:19-21). The “faith movement” of the “German Christians” promulgated the German Evangelical Church to be a church, which believed in the divine authority of the State serving the interest of the German people (Barth, 1933:24). The “faith movement” strove to expand the Church’s Confession in order to include the National Socialist’s worldview, classifying race and blood as a prerequisite for church membership (Barth, 1933:24). Walter Grundmann, author of the *28 Thesen ...*, held Führer Adolf Hitler in what could be termed, absolute awe. According to Preisinger, this virtual deification is a prerequisite for the proper interpretation of Grundmann’s thesis (Preisinger, 1991:116). In *Glaube und Volk* (1933) Grundman, as quoted in Zabel (1976:139), enthuses:

... Our Führer Adolf Hitler of whom everyone on first meeting him: shockingly recognises: that is a completely pure man! All of us see it thus, in this man, there is nothing disunited. He is in himself completely one, completely simple, clear and true. We also know that the power of such a clear and truthful man does not derive from the earth, but rather out of that higher world that the Master, Christ called the kingdom of heaven. We also know from

men who are close to the Führer that he knows of his inner connection with God. He knows himself to be the instrument of God and has the clear, simple trust in God of a man who – as the Bible puts it– is reconciled with God. Some people have said of Adolf Hitler that a magic power radiates from him. I do not know whether one ought to put it that way. When one experiences this man for the first time, he certainly feels one thing: the deep humility of the man, which is at the same time completely consistent with his higher commission. This oneness of man with his God is a symbol of what the old church teachers used to say with the Three-in-one.

Throughout my research on the “notion” of exclusivist claims to be God’s chosen people (ECGCP) of African Blacks; here denoting Blacks whose ancestry stems from Africa, together with Africa as a continent; I was intrigued by the Israel/Jerusalem/Zion” divinely aligned status being advocated by the subscribers of citizens and the countries of their residence, to the status of being divinely chosen. This claim of an Israel-rooted divine affinity also found historical roots in Africa through claims by some Afrikaners that the “Boers” (Afrikaners), were God’s chosen people and that South Africa was God’s chosen country.

### **3.5 AFRIKANERS - GOD’S CHOSEN PEOPLE?**

The sources I consulted comprise a broad spectrum of authors. In no order of preference, these are Hermann Giliomee (2003), André Du Toit (1983), John and Steve De Gruchy (2003), Murray Coetzee and Ernst Conradie (2011), Charles Villavicencio (1983) and others.

In South Africa, in the Cape during the eighteenth century, *burghers* (citizens) commonly referred to themselves as Christians (Giliomee, 2003:41). At the outset, the burghers were not ultra-religious or even in close affinity with the Church. They did not carry or even own Bibles, and only a limited number were ordained members of the Church (Giliomee, 2003:41). A religious revival occurred in the Cape Colony in the 1790s, resulting in an increase among active burghers in the Church. According to Giliomee, the burghers, now also commonly referred to as Afrikaners, were truly God-fearing and displayed strong elements of sincere piety (Giliomee, 2003:42). During the course of the eighteenth century, the Church had been transformed largely into a white church (Giliomee, 2003:42). The VOC (“*Verenigde Oos-Indische*

*Compagnie*”), hereafter referred to as the “Company” had prescribed a specific imprint for organised religion in the Cape (Giliomee, 2003:42). Among these dictates, as issued by the Company were instructions that the Reformed faith and the Dutch language had to be preserved at the Cape (Giliomee, 2003:42). The burghers developed an identity, which resembled a type of covenant between God and themselves for the preservation of their cultural heritage (Giliomee, 2003:42). The theological premise upon which this covenant was based, entailed that it implied continuity between God’s covenant with the Jews, and that which God had with Christians (Giliomee, 2003:42). With regard to Giliomee’s reference to the acceptance of the baptism theology in the DRC (“Dutch Reformed Church”) at the Cape, with the conviction having developed that God’s particular covenant applied to both this particular body of people and their descendants (Giliomee, 2003:42-43).

In their struggle against the forces of British Imperialism, the Afrikaners, with special reference to the post-Anglo Boer War era, drew spiritual inspiration from the exodus experiences of the Israelites. Accordingly, the Afrikaners were convinced that a divine mission had been assigned to them since the start of the Great Trek. This divine mission included their battles and victories over the “black nations” (“Philistines”) culminating in their victory at the Battle of Blood River (De Gruchy & De Gruchy, 2003:30). During this battle, the Afrikaners had entered into a sacred covenant with God, which to them was confirmed through their entry into the then Transvaal (Gauteng) and the Orange Free State (Free State), these provinces having been regarded as the “promised land” to the Afrikaners. Importantly, the Afrikaners interpreted their defeat by the British in 1902 as a sign of God’s judgment on the Afrikaner nation, and a message that they needed to abide by the sacred covenant of being God’s people who had to “bring light to the continent” (Africa) (De Gruchy & De Gruchy, 2003:30).

Giliomee (2003:178) argues that a case can also be made that the notion of a chosen people manifested itself only after the Anglo-Boer War when a group of intellectuals in Potchefstroom formulated it as an ideology (Giliomee, 2003:178). Evidence exists of some “*Voortrekkers*”, a designation denoting the first Afrikaners who had moved inland from the Cape Province; here with specific reference to the “Doppers”, members of the *Gereformeerde Kerk* (the Reformed Church), indeed having

perceived themselves as distinctly chosen, who like Israel, was charged with a divine mission (Giliomee, 2003:178). This constitutes an exclusivist claim of being God's chosen people – ECGCP, as expressed in the cases where there are claims for corporate agents. who like Israel, has a special mission amongst the nations. W.W. Collins, a resident of the Orange Free State in 1888, referred to the “Doppers” as a “peculiar sect” and who appeared to have been obsessed with God's dealings with Israel. Collins (1907:158) comments:

Jehovah's wonderful manifestation to his ancient people.. the Old Testament. They [the Doppers] seem to be possessed with the idea that they too are a divinely favoured people in the same sense that Israel was, and have been signally endowed by the Almighty with sufficient intuitive knowledge and understanding to undertake any mental or other duties.

Paul Kruger, a devout Afrikaner leader who read no other book than the Bible, in his later life, was strongly influenced by Calvinistic beliefs (Giliomee, 2003:177). Accordingly, Kruger conformed to a specific strand of Calvinism that was taught in the Cape, subscribing to the belief that the covenant with God extended to the faithful unto the thousandth generation, and this, Kruger greatly enhanced during the Great Trek (Giliomee, 2003:177). Kruger drew a parallel between Israel and the Afrikaners who had evolved during the Great Trek. To him, they were both God's people and had a special vocation (Giliomee, 2003:229). Kruger, a co-founder of the *Gereformeerde Kerk* “the Dopper Church,” (the Reformed Church) (Giliomee, 2003:177), subscribed to the notion that the Afrikaners are the chosen people of God. Kruger, notes Akenson (1992:69-71), see also Giliomee (2003:177): “... is more closely associated than any other leader with the concept Afrikaners as a Chosen People, like the ancient Hebrews, with a covenant with God to fulfil a divine plan.” ECGCP!

Kruger was inconsistent concerning what he regarded as God's people. At times when referring to his “*oud volk*” (“traditional citizens” - translation mine), (the original *Voortrekkers*) – he would refer to them as the only people that counted. They were God's people! Then, at times, Kruger would include all white people in the state, together with foreigners as God's people (Giliomee, 2003:229).

Kruger was strongly influenced by the religious conflict that prevailed in the Netherlands in 1834. Through a working-class Calvinist spiritual awakening, a separate church came to be established, commonly known as the Separate Christian Reformed Church (Giliomee, 2003:178). Kruger campaigned for a minister from their own ranks, who happened to have come from the Netherlands (Giliomee, 2003:178). This split was derived from a view held by Kruger that the traditional confessional standards of the main Reformed Church of the Netherlands, together with the singing of hymns during church services had been weakened (Giliomee, 2003:178).

Whilst perceiving that their struggle was not over, the Afrikaners were motivated by their “eschatological vision” (De Gruchy & De Gruchy, 2003:30), which would be the rebirth of a free republic being governed undisputedly by themselves (Afrikaners) through God’s divine providence (De Gruchy & De Gruchy, 2003:30).

Afrikaner theologians who subscribed to the notion that the Afrikaners were God’s chosen people, as well as to the theology of apartheid, made use of more than one dogmatic key belief. Each of these dogmatic key beliefs occupied a dominant role, at certain times, yet still exerted an influence in the later stages (Coetzee & Conradie, 2011:347). The key belief that played a decisive role among Afrikaners during the colonial era was the quest for self-preservation (“*selfbeskikking*”). Accordingly, the quest for liberation (“*bevryding*”) started to surface after 1930, when separation (“*skeiding*”) and isolation (“*isolasie*”) featured more prominently (Coetzee & Conradie, 2011:347). Notions that had already featured significantly during the colonial reign in the Cape were those of vocation (“*roeping*”) and self-reservation (“*selfbeskikking*”) (Coetzee & Conradie, 2011:347). With regard to a cultural perspective, the Afrikaners perceived themselves to have stemmed from a culture that emanated from the “corpus Christianum” (Coetzee & Conradie, 2011:347). Because of being of Western-European descent, the Afrikaners in addition to being the heirs of the latter “culture,” regarded themselves as the custodians of the Christian civilization (“*Christelike beskawing*”). It was this very “culture” that cultivated the conviction among the Afrikaners that they were the “chosen people,” the (“*Volk*”) of God whose divine mission was to proclaim the gospel (“*lig van die evangelie*”) to

the heathen (*“heidene”*) vesting in the southern part of dark (*“donker”*) Africa, (Coetzee & Conradie, 2011:348) This divine calling, in conjunction with the liberation of the slaves in the Cape and other factors, is what inspired and culminated in the since 1834, Great Trek, (Coetzee & Conradie 2011:348). It was indeed the “Great-Trek-Afrikaners” who harboured a considerable fear of having to forfeit their superior status and right to self-preservation through the threat of the heathens (*“heidene”*) (Coetzee & Conradie, 2011:348).

The hermeneutic of the right to self-preservation (*“selfbeskikking”*) was transferred to the concept of ‘liberation’ (*“bevryding”*) during the post-1902 era, the period during which the Afrikaners’ socio-economical and cultural-religious circumstances had changed. The British earth-scorching, the 1929-global depression, and the 1930-drought and urbanisation had plunged the Afrikaners into a sudden economic and social crisis, resulting in poverty-stricken Afrikaners perceiving themselves as the oppressed and marginalised (Coetzee & Conradie, 2011:348). During this lean period, the DRC (Dutch Reformed Church, “NG-Kerk”) became “THE” church; a haven for the Afrikaner nation (*“volk”*) to such an extent that the church and the nation became virtually inseparable (Coetzee & Conradie 2011:348). Theologians who subscribed to the notion of Afrikaners being God’s chosen people typified the Afrikaners as symbolically resembling God’s solidarity with the oppressed and marginalised Israelites who were delivered from Pharaoh in Egypt (Coetzee & Conradie, 2011:348). A further significant key here with relevance regarding the fact that the Afrikaners considered themselves to be God’s chosen people (*“uitverkore volk”*), underpins the Afrikaners’ motive for isolation (Coetzee & Conradie, 2011:349).

This hermeneutic manifested itself among the Afrikaners- God’s chosen people advocates (theologians) at an early stage (Coetzee & Conradie, 2011:349). Isolation was applied more systematically in the 1935 mission policy of the DRC (“NG Kerk”) and was expressed in the slogan, which read “in isolasie lê ons behoud en ons redding” (“our survival and salvation vests in isolation” (translation mine), (Coetzee & Conradie, 2011:349). This hermeneutic (key) of isolation was evidently manifested during and after the Cottesloe consultation, when the majority of the DRC members and leaders withdrew into a type of recluse “*laer*” (laager), separating

themselves from the ecumenicity (“ekumene”) and the broader spectrum of the Christian tradition, (Coetzee & Conradie, 2011:349).

The “isolationists” (designation mine) justified their laager separation (“*trekking*”) by drawing an analogy with Israel in the Bible, who as the “chosen people,” were commissioned to separate themselves from other nations (“*volke*”), and here with particular reference to interbreeding (“*verbastering*”) with other nations (“*volke*”), (Coetzee & Conradie, 2011:349). Legislation was subsequently introduced by the apartheid government to ensure that the Afrikaners and DRC members could exist in isolation and thus maintain their own identity (Coetzee & Conradie, 2011:349). Separation and isolation were to the Afrikaners paramount to surviving in the face of the threats and being swallowed up by the negative effects of barbarism (“*see van barbarisme*”), (Coetzee & Conradie, 2011:349). Separation (“*afskieding*”) was regarded by the Afrikaners as their only means of salvation (“*redding*”), (Coetzee & Conradie, 2011:349). This hermeneutic (key) was what ensured and that the Afrikaners could be secure and maintain their unique identity and purity, and enable them (the Afrikaners) to maintain their white civilised standards (“*blanke beskaafde standarde*”), (Coetzee & Conradie, 2011:349).

The Afrikaners found solace in their perception of themselves as analogous to the encounters of the Israelites, who, like the Israelites, would enjoy God’s protection with regard to the attaining of their divine vocation (Coetzee & Conradie, 2011:348). God, who had ceded to them, the Afrikaners, “the promised land” (Israel), would ensure that they would arrive at their divine destination safely and would be sustained, despite the onslaughts of the heathen (“*heidene*”) (Coetzee & Conradie, 2011:348). This hermeneutic (key) of divine chosenness also proved to be the dictate for the manner in which the Afrikaners assessed the South African wars, 1872-1874 and 1899-1902. During these wars, the then-Afrikaners, sustained themselves through their apparent divine vocation (“*roeping*”) and their right to self-preservation (“*selfbeskikking*”), (Coetzee & Conradie, 2011:348). The British imperialists were perceived as the proverbial Pharaoh (“*Farao*”) and the black nations, as the heathen forces (“*heidense magte*”) against whom they, the Afrikaners, had to fight in order to fulfil their divine calling which constituted their “right” to self-preservation (“*selfbeskikking*”) (Coetzee & Conradie, 2011:348). Separation

(“*skeiding*”) was what enabled the Afrikaners to maintain their social superiority (Coetzee & Conradie, 2011:349). Isolation (“*isolasie*”) proved to be a similar saving grace in that it enabled the Afrikaners to survive in terms of group cohesion, and amidst the threatening circumstances being able to survive further (Coetzee & Conradie, 2011:349). Coetzee & Conradie (2011:349) further note that these metaphors were salvation and survival related, and can accordingly justly be described as “quasi-soteriology” (Coetzee & Conradie, (2011:349).

André du Toit (1983) argues that the Afrikaners took a crucial step in their quest for an identification of their own history (Du Toit, 1983:925), by comparing this history with that of the ancient Israelites. Based on cases of corporate agents having a special mission and task akin to that of Israel amongst the nations, Afrikanerdom was posited by Du Toit as being a divinely chosen ethnicity with a divine mission. Du Toit (1983:925) states that the Afrikaners compared their status:

With that of Israel of the Old Testament. This was to view themselves, Like Israel, as a Chosen People with divine missions. Indeed, many writers held that this notion provided much of the motivation for, and the self-understanding of, such a critical historical event as the Great Trek. As F.A. van Jaarsveld phrased it, ‘The British administration had stood in the shoes of Pharaoh and oppressed them in Egypt – a country that they had to forsake to seek freedom. Therefore, the exodus to the Promised Land was undertaken. The Voortrekkers and their descendants in their New home (Israel) felt that they were waging a struggle for survival against ‘Pharaoh’ and ‘the black Canaanites.

The term “nationalist” evoked different interpretations among the south and north intelligentsia in South Africa. Since its establishment in South Africa, those belonging to the Gereformeerde Kerk (“Dopper”), had accentuated their divinely favoured identity, comparing this identity with that of “ancient Israel” (Giliomee, 2003:419). The intelligentsia vesting in the then Transvaal viewed the Afrikaners in a metaphysical sense, with an accentuation on the “*volksiel*” (nation soul), thus claiming exclusivity for themselves (Giliomee, 2003:419). The Dutch Reformed Church’s (DRC) position in the early 1900s was evangelical, while it was also stressed that it was imperative for the church to remain loyal to the secular authority and to abstain from everyday politics (Giliomee, 2003:384). Since the early days of orthodox Calvinism in the Cape Colony, the gospel of an omnipotent God, intervening directly in the lives of individuals and communities was preached, which

included the doctrine of predestination and the elect (Giliomee, 2003:177). In general, during the time of unification in 1910, the church was held in high esteem as the most paramount institution within the Afrikaner community (Giliomee, 2003:384). D.F. Malan a designated prime minister of South Africa did not share the “Doppers” neo-Calvinist obsession with what they termed the “sound” of pure doctrine” and disagreed with their abstract founding principles (Giliomee, 2003:419). While acknowledging that the Afrikaner had a God-given identity and that God’s providence prevailed in the Afrikaner history, Malan as quoted by Giliomee (2003:419) notes:

That he (the Afrikaners) claims this as his exclusive right and that he raises his people above others as God’s special favourite is a false and slanderous allegation” (US Library, D.F. Malan Connection; Manuscript “*Op die wagtoring*”).

Malan, who pastored a DRC (Dutch Reformed Church) congregation in Graaff Reinet in 1915, attended a DRC conference in Bloemfontein to intervene in a “church schism”) that was threatening the DRC after the 1914 to 1915 rebellion (Giliomee, 2003:385). Malan’s intervention united the meeting. At this meeting, the DRC ruled that, in addition, to the need to have a national character, entrusted with the oversight of reserving the country’s particular national interests, its mission was to educate the people to recognise the hand of God in its origin and history, and that the church had to cultivate an awareness of a national calling among the people (Giliomee, 2003:385). *De Kerkbode*, later “*Die Kerkbode*”, which was and is currently still the title of the DRC’s (Dutch Reformed Church) official magazine, reflected the nationalistic spirit of the meeting with the words of the editor stating: “God is in our history – *ons kerk is nasionaal* (our church is a church of the people)” (*De Kerkbode*, 11 February 1915), (Giliomee, 2003:385).

The South African newspaper, *Die Burger*, which had become the most significant intellectual print media expression of Afrikaner nationalists in the early twentieth century, was content with D.F. Malan using the pulpit to promote his ideas (Giliomee, 2003:385). For Malan, a national movement could only succeed if its members believed that their community was unique (Giliomee, 2003:385). He contended that it was the Church which had held the colonists together as a social entity for over 250 years and that:

The church was the means by which God guided and forged our people and our church is still the guarantee of our nationality. (Malan quoted in Giliomee 2003:386).

In 1948 D.F. Malan became the President of South Africa. From Malan's proclaiming Afrikaners to be divine masterpieces, whose equals are not found in the world, I identify an exclusivist claim to be God's chosen people – ECGCP. Malan's accreditation stems from an affirmation of cultural identity, which is necessarily particular, although claims for an Afrikaner worldview need to be noted. Malan lays claim to Afrikaners being corporate agents that had a special mission and task, akin to Israel amongst the nations, namely, being chosen for a special task and advocating exclusivist claims to be God's chosen people. Malan, in my opinion, attests unequivocally to the above when he after the National Party's 1948 victory, made the following statement:

Our history is the greatest masterpiece of the centuries; we hold this nationhood as our due for it was given to us by the Architect of the universe. [His] aim was the formation of a new nation among the nations of the world ... The last hundred years have witnessed a miracle behind which must lie a divine plan. Indeed the history of the Afrikaner reveals a will and a determination, which makes one feel that Afrikanerdom, is not the work of men but the creation of God. (Moodie, 1975:1; see also De Gruchy and De Gruchy, 2003:30).

The 1920s and 1930s witnessed the conflict between theologians who subscribed to the traditional thinking of the DRC and those who had been shaped by the ideas of Abraham Kuyper (Kinghorn, 1986:86). Patriotic Afrikaans students driven by an ardent Afrikaner nationalism in the early 1920s went and studied abroad to explore a new form of Reformed theology (Durand, 1985:42). They adopted Abraham Kuyper, the founder of the Free State University of Amsterdam and an influential leader in the "*Gereformeerde Kerken*" (Reformed Church), as their mentor (Durand, 1985:42). Kuyper advocated a new theology, underpinned by the belief that human life is made up of several sovereign spheres such as the church, the state and the family, and that each of these spheres possessed sovereignty over its affairs through God (Durand, 1985:42). Kuyper's promulgation of the principle of "diversity" (Durand, 1985:42) was embraced by some Afrikaner theologians who were searching and discovering passages in the Scriptures, which confirmed to them that God sanctioned separate nations (Durand, 1985:42). Among them, was Joshua Naudé; the father of Beyers Naudé: who, whilst adhering to the tenets of evangelism and the

church's mission vocation, subscribed to the ideology of the Afrikaners being a "chosen people" and a separate race (Kinghorn, 1986:86). Although a strong case can be made out that Kuyper's new theology was adopted out-of-context through their interpretation of Kuyper's principle of "diversity," the quote below by Kuyper does advocate at face value in my opinion, a superior status being allotted to "Whites" who are referred to by Kuyper as the Aryan race. Kuyper (1898:11-12) comments:

It is now understandable that the workman of the Aryan race compares favourably against the dark shadow that continues to rest on the Negro population? ... as for the majority, though the Negro population lacks skill and pride and character, and it is not least through the contrast with abhorrent self-degradation that the white workman, out of self-respect is prompted to act more nobly and to occupy a better social position.

The "romantic nationalism which emanated from Nazi Germany" (Kinghorn, 1986:86) served as the final influence in persuading the Church to adopt apartheid (Kinghorn 1986: 86). Eminent Afrikaner nationalists, such as, Nico Diedericks, Piet Meyer, and Geoff Cronje who had become sympathetic to Nazism during their studies in Germany, were influenced by the Nazi ideology of "racial purity" due to the Nazis having been the enemies of the British (Bosch, 1984:32)

Villa-Vicencio (1983:71) asserts that the Afrikaner's cherishing of its identity is inherently vested in its sense of "loyalty to the volk" ("nation") and those who were prepared to distance themselves from the Church culture and family to be subservient to their theological and political convictions, were in the minority.

I wish to include in this section a few slightly humorous and cynical post-1994 remarks by Giliomee that I feel contain distinct references to the ideology of Afrikaners claiming to be God's chosen people (ECGCP). Accordingly, Giliomee (2003:666) contends:

"They [Afrikaners] no longer sang the popular song '*Die Lied van Jong Suid-Afrika*' (The Song of Young South Africa) about a people's awakening, ...They no longer spoke of themselves as a separate "volk" (nation) with a special calling and destiny."

The well-known Afrikaans poet, J. D. du Toit, commonly known as "Totius," who was also a translator of the Bible; advocating of a divine designation for the

Afrikaners is reflected in my opinion in a speech he delivered at the “*Volkskongres*” (National Congress) in 1944, where he expresses a view of a divine Afrikaner with a divine status on the topic of “*Christelike voogdyskap*” (Christian guardianship). In this regard, Totius (Du Toit & Du Toit, 1955:19-20) makes the following statement:

Fellow South Africans, here is the calling from God on high, namely to nurture the native in his coming of age ... The wonderful God who guided our fathers, as torch bearers for black Africa will also lead and inspire us under more difficult conditions to bearers of light where the darkness still prevails.

Throughout my research on the “notion” of exclusivist claims to be God’s chosen people – ECGCP, of African Blacks; here denoting Blacks whose ancestry stems from Africa, together with Africa as a continent; I was intrigued by the “Israel/Jerusalem/Zion” divinely aligned status being advocated by the subscribers of citizens and the countries of their residence, to the status of being divinely chosen. This claim of an Israel-rooted divine affinity also found historical roots in Africa through claims by some Black Africans that the Black Africans are God’s chosen people and that Africa is God’s chosen country.

In the next chapter, I feature the movement commonly known as Pan-Africanism. The common perception about Pan-Africanism is that it constitutes a movement whose primary objective is to consolidate the continent in a United States of Africa. Whilst the common perception of Pan-Africanism is that it is a socio-political ideology devised “by” and “for” African Blacks exclusively, and, Africa as a continent, specifically, I will attempt to show that the socio-political principle of Pan-Africanism, in certain instances, reflects the notion of exclusivist claims to be God’s chosen people (ECGCP). This “notion” is advocated by some North American and Pan-African theologians, preachers, politicians, philosophers, activists, writers and others, in general.

## PAN-AFRICANISM

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION – WHAT IS PAN-AFRICANISM?

Defining Pan-Africanism either as an ideology or a movement is a mammoth task. I, therefore, commence with a brief account of the definitions of the movement as expressed by its key founders, participants, and contemporary scholars. I selected the various definitions in conjunction with brief commentaries as formulated and expressed by individuals who were prominent in the historical, developmental, and current stages of the Pan-African movement. The common thread throughout Pan-Africanism is one of “Africa for the Africans”.

The question, can be asked what is Pan-Africanism? Pan in both Classical and Hellenistic Greek means the “whole” or the “entire” (Bax, 1983:130-131). Pan-African thus means all, the whole, the entire - Africa, and its ethnicities designated as Black Africans.

The first form of the Pan-African Movement was not directly concerned with Africa. It instead represented black communities of African ancestry who lived in North America and the Caribbean, commonly known as the West Indies, respectively (Davidson, 1994:32). Pan-Africanism is a philosophy that is based on the belief that Black Africans share common bonds and objectives, and promulgates unity to achieve these objectives.

In view of its different proponents, Pan-Africanism has throughout its history been conceived in varying ways. It has been applied to all people of Black African descent, or to everyone on the African continent including non-Blacks (Davidson, 1994:32).

## 4.2 PAN-AFRICANISM – HISTORICAL ROOTS

The founders of Pan-Africanism were Africans from the diaspora and were descendants of the millions of Africans taken captive during the trans-Atlantic slave trade (Abdul-Raheem, 1996:1). “Back to Africa” movements had, as a direct result of slavery, sprung up in the USA, Brazil, and the Caribbean during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Abdul-Raheem, 1996:1). The desire to be freed from the yoke of slavery acted as a strong impetus in the desire to return to the country of their origin, namely Africa (Farisani, 2002:6). Since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, American Blacks have persistently navigated the distant past for a foundation to establish a distinct Black nationality, which could serve as a countervailing of resistance, and be a means of existential validation (Adeleke, 2010:494-495). During this period the achieving of an independent nationhood was regarded as an indispensable condition for survival (Adeleke, 2010:494-495). To some Black Americans, this quest, consciousness, and desire for nationhood meant the literal creation of a nation outside what was then commonly known as America (Adeleke, 2010:495). A large segment of Black Americans sincerely believed that an independent nationhood would engender respect, recognition and validation for them (Adeleke, 2010:495). Although Pan-Africanism originated outside the continent of Africa, during its early stages, the movement succeeded in creating a link between Civil Rights leaders in the United States and Africa. In this regard, Moses (1978:18) avers:

Its roots as a mass movement are in the maroon revolutions of Haiti, Jamaica and Surinam during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and in the rebellions of Denmark Vesey and Nat Turner in the nineteenth century.

Some African Pan-Africanists seek to unite the continent as one independent nation. William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (commonly known as W.E.B. Du Bois), a key founder and formulator of the Pan-African movement regarded Pan-Africanism to be a vehicle through which “all groups of Negro descent,” here referring to Africa, had to have a common communication medium through which solidarity could be created among all the slaves in order to accomplish the industrial and spiritual liberation of the *Negroes* (“Black Americans”) at the earliest possible time (Du Bois, 1933:247). The idea of Pan-Africanism as a protest movement by Blacks of African descent and the African diaspora against European colonisation of Africa, amongst other reasons,

needs to be understood in terms of the practices of the slave trade and abolitionist movement to which it gave rise (Geiss, 1974:16). Mene (2002:46-47) captures the impact of the slavery of Black Africans in these terms:

No group in history, not even the Jews suffered more than the Africans. Africa is the only continent that was subjected to the slave trade, both of the Arab and the Atlantic versions. The slave trade did incalculable damage to the cohesion, industrial and production capacities and the physical environment of African communities. This was affected through spoliation, depopulation, promotion of constant warfare, and indiscriminate slave trading.

Between 1517 and 1840 approximately twenty million blacks were captured in Africa, transported to America and exposed to brutal circumstances (Geiss, 1974:8). Alluding to these factors, Geiss (1974:8) explains:

Along the same routes taken by “goods” which made the slave trade profitable – in particular the slaves themselves - who were treated as chattel. There travelled ideas which from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards, were to make Pan-Africanism a political force – at first unconsciously - but later knowingly.

The three points of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade: Western Europe (specifically England); Africa (specifically West Africa); and The New World (meaning West Indies and the USA); became the centers of the resistance and the intellectual development of Pan-Africanism. Pan-Africanism was intended to challenge the main activities of European imperialist domination comprising the slave trade, European colonisation of Africa, and racism (Thompson, 1969:3). One of the largest single factors that led to the final objective of the formal structuring of the idea of Pan-Africanism by African intellectuals such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Joseph Casely Hayford, George Padmore, Alex Quasion-Sackey and others, was the Berlin Conference of 1885 during which Africa was dissected without the common consent of the member countries (Prah, 1997:24). In this context, Geiss (1974:5) notes:

Pan-Africanism is thus predominantly a modern movement. It is the reaction of the most advanced most intensively Europeanized Africans and Afro-Americans to contact with the modern world. Its representatives have been African or Afro-American who in many cases have had an academic education in Europe, America or West Africa, or who were exposed for a long time to modern influences in their own country. They embraced the European and North American principles of equality and democracy and on this basis elaborated their own ideology of emancipation from White supremacy.

From the preceding views, it can be concluded that Pan-Africanist thought was amongst others, as indicated in Esedebe's definition below, intended to be a counterpoint to the cultural and psychological effects of colonialism, Western racism, and first and foremost, slavery.

Esedebe in his work *Pan Africanism: The Idea and Movement, 1776-1991* (1994:4) defines Pan-Africanism as follows:

With some simplification, we can say that Pan-Africanism is a political and cultural phenomenon that regards Africa, Africans and African descendants abroad as a unit. It seeks to regenerate and unify Africa and promote a feeling of oneness among the people of the African world. It glorifies the African past and inculcates pride in African values.

Cultural enterprises, such as the visual arts, music, dance, and linguistic acumen, are crucial components with regard to assimilating Black Africans, both on the continent and abroad in terms of the Pan-African vision (Campbell, 2006:31). Instilling pride amongst Black Africans with regard to its arts and culture should feature prominently in the holistic vision of Pan-Africanism (Campbell, 2006:28).

Marcus Garvey (1986:77) provides a classic description of the term *Négritude* within the context of the migrant labour, share-cropping, and subsistence farming, which the majority of Black North Americans were subjected to during the post-reconstruction period of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The quotation of Garvey below is worth citing at some length since it articulates the assumption that *Négritude* indicates a Black African superiority positing Black Africans as possessing a divine status in that Black Africans resemble gods. Garvey (1986:77) announces:

... was not the Negro a power, was he not great once? Yes, honest students of history can recall the day when Egypt, Ethiopia, and Timbuktu towered above Europe and Asia ... Africa was peopled with a race of cultured black men who were masters in art, science, and literature. Men who were cultured and refined. Men who it was said were like Gods. Poets of old sang in beautiful sonnets of the delight it afforded the gods to be in companionship with the Ethiopians ... Get organized, and you will compel the world to respect you. If the world fails to give you consideration because you are black men, because you are Negroes, four hundred million of you shall go through organization, shake the pillars of the universe and bring down creation. (ECGCP)

### **4.3 NÉGRITUDE AND THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE – PAN-AFRICAN LITERATURE AND ART MOVEMENTS**

The movements known as Negritude and the Harlem Renaissance, “spearheaded by Black African and Black African American leaders emphasised culture as a means for holistic empowerment and created a need for African people to define culture on their own terms” (Campbell, 2006:28).

In turn, Campbell (2006:28) asserts that Black African artistic skills, here denoting fine art, literature, poetry, music, and other art forms on the continent and in the diaspora, were undermined, brandished and misconstrued. This to the extent where non-African art academics made it their mission to substantiate that Black Africans simply did not possess a culture.

*Négritude* and the Harlem Renaissance both accentuated the rehabilitation of the Black person. Both focused on the Black person’s aspirations for elevation (Ogunyemi, 2013:50). The *Négritude* aesthetic in literature accentuates the rehabilitation of the Black person and it stresses the innate dignity of African folk culture, which it insisted, was still a vault in the “African Personality” (Ogunyemi, 2013:50).

Most writers of these epochs created a literature of which the contents wage wars against existing perceptions about Black Africans (Ogunyemi, 2013:50). This frequently emanated from decolonial resistance against an internalised sense of inferiority, with the affirmation that “black is beautiful”. Both movements found an increasingly important outlet in the spheres of literature, both scholarly and creatively (Vaillant, 1990:93-94).

Three sisters, Jane, Paulette and Andree Nardal from Martinique, who hosted a “Salon” in Paris, were introduced to Black American writers such as Langston Hughes and Claude McKay, who were authors of the Harlem Renaissance movement (Vaillant, 1990:93-94). For the three sisters, these writers were the embodiment of black pride, the consciousness of a culture and an affirmation of a distinct identity (Vaillant, 1990:93-94)! The characteristics of the Black American writers were to

the three sisters in sharp contrast with French assimilationism (Vaillant, 1990:93-94). They were inspired and ready to proclaim the “*Négritude*” of the “*new Negro*”! (Vaillant, 1990:93-94). The designation or identity “*Négritude*” was also the title of the *Anthology of Harlem Writers* by Alain Locke, which duly impressed Léopold Sédar Senghor and his friends, these being Leon Gontran Damas and Aimé Césaire (Vaillant, 1990:93-94).

Léopold Sédar Senghor, an ex-President of Senegal earned acclaim for promoting “*Négritude*” on a grand scale (Campbell, 2006:33). To Senghor, *Négritude* embraced “the whole of the values of civilization-cultural, economic, social and political – which characterize the Negro African World” (Campbell, 2006:33; see also Colvin, 1981:229). Senghor (quoted in Campbell, 2006:33) states:

We would think, and we would say that we were, we Negroes, the salt of the earth, that we were the bearers of an extra-ordinary message that nobody else could proffer except us. Un-consciously through Osmosis and reaction at the same time, we would speak like Hitler and colonialists, we ... would extol the blood ... After the negation of white values, the affirmation of Negro values.

Senghor, in no uncertain terms, extols the virtues of Black Africans, assigning the spiritual virtue to them which Jesus designated to those who believe in Him, as being the salt of the earth. For Senghor, Africa was a land of innocence, a sort of earthly paradise free from original sin (Hymans, 1971:57). Senghor in Hymans (1971:71) manifested a racial pride, which proved to be evident throughout his literary career. Senghor in Hymans (1971:71), assigns Africa the status of being the continent through which humanity originated and proclaims the superiority of traditional African culture and religion. Senghor (quoted in Hymans, 1971:57) confirms the accolades when he states:

In the hours of grave difficulties, in the hours of discouragement and doubt, we only have to think of Pharaonic Egypt to convince ourselves that Africa played a primordial role in the elaboration of civilization. Africa, cradle of the Negro, indeed of Homo sapiens.

Innate to the *Négritude* movement was the despising of the West (Nubukpo, 2007:15). During his anti-Western phase, Senghor in 1930 “hypnotised himself” to the extreme that all white women looked ugly to him (Hymans, 1971:72). Senghor (quoted in Hymans, 1971:72) asserts:

“All that belonged to white Europe was insipid to us: its reason, its art, its women

Senghor could not resist returning to the African continent of his youth finally, the continent, which was almost perfect (Nubukpo, 2007:16). According to Senghor (quoted in Hymans, 1971:72):

. . . the African poets have a completely romantic idea of Africa: it is a refuge from the ugliness and the inhumanity of the American world; it is a bath from primitive life cleaning away the sophistication of white culture.

Senghor as quoted in Hymans (1971:71) contends:

Relying on the works of anthropologists, pre-historians, ethnologists – paradoxically white, we proclaim ourselves, along with Aimé Césaire, “The Eldest sons of the Earth”. Did we not dominate the world, up to and including the Neolithic period, fertilize the civilizations of the Nile and of the Euphrates before they became the innocent victims of white barbarians, nomads melting out of their Eurasian plateau? I confess, our pride turned quickly into racism . . . We then had the sincerity of youth AND passion.

Senghor’s exalting of the unparalleled virtues and prowess of Black Africans is prevalent among some of the African politicians/activists, anthropologists, writers, poets, theologians, and philosophers referred to in this paper. The questions I wish to pose here are whether such adulation of Black Africans is:

- i. Whether such adulation of Black Africans is borne from a reaction to political oppression by “white barbarians”?
- ii. Whether such adulation of Black Africans is sowing the seed for post perceptions of Black Africans claiming to be God’s chosen people (ECGCP)?

In this regard, Césaire (2009:91) states:

... If anybody asks me what my conception of Négritude is...we must have a concrete consciousness of what we are – that is, the first fact of our lives: that we are black; that we were black, and we have history, a history that contains certain cultural elements of great value; and that Negroes were not, as you put it, born yesterday, because there have been beautiful important black civilizations.

The Harlem Renaissance is a movement that represents a new alertness, a new confidence, and a new perspective for the black writers who have dual experiences as being “*Negro*” (Ogunyemi, 2013:47). It gave the “*Negro*” protest writer a new wit or satiric approach in the fight for equality and a new appreciation for all genres

of folklore (Ogunyemi, 2013:47). The movement ignited a conventional interest in Africa as the homeland, at least thereby, enhancing pride in the race (Ogunyemi, 2013:47). For over ten years Aimé Césaire and Leon Gontra Damas oversaw a flourishing movement that said an absolute “NO” to French cultural imperialism, rejected the European denunciation of African history, sought to escape from assimilation into French culture, and embraced the Harlem Renaissance (Martin, 1996:278). The Harlem Renaissance just like the *Négritude* Movement, set about presenting Africans and their cultures as the best in the world (Nubukpo, 2007:13). This indicates superiority i.e. that some aspects of traditional African culture and also religion is superior to Western or Christian notions (which rhetorically may be a response to the decolonial resistance).

Both movements evolved as a result of the inferiority of Blacks in comparison with the Whites. In the US, American Blacks were rated second best and were regarded as second-class citizens (Nubukpo, 2007:3). Black Africans were considered incapable of governing their states and so their countries had to be colonised by the white people who claimed that they belonged to a superior race (Nubukpo, 2007:3). Even though the Harlem Renaissance and *Négritude* were different literary movements; the former developing in the US in the 1920's and the latter in France in the 1930's, both movements shared a common preoccupation of uplifting the black race (Nubukpo, 2007:5).

A further commonality between the Harlem Renaissance and *Négritude* was a preoccupation with what both Césaire and Senghor referred to as a prehistoric glorious Africa with the ancient Egyptian culture serving as a cradle for humanity (Hymans 1971:71). Césaire and Senghor are extolling of Africa which reflects a claim for superiority, that is, that some aspects of traditional African culture, here with special reference to the virtues of ancient Egypt, are superior to Western or Christian notions, which historically may be a response to decolonial resistance.

Marcus Garvey also assisted in the initiation of the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920's with an unparalleled promotion of African-conscious literary activity (Martin, 1996:275). Garvey defined the aesthetic of the current literary standards of Blacks as offensive, and in his essay on “African Fundamentalism” in 1924, called for a

radically renewed literary approach by Black Africans (Martin, 1996:275). Garvey mustered a decolonial resistance against an internalised sense of inferiority. Garvey (quoted in Martin, 1996:4) declares:

The time has come for the Negro to forget and cast behind him his hero worship and adoration of other races, and to start out immediately to create and emulate heroes of his own. We must canonize our own saints, create our martyrs, and elevate to positions of fame and honour black men and women who have made their distinct contributions to our racial society... We must inspire a literature and promulgate a doctrine of our own without any apologies to the powers that be. The right is ours and God's. Let contrary sentiment and cross opinions go to the winds.

Chidi Maduka in *The intellectual and the power structure* (1999) highlights Garvey's vision. Maduka (1999:123) notes:

In order to find a black version of a hero, one must look some place other than the definitions proffered by Western traditions. One can find him in the character types who are immortalized in Black songs and legends, in Black fact and reality. He is the rebel leader who revolts against physical bondage, and the runner who of his hand, the supreme game runner, who survives through heart-courage-the power of his rap-conversation, and the bossiness of his front, the effectiveness of the various guises which he wears in order to manipulate others, as well as the calmness-the icy cool-with which he faces the always changing fortunes of his life.

Du Bois is an ardent believer that the genres of art and literature are powerful instruments in the Pan-African quest (Campbell, 2006:31). To Du Bois, art is of no consequence if it does not project a political agenda (Campbell, 2006:31). Du Bois' uncompromising ideology of art having to be political propaganda is expressed by him when he declares:

Thus, all art is propaganda and ever must be, despite the wailing of the purists. I stand in utter shamelessness and say that whatever art I have for writing has been used always for propaganda for gaining the right of black folk to love and enjoy. I do not care a damn for any art that is not used for propaganda. But I do care when propaganda is confined to one side while the other is stripped and silent.

Du Bois refused to be misled by the Black African oppressors who depicted African art as "incomplete, homogenous or even deformed" (Campbell, 2006:41; see also Lewis, 2000:175,181).

Claims of the superiority of Black Africans is not a substantiation of *exclusivist claims to be God's chosen people* (ECGCP), but a claim concerning Black Africans' superiority in that some aspects of traditional African culture and also religion it is superior to Western or Christian notions. Historically, this has often proven to be an expression of decolonialism. Du Bois confirms this Black African superiority. Accordingly, Du Bois (1920:39) asserts:

Europe has never produced and never will in our day bring forth a single human soul who cannot be matched or over-matched in every human endeavor by Asia or Africa.

William W. Brown a Pan-African theologian in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and rated in the same category as Alexander Crummell and Edward W. Blyden, repudiated the idea of Black inferiority (Brown, 1863:32). Brown (1863:32) argues fervently that Africans were people of greatness who were brought to their cultural knees by the brutality and evils of human enslavement. Brown boldly declares that the “. . . Negro has not always been considered the inferior race. The time was when it stood at the head of science and literature” (Brown 1863:32).

As I move toward the founders and advocates of the Pan-African movement, the above overviews should have drawn sufficient light to the notion that through the history of Pan-Africanism there runs a continuous stream of religious language, themes and narratives, that which, in my view, seems to evidence a *religiosity*. I contend therefore that Pan-Africanism was more than just; an idealisation of Africa and/or an aspiration of a “Africa-nationalising” project, but a Pan-African theology.

## **4.4 FOUNDERS AND ADVOCATES OF THE PAN-AFRICAN MOVEMENT**

### **4.4.1 Introduction**

A brief discussion follows below of the main proponents of Pan-Africanism that include politicians, theologians, members of the clergy, and individuals of Christian and other convictions, and how in my opinion exclusivist claims are made in Pan-Africanism of Black Africans being God's chosen people (ECGCP).

Nineteenth-century Black American Ethiopionism protagonists gained a stronghold in Africa through the missionary endeavours of denominations with the likes of the African Episcopal Church (AME) (Clarke, 2013:158). African American Ethiopionists such as Martin Delany, Alexander Crummell, and Henry McNeal Turner were the chief contenders for Africa's religious independence to counteract the White leadership and ecclesiastical control in Africa (Clarke, 2013:158). Among these Black American leaders were those who firmly believed that a redemptive role in the liberation of Africa and resident Black Africans had been conferred upon the Black Americans (Clarke, 2013:158). Clarke (2013:158) notes that an important study that examined the self-understanding of Black African Americans had been undertaken by Eric Michael Washington. The target audience for this research were the leaders of the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. whose missionary philosophy from 1880 to 1930, constituted the core theme of Washington's research (Clarke, 2013:158). Washington researched the notion of Black African American Baptists' claim to have the vocation of educating those Black Africans who were residing in South Africa on God's "Providential design," which prescribed that the gospel of Jesus Christ had to be preached by Christian Black African Americans to Black Africans residing in Africa (Clarke, 2013:158). Creating and suggesting the theme of a Black American Ideal which I phrase as "Black like América". Through his research, Washington claimed to have ascertained that both local Black African American Baptists; "local", here denoting the USA; and American African missionaries, were called through God's Providence to "go to Africa to redeem Black Africans both spiritually and materially" (Clarke, 2013:158). As noted earlier in this study, I detected a Black African American spiritual paternalism with regard to those

African Blacks who were residing in Africa during this period, which, in my opinion, warrants further research (Black like América).

#### **4.4.2 Martin Delany (1812-1885)**

A new movement specifically aimed at creating an independent black nationality originated in the USA by the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Adeleke, 2010:496). This movement, commonly known as “emigration”; to distinguish it from colonisation; was initiated by Martin Delany, Henry Garnet, Alexander Crummell, and Henry McNeal Turner. The significance of emigration as opposed to colonisation, was that it witnessed a sustained attempt by alienated Black Americans to contend vigorously for an independent nationality in Africa (Adeleke, 2010:497). Delany is regarded as one of the pioneers of the founding of this organisation which had as its vision the establishing of a nationality for Black Americans which was independent of the USA (Adeleke, 2010:497). Delany is broadly acknowledged for his mentorship in the “back-to-Africa” movement in the period 1850 to 1860 (Adeleke, 2010:497). Delany perceived an inseparable link between racism and nationhood (Delany, 1852:12). According to Delany (1852:12), the quest for nationhood is a natural outflow of supreme rulership. Delany (1852:12) states:

... in all ages in almost every nation, existed a nation within a nation – a people who although forming part and parcel of the population, yet here from the force of circumstances known by the peculiar position they occupied forming in fact, by the deprivation of political equality with others, no part and if any, but a restricted part of the body politic of such nations, is also true.

To Delany examples of races that were victims of domination and marginalisation were the Poles in Russia, the Hungarians in Austria, and the Scotch, Irish and Welsh in Britain (Adeleke, 2010:497). To Delany, these references served as a global reality to posit the black experience in America as an apt example of a similar colonial situation (Adeleke, 2010:497). The Black Americans were “a nation within a nation” (Delany, 1852:12), thus being deprived of all the benefits and legal rights which those who possessed a natural American nationality, were privy to (Delany, 1852:12). Delany campaigned for a Black identity that would be in solidarity with Africa (Adeleke, 2010:497). In pursuit of this goal, he hosted a national emigration summit in Cleveland Ohio in 1854 where he was given the mandate to investigate the

prospect of a Black nationality in Africa in his capacity as president. He physically engaged in a visit to Africa in the 1850s during which tour he stopped over in Liberia and other West African countries. This was to explore the possibilities for Black Americans to settle in Africa with the vision of establishing an independent black nation in Africa (Adeleke, 2010:497). For Delany (Adeleke, 2010:498) Africa epitomised the virtues of a prosperous nationality and he thus devoted the second part of the nineteenth century, to the campaigning for a seamless relocating of financially independent and entrepreneurial Black Americans to Africa. Africa, through the arrival of competent Black Americans and given its solely African soil, would to Delany serve as a platform from where Black independence would distinguish itself as politically, economically and culturally competent (Adeleke, 2010:498). To Delany, this venture would confer the dawn of a new aeon vesting in a new continent upon Black Americans, this being Africa (Adeleke, 2010:498) (Black like América). Delany was adamant that blacks would never be respected or given their rights and privileges whilst their plights and causes were not represented by a united nationality (Adeleke, 210:498). A unified Black nation of Africa would to Blacks annihilate the false perceptions and myths that Africa had been plagued by for ages (Adeleke, 2010:498). As a counter to Eurocentric historiography, Delany accentuated Africa's civilised antiquity, with special emphasis on Africa's moral, social, and culturally rich achievements (Adeleke, 2010:498). Delany's ardour for Africa's achievements can be attributed to decolonial resistance against an internalised sense of inferiority an affirmation of Black African cultural identity with an underlying African worldview and advocacy of superiority vesting in Black African culture, which is often a natural outflow of decolonial resistance.

Henry Garnet, Henry McNeal Turner and Alexander Crummell, were staunch campaigners together with Delany, for the nationalisation of Africa being Black (Adeleke, 2010:498).

#### **4.4.3 Alexander Crummell (1819 – 1898)**

Alexander Crummell was an African American Episcopalian priest, missionary, and educator who was subjected to racism as a child, as a result of his passion to be educated (Ilo, 2013:144). This mode of discrimination has culminated when he was

refused enrolment at the General Theological Seminary, New York (Ilo, 2013:144). He studied theology education at the Diocese of Massachusetts (Ilo, 2013:144). In 1842, Crummell was ordained to the diaconate (Ilo, 2013:144). Two years later, he was invited to the Episcopal priesthood by the Bishop of Delaware (Ilo, 2013:144). Wilson Jeremiah Moses in his editing of the book by Alexander Crummell, *Destiny and Race* (1992), in his description of Crummell's personality through his quoting of Crummell, in my opinion, confirms that Crummell regarded African Blacks as a designated superior race. Moses (1992:5) describes Crummell as follows:

A passionate man with a keen, acerbic wit, but he was also a dark, brooding, Miltonic figure. He was optimistic concerning the future of black people in America and what he called "the destined superiority of the Negro" But he was also pessimistic about human nature and spoke repeatedly of human degradation and depravity.

Crummell founded a small mission in Philadelphia during which time he became "politically active, calling for equal suffrage and the abolishment of slavery" (Ilo, 2013:144). After being overlooked for the Pennsylvania diocesan convention, he resigned from the diocese and in 1848 he took up residence in England where he enrolled at Cambridge University (Ilo, 2013:144). Alexander Crummell was the first Black to graduate from this university. Crummell upon the completion of his bachelor's degree, fervently participated in the anti-slavery movement (Ilo, 2013:144). He pursued his academic career at the Liberia College, Liberia, through his appointment as professor of English and moral philosophy (Ilo, 2013:144). During his stay in Liberia, he sought to teach Liberians English and "convert them to Christianity" (Ilo, 2013:144). To Crummell, the Black African Americans were in need of a moral and spiritual revival and Liberia was seen by him as the country where his mission could materialise (Ilo, 2013:144). To Crummell, Liberia embodied the foundation for the establishing of a Christian Republic where Blacks could be revered through the Episcopal Church (Ilo, 2013:144). The Black clergy of Liberia's main objective was to establish an Episcopal church in Liberia's capital, which was completely liberated from European control (Ilo, 2013:149). Crummell's vision entailed the expanding of the Episcopal congregation into the National Church of Liberia (Ilo, 2013:149). However, the Foreign Committee of the Board of Missions did not share his vision for a National Church (Ilo, 2013:150). This resulted in him being denied the task of spearheading the denomination's expansion (Ilo, 2013:150).

Crummell's demise resulted in a split-up in his congregation, with some members of his flock veering to another church (Ilo, 2013:150). As a consequence of Crummell's ordeal, the church's executive council began to experience doubts about the feasibility of assigning pastoral positions to Black Americans in West Africa. Crummell tendered his resignation, subsequently and departed from West Africa in 1872 (Ilo, 2013:150).

For Crummell, Blacks were not to be patronised through public sympathy or some philosophical condescension but should be assigned rights because they are human (Ilo, 2013:153). Instead, he argued that Blacks should be given rights because it is the state of nature. In his *Natural rights argument*, Crummell declares that these "rights" were immanent and non-negotiable. These rights furthermore, were not to be conferred on Black Africans in a patronising manner. To Crummell, Blacks were the bearers of a nobler origin and purer birth which was manifested as a logical priority "and" metaphysical independence (Ilo, 2013:153). Whilst Crummell's lauding of the superiority of Black Africans cannot be regarded as a claim (ECGCP) to being divinely chosen, it in my view, nevertheless exalts Black Africans as possessing unparalleled virtues. Crummell argued that Blacks were the possessors of natural rights that had been conferred upon them by virtue of their human status, and not adjudicated, assigned to them, by a contextual legal environment (Ilo, 2013:153). To Crummell, the Christian message was the key component for delivering Blacks from their oppressive circumstances (Ilo, 2013:159). Yet despite this constituting his primary objective in his lecturing and preaching, the Liberians proved to be unconvinced by his beliefs (Ilo, 2013:159).

Crummell's African nationalism was linked irretrievably to his Christian beliefs (Adeleke, 2010:499). Crummell pursued the vision of uniting Blacks in Africa with Blacks in the "diaspora" vigorously, here with specific reference to Black Americans (Adeleke, 2010:499).

The first work to reflect the term "African Diaspora" appeared in 1976 and was edited by Martin Kilson and Robert I. Rotberg with an introduction by Shepperson (Manning, 2003:490). The topics in the latter publication represented a broad framework of the term which included Ethiopians in the Greco-Roman world through

medieval Islam, the Atlantic slave trade, the Indian Ocean, and 20<sup>th</sup> century cultural and political affairs in the Americas (Manning, 2003:490). Despite being an ardent African nationalist, Crummell perceived the Blacks from Africa to be negative and barbaric and advocated a vocation; which in my view reflects a “Black American ethnic superiority (Black like América)” in that Africa to Crummell would utilise cotton through the “civilised” (Adeleke, 2010:499) Black Americans as an economic tool to convert Africa into the Black man’s proverbial “city seated on a hill,” culminating in global acknowledgement and reverence for all Blacks (Black like América) (Adeleke, 2010:499). Crummell branded Blacks who resided in Africa as “barbaric and violent” (Ilo, 2013:148) and contended that the British government should employ whatever measures, even violence, to make Black Africans submissive (Ilo, 2013:148). In the same vein, Crummell, just like Martin Delany and Henry McNeil entertained the notion that in order for a Black nationality to be created, the tutor-and-leadership of “civilised” Black Americans. I repeat, the “tutorship” of “civilised” Black Americans! This to effect the transformation of a backward and benighted indigenous African population, was imperative (Akpan, 1982:283). Whilst many Black Americans fixed their hopes on Africa to thus re-affirm their African roots, their “cultural identity was Eurocentric and they wanted to shape Africa in this image” (Adeleke, 1999:77). Crummell and Turner exploited the enslavement of Black Americans, in a sense that such enslavement “served as their “awakening period when they were moved out of the darkness of Africa into the socialized light of Europeans values in America” (Adeleke, 2010:148) (Black like América).

Whilst the positive implications of the “redefinition of slavery” were the bridging of the gap between American Black nationalists and Europeans, enslavement rather than cultivating a dignified African identity, amounted to a nullification of the African identity” (Adeleke, 1999:80). Adeleke toils with the answer as to who Blacks are, and in his answer to the question “Who Are We” (Adeleke, 2010:148) concludes with what to me is a profound answer being “All depends on who you ask” (Adeleke, 2010:148). Adeleke’s (2010:160) article, commonly known as *Who are we? Africa and the problem of Black American identity* (1999), identifies a nationality identity crisis among Black Americans. Adeleke poses the question regarding whether Black Americans’ appeal to an African identity has any significance (Adeleke, 2010:160).

Adeleke upon having scrutinised Crummell's work, concluded that Black Americans "had more in common with their American identity than their African heritage" (Adeleke, 2010:160) (Black like América). Crummell (1856:19) anticipated ". . . a manly, noble, and complete African nationality" (Crummell, 1856:19), refuting "all the lying utterances of the speculative ethnographies and the pseudo-philosophies which have spawned from the press of modern days . . ." (Crummell, 1856:19). Crummell (1956:19) sees this projected Black African status as a sign of God's providence when he states:

The Providences of God have placed the Negro Race before Europe and America, in the most commanding position. From the sight of us, no nation, no statesmen, no ecclesiastics, and no ecclesiastical institution, can escape.

Crummell's attitude with regard to Black "Americans" being superior to Black Africans, surfaced when he (Crummell), together with Delany and Turner the status of "civilised" agents (Adeleke, 2010:500) assigned to themselves, which qualified and "even imposed upon them the divine vocation to be the conveyancers of civilization to Africa" (Adeleke, 2010:500). To the Crummell-Delany-Turner trio, Africa resembled backwardness and primitiveness (Adeleke, 2010:500). Its citizens were "heathens who were in desperate need of the infusing of "civilized" values from the West" (Adeleke, 2010:500). This Black American Nationalist triumphalistic "trio" regarded Africa as a mere geographical convenient location for their vision, and its enactment would be a replica of Western/European "socialisation" (Adeleke, 2010:500) (Black like América).

#### **4.4.4 Henry McNeal Turner (1834 – 1915)**

Henry McNeal Turner, the third member of the "trio," was a bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church. Turner proved to be a vigorous advocate for the emigration of Black Americans to Africa (Kelly, 2002:21). Turner had no compassion for the United States since to him its Constitution was a filthy rag, dishonest, of ill repute to Black Americans, and needed to be treated with contempt by every Negro citizen (Kelly, 2002:21). Turner condemned white supremacy because to him it was the primary cause of Blacks despising themselves (Kelly, 2002:21). Black emancipation could only be achieved if Blacks were able to protect

and govern their own interests (Kelly, 2002:21). Turner mustered a great pro-Africa return among the poor and the farmers for whom any destiny would be an improvement on the Jim Crow South (Kelly, 2002:21). Turner inaugurated his African Methodist Episcopal Church's mission in South Africa in 1896 and paved the way for a greater acceptance of a Black Jesus when he affirmed that "*God is a Negro*" (Turner quoted in Johnson, 2015:29). Turner asserts:

We have so much right biblically and otherwise to believe that God is a Negro as you ... white people have to believe that God is a fine looking, symmetrical and ornamental white man... Every race of people since time began who have attempted to describe their God by words, or by paintings or by carvings, or any other form or figure, have conveyed the idea that the God who made them and shaped their destinies was symbolized in themselves, and why should not the Negro believe that he resembles God as much as other people? We do not believe that there is any hope for a race or people who do not believe that they look like God. (Black like América)

Turner was adamant that Blacks needed a Negro nationality for self-respect (Adeleke, 2010:498). To Turner, Africa embodied the cornerstone of this *Negro* nationality because he anticipated "no shelter from the stormy blast, from the red tide of persecution, from the horrors of American prejudice" (Adeleke, 2010:498). Turner like Delany accentuated the connection between "racism in America and the quest for an independent black nationality" (Adeleke, 2010:498). Turner's advocacy of an African nationality was triggered by his expulsion together with other black state legislators, from the Georgia Legislature in 1870 (Adeleke, 2010:498). This misfortune, together with further even stricter impositions like the US Supreme Court decision of 1883 that annulled the civil rights acts of 1873, according to which discrimination against Black Americans in public places was a criminal offence, incited Turner to campaign vigorously for a black nationality which was totally independent (Adeleke, 2010:498). For Turner, Africa possessed the innate prospects for Black Americans and Black Africans in other parts of the world, to be endowed with dignity and self-confidence through a black nationality (Adeleke, 2010:498). Turner (quoted in Redkey, 1971:83) avers:

Africa will be the thermometer that will determine the status of the Negro the world over. The Negro will never be anything here while Africa is shrouded in heathen darkness. The elevation of the Negro in this and all other countries is indissolubly connected with the enlightenment of Africa.

Turner by designating Black Africans as “shrouded in heathen darkness” (Turner, as quoted in Redkey (1971:83), does to me as numerous referred to in this study, desecrate those Black Africans who reside in Africa, as notoriously irreligious! Turner contends that contrary to the belief that Black Africans are despite the achievements and accomplishments of Blacks, this would be of no avail to Turner if Blacks do not produce the evidence of possessing the skills and ability to facilitate their own independent nationality (Adeleke, 2010:498-499). (Black like America). In Turner’s view, Africa was the ideal breeding ground for the enacting of the competencies of all Blacks (Adeleke, 2010:490). In his quest for an independent Black nationality, Turner (quoted in Redkey, 1971:43) notes:

Nothing less than a nationality will bring large prosperity and acknowledge manhood to us as a people.

During the period 1891 to 1898, Turner visited Africa four times (Carey, 2017:87). To Turner, the continent embodied the political and economic capacity of which Blacks in the United States were deprived (Carey, 2017:87). To Turner (Carey, 2017:88), the key for self-determination for Black Americans was vested in Pan-Africanism and Black Nationalism. It is important to note that Turner (Redkey, 1971:44) had a vision for a “United States of Africa” Turner, as quoted in Redkey (1971:143), campaigned for Blacks to go back to Africa where Black Americans could: “Build a civil government that would serve as an asylum for the oppressed and degraded portion of our race.” (Black like América).

Turner in some cases whilst being an ardent “Africa for Black Africans” campaigner, simultaneously regarded Africa *per se* as undeveloped, and its citizens – here denoting African Blacks residing in Africa – as “barbaric and unskilled,” deeming it necessary that they had to be “converted” from a heathenistic African heritage to the Christian virtues vesting in “colonial” Christianity (see Turner in West *et al* 2009:134). Turner assigns a trait of a divine vocation to “colonial” Christianity regarding its foothold as the “light of civilisation” (Turner as quoted in an essay by West *et al.* 2009:134) (Black like América). Turner (quoted in West *et al.*, 2009:133) in this regard asserts:

God had willed the enslavement of diasporic blacks so that they would be taught the “civilizing” traits of Christianity, the Protestant work ethic, thrift, and moral rectitude, qualities they would then return to Africa to promulgate, in other words, diasporic blacks would transmit the “light of civilization” to a slumbering “Dark Continent” that would be regenerate as a modernized independent Christian Africa resplendent in God’s favour . . . For diasporic Blacks an independent “Africa for Africans” would be a “Promised Land”, an emigrationist homeland that would provide historical and cultural grounding and serve as a source of protection.

In my view Turner assigns a type of blessing in disguise to those Blacks who were the victims of slavery, since he argues that if it had not been for their rearing in the civilised colonial countries, they would not have had the equipping necessary to construct a continent, here denoting Africa. This to me resembles a notion of Black Americans regarding themselves as superior to Black Africans, a North American Black nationalism, which in my opinion is obnoxious, arrogant, and patronising.

The “providential design” ideology, coupled with black modernity affected solidarity in the countries where those who were of African descent, were residing (West et al., 2009:134). Prominent leaders and Back-to-Africa protagonists like W. E. B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey also promulgated the “providential design” theory (West et al., 2009:134).

#### **4.4.5 W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963)**

W.E.B. Du Bois was an American sociologist, historian, activist, Pan-African author, and editor (Shivani, 2007:259). He was one of the first African-Americans to support the idea of Pan-Africanism and attended the First Pan-African Conference, held in London from July 23-25, 1900 (Shivani, 2007:259). Interestingly, this conference was hosted “just prior to the Paris Exhibition of 1900 “in order to allow tourists of African descent to attend both events” (Shivani, 2007:259). The organisers, all originating from the Caribbean, were Anténor Firmin, Bénito Sylvain and the Trinidadian barrister, Henry Sylvester Williams (Shivani, 2007:259). Du Bois played a leading role at the conference, which amongst others, included the drafting of a letter entitled “Address to the Nations of the World” that was addressed to European leaders, appealing to them to combat racism, to grant the “colonies in Africa, and the West Indies, the right to self-government, and to demand political and other rights

for African Americans” (Shivani, 2007:259-260). Her Majesty, Queen Victoria, responded to his correspondence by stating that her government “will not overlook the interests and welfare of the native races” (Woronoff, 1970:18). The issues of African equality and achievement were top of the agenda at this conference after which a series of Pan-African congresses were hosted during the period 1919-1994 (Farisani, 2002:8). After the conference delegates unanimously adopted Du Bois’ “Address to the Nations of the World” letter and sent it to various heads of state where people of African descent were living and being oppressed (Edwards, 2009:33). The “Address”, in addition to the demands as mentioned above, “implored the United States and the imperial European nations to ‘acknowledge and protect the rights of people of African descent’ ‘and to respect the integrity and independence of “the free Negro States of Abyssinia, Liberia, and Haiti” (Edwards, 2009:33). The “Address” was signed by Bishop Alexander Walters (President of the Pan-African Association), Rev. Henry B. Brown (Vice-President from Canada, Williams (General Secretary) and Du Bois, who was the chairman of the committee on the “Address” (Edwards, 2009:33). The “Address” further included Du Bois’ observation that “the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the “colour-line” (Du Bois, 1996:54). After identifying and discussing the major problems of the world, Du Bois (1996:47) concludes his critical survey of these problems by stating:

Confirms the proposition with which I started – the world problem of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is the problem of the colour line, the question of the relation of the advanced races of men who happened to be white to the great majority of the undeveloped or half-developed nations of mankind who happen to be yellow, brown or black.

Du Bois used this now world-renowned “colour-line” “argument again three years later in the “Forethought” of his book, *The Souls of black folk*” (1903) (Du Bois, 1994:19; see also Edwards, 2009:33). In May 1909, Du Bois attended the National Negro Conference in New York. The meeting led to the creation of the National Negro Committee, chaired by Oswald Villard, and dedicated” to the campaigning for civil rights, equal voting rights, and equal educational opportunities (Lewis, 1993:256-258). The following spring in 1910, at the second National Negro Conference, the attendants created the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)” (Lewis, 1993:263-264). Upon Du Bois’ suggestion, the word “coloured,” rather than “black” was used to include “dark-skinned people

everywhere” (Lewis, 1993:264). Dozens of civil rights supporters, both black and white, participated in the founding of the NAACP, but its most prominent executive officers were white, including Mary Ovington, Charles Edward Russell, William English Walling, and its first president Moorfield Storey (Lewis, 1993:253-264). Earlier in 1897, Du Bois (1996:47) is reported to have stated that:

...if the Negro were to be a factor in the world’s history it would be through a Pan-African movement.

Du Bois can be regarded as one of the founding fathers of Pan-Africanism. He presented himself as an African boldly declaring “his belief in the African Race, in the “beauty of its genius, the sweetness of its soul and its strength” (Du Bois 1920:1).

Between 1919 and 1927, four further Pan-African Congresses, which became known as the Du Boisan Congresses, were hosted and heralded the first phase of Pan-Africanism (Tondi, 2005:316). These congresses as noted by Tondi (2005:316) were:

- i. The First Pan-African Congress, Paris, 1919
- ii. The Second Pan-African Congress, London, Brussels and Paris, 1921
- iii. The Third Pan-African Congress, London and Lisbon, 1923
- iv. The Fourth Pan-African Congress, New York, 1927.

The congresses were hosted to maintain the continuity of the Pan-African movement and unite the people of African origin and descent (Tondi, 2005:317). Du Bois was a member of the three-person delegation from the NAACP who attended the 1945 conference in San Francisco at which the United Nations (UN) was established (Lewis, 1993:654-657). The delegation wanted the United Nations to endorse racial equality and to bring an end to the colonial era. To push the United Nations in that direction, Du Bois drafted a proposal that “the colonial systems of government undemocratic, a social peril, and dominant cause of wars” (Lewis, 1993:654-657). The NAACP proposal received support from China, Russia and India but was virtually ignored by the other major powers (Lewis, 1993:655-657). Subsequently, these proposals were not included in the United Nations charter (Lewis, 1993:655-657). After the United Nations conference, Du Bois published” *Colour and Democracy: Colonies and Peace* (1945), a book that attacked colonial empires and,

in the words of one reviewer “contains enough dynamite to blow up the whole vicious system whereby we have comforted our white souls and lined the pockets of generations of free-booting capitalists” (Lewis, 1993:655-657). In late 1945, Du Bois attended the fifth and final Pan-African Congress,” at the Charlton Town Hall, Manchester, England (Lewis, 1993:661). This congress drew over two hundred delegates across the “coloured world” (Thomson, 1969:31). It was the most productive of the five congresses, and it is here that Du Bois met Kwame Nkrumah the future first president of Ghana, who would later invite him to Africa (Lewis, 1993:256-258). Du Bois helped to submit petitions to the UN concerning discrimination against Black African Americans (Martin, 1996:4). These petitions culminated in the report and petition called ‘We charge genocide’ submitted to the Civil Rights Congress in 1951 (Martin, 1996:4). “We charge genocide” accused the US of systematically sanctioning murders and inflicting harm against African Americans and therefore committing genocide” (Martin, 1996:4). Fierce rivalry existed between Du Bois and Marcus Garvey. Thompson (1969:42) draws the following comparison between them:

The differences in their upbringing coloured their outlook. The one was a scholar and university don the other a mass leader, largely self-taught; the one a retiring figure, the other a showman and great orator; the one diplomatic in his approach to his people’s problems, the other a vociferous character.

#### **4.4.6 Marcus Garvey (1887-1940)**

In this section, I provide a brief discussion of Marcus Garvey the mass leader, orator, and vociferous campaigner of Pan-Africanism. Marcus Mosiah Garvey Jr. was a Jamaican political leader, publisher, journalist, entrepreneur, and orator, who was a staunch proponent of the Black Nationalism and Pan-Africanism movements, to which end he founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) (Dagnini, 2008:198). The UNIA to Garvey served as the platform from where he could promote and grow his Pan-African vision and African nationalism (Adeleke, 2010:501). A further objective of the UNIA was to establish a separate but equal tertiary educational system for Black Jamaicans (Dagnini, 2008:198). Education to Garvey included the liberation of his people through the development of Black consciousness in order for Black people to achieve political, economic, and cultural independence (Dagnini, 2008:198). Garvey also founded the Black Star Line, which

promoted the return of the African Diaspora to their ancestral lands. Garvey is considered the pioneer of the Back-to-Africa movement (Dagnini, 2008:199). Garvey, a native from Jamaica arrived in the US in 1916 inspired by a Pan-African and global consciousness (Adeleke, 2010:501). In the United States, Garvey (Adeleke, 2010:501) identified himself with migrant workers from West India among whom he created an awareness of their dignity, and initiated the structures whereby they could function as an entity. Garvey relocated to London in 1912 where he enrolled at a college, whilst performing casual duties at the docks (Adeleke, 2010:501). Garvey upon discovering migrants from West India also working in London, and Africans studying in the city, came to the realisation that regardless of the countries in which Blacks were residing, working, and studying, they had all become victims of “imperialism and racism” (Adeleke, 2010:501).

Adeleke argues that the Black Nationalism Garvey advocated proved to be a mammoth, if not impossible task, due to the extreme forms of racism that had ingrained an inferiority complex in Blacks for centuries, making the task of unifying them under the mantle of a common nationality, and almost impossible mission (Adeleke, 2010:501). Garvey’s task was further impaired by caste systems among Blacks, with special reference to the members of the black middle class in Jamaica (Adeleke, 2010:501). Garvey’s first objective was to educate Blacks to cultivate a “consciousness” (Adeleke, 2010:501) of a common “nationhood” (Adeleke, 2010:501). To Garvey, Blacks had to be reminded of their “African ancestry” and reminded that their ancestral roots were communal and that Black Africans possessed “cultural attributes” (Adeleke, 2010:501). Garvey (1971:5) in his quest for the cultivation of a Black “nationhood”, contends that:

The Negro must have a country and a nation of his own ... a government of their own. To be at par, equal with whites was to Garvey impossible unless Blacks would: “... first on their own account proving to the world that they are capable of evolving a civilization of their own.

Garvey’s aspiration for an African Black nationhood is an affirmation of human dignity which is almost by definition universal applying to all various forms of Black African humanism, and notions that “black lives matter” and “black is beautiful”. Garvey (1971:34) states:

Nationhood is the strongest security of any people, and it is for this that the UNIA strives at this time.

Garvey intended that persons of African ancestry in the African “Diaspora to redeem the nations of Africa and for the European colonial powers to leave the continent” (Garvey, 1986:163) Garvey’s essential ideas about African nationalism is aptly expressed in the formulation below. Garvey (1986:163) declares:

Our union must know no clime, boundary, or nationality ... to let us hold together under all climes and in every country.

Amongst Garvey’s numerous accomplishments was his weekly newspaper *The Negro World*, which enabled him to inform readers about UNIA activities, with an underlying Pan-African message (Dagnini, 2008:200). Garvey’s vision was to restore Black people’s dignity, of which slavery and colonisation had deprived them, and to convince Black people that they were not inferior beings and that they, through knowledge, technical and financial means must liberate themselves from the yoke of White people (Dagnini, 2008:200). Garvey became increasingly involved in the Black Star Line, a shipping line belonging to Black people and operated by and for them (Dagnini, 2008:200). Stocks were sold at UNIA conventions, whose long-term goal was the repatriation of Black Americans, Black Jamaicans and other Black Africans of the diaspora to their homeland, namely, Africa (Dagnini, 2008:200). Garvey saw himself as the “Provisional President to Africa,” showing his strong belief in his personal destiny as the redeemer of Africa and “He was a Christian but believed in a Black version of Christianity.” Garvey’s programme falls into the category of Black pride and Pan-Africanism (Dagnini, 2008:200). Garvey’s adamancy that Africa had to be the official continent for Black Africans both from and outside Africa, was officially formulated at the *Negro Race Convention*, hosted in New York in August 1920, when a document known as “The Great Charter”, was circulated among educated and semi-educated Black South Africans (Hill, 2006:11). Clauses 13 & 14 of this Garveyan (quoted in Hill, 2006:11) document declares:

We believe in the freedom of Africa for the Negro people of the world, and in the principle of Europe for the Europeans and Asia for the Asiatics. We also demand Africa for the Africans at home and abroad.

African Blacks and Africa as a people and a continent respectively, were not always considered inferior. Black Africans and Africa towered above the other races and countries of the world! Black Africans “were like the gods” (Garvey, 1986:77). Garvey through his elevation of Black Africans as being on a par with the gods does according to me assign a divine status to Black Africans. Rating Black Africans to whom he refers to as “the Ethiopian,” who, in contrast with Europeans being regarded as savages, engendered delight among the gods. Black Africans were highly cultured, of incomparable ancestry and soared above non-Black African nations. To me, Garvey’s adulation of Black Africans and his derision of non-Black African cultures signify a claim of African superiority over other nations, namely that the Black African culture and religion are superior to Western or Christian notions. I concede that Garvey’s heralding of Black Africans might be a response to decolonial resistance rhetorically. Garvey (1986:77) relates:

When Europe was inhabited by a race of cannibals, a race of savages, naked men, heathens and pagans, Africa was peopled with a race of cultured black men, who were masters in art, science, and literature; men who were cultured and refined; men, who, it was said, were like the gods. Even the great poets of old sang in beautiful sonnets of the delight in the gods to be in companionship with the Ethiopian ... The thing to do is to get organized; keep separated and you will be exploited, you will be robbed, you will be killed. Get organized, and you will compel the world to respect you. If the world fails to give you consideration because you are black men, because you are Negroes, four hundred million of you shall, through organization, shake the pillars of the universe and bring down creation ... But when we come to consider the history of man, was not the Negro a power, was he not great once? Yes, honest students of history can recall the day when Egypt, Ethiopia, and Timbuktu towered in their civilizations, towered above Europe, towered above Asia.

Rather than discarding the colour “black” as a symbol of degradation, Garvey, encouraged black mothers to provide “black dolls” to their black children to admire, while describing the literal “black’ skin colour as an image of God’s “perfect creation” (Garvey, 1970:29). Garvey (1970:29) refuted the notion that having a “black skin” was the Creator’s mistake, but instead saw it as God’s “perfect creation”. Garvey’s Pan-Africanist programme conjured a sense of “black” pride in Black Africans, regardless of their backgrounds. To Garvey, the equipping of blacks with distinguishing cultural symbols was imperative, an example being the creation of the Pan-African flag, on which the colours are black, red and green, and a composition of the Pan-African anthem.

Garvey is revered among a wide variety of famous indigenous Pan-Africanists and Black nationalists, who claimed that their League (UNIA) inspiration, emanated from him. These include Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of independent Ghana in 1957, Léopold Sédar Senghor, “the first President of Independent Senegal in 1960, and the father of the Negritude” movement, and Patrice Lumumba, “the first Prime Minister of Independent Congo in 1960.” Other leaders and well-known public figures inspired by Garvey, were Julius Nyerere, the first President of Independent Tanzania in 1962, Steve Biko, Nelson Mandela, Malcolm X, the Nigerian singer Fela Anikulapo Kuti and the Jamaican reggae stars, Burning Spear, and Bob Marley (Dagnini 2008:201). The term “Pan-Africanism” is attributed to both Garvey (1887-1940) and Henry Sylvester Williams (1869-1911), who are renowned for facilitating the largest Pan-African movement in history in collaboration with others.

Garvey, like most of the Pan-African activists, frequently employed the Bible to confirm his ideologies with regard to an Africa for the Black African, goal (Dagnini, 2008:2). It is important to note that Garvey showed great respect for the Bible, here particularly denoting the King James Version (“KJV”), and often referred to what he called the Holy Book, in his speeches (Dagnini, 2008:200). One of his favourite quotations was, as is the case with most Pan-African leaders, the often quoted verse from the Book of Psalms, Chapter 68, and verse 31 “Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God” Psalm 68: 31 (KJV); (Dagnini, 2008:202).

Garvey’s primary goals evolved around “the repatriation of Black people of the African Diaspora to Africa, and the creation of a strong Negro nation in Africa”. Garvey recommends “segregation rather than integration. He advocated separation between Whites and Blacks” and was distinctly opposed to intermixed couples. To Garvey “race purity” was of utmost importance, making the mission of Africa for the Africans non-negotiable (Dagnini, 2008:202). In Garvey’s above-mentioned claim I discern a type of racism in reverse. In March 1934, in Garvey’s magazine, *The Black Man*, Garvey recommended that his readers peruse Mein Kampf, expressing the hope that, one day, the Black race would produce its own Hitler... “Hitler has a lesson to teach and he is teaching it well” (Blaisdell 2004:x) (see also Dagnini, 2008:202).

Garvey further held Mussolini, Napoleon, and the White racist group Ku Klux Klan (KKK) (Blaisdell, 2004:75-77) in great esteem. Garvey (quoted in Blaisdell, 2004:75-77) in a speech delivered in New York (July 1922) asserts:

From impressions, from my observations, from my understanding, the Ku Klux Klan is a mighty white organization in the United States of America, organized for the purpose of upholding white supremacy in this country; organized for the purpose of making America a white man's country, pure and simple. The organization has absolutely no apology to make as far as its program is concerned – a program of making America a white man's country. [...] Whilst the Ku Klux Klan desires to make America absolutely a white man's country, the Universal Negro Improvement Association wants to make Africa absolutely a Black man's country.

With regard to religion, he was a Christian but believed in a Black version of Christianity. To support his beliefs Garvey used the “references to Ethiopia in the Bible as well as the following verse: “God created man in his image” (Genesis 1: 27). To Garvey, “God,” like his “image,” here denoting “Garvey,” is a Black man. Garvey denounced the exclusivist Eurocentric interpretations of the Bible, which to Garvey had contributed to the enslavement of Africans (Dagnini, 2008:202). The distinctive characteristic of Garvey's “faith was that he believed in a Black God, the ‘God of Ethiopia’ as he used to call him” and that he promoted an Afrocentric version of Christianity (Dagnini, 2008:202). Garvey's creed for the Negroes as indicated below, whilst on the surface proving to be a Black African's definition of one God, through his designating of this God as the God of Ethiopia, thus of Africa, does, in my opinion, constitute an exclusivist claim of Black Africans being God's chosen people (ECGCP). Garvey (quoted in Barrett, 1977:77) affirms:

We, as Negroes have found a new ideal. Whilst our God has no colour, yet it is human to see everything through one's own spectacles, and since the White people have seen their God through White spectacles, we have only now stated (late though it may be), to see our God through our own spectacles. The God of Isaac and the God of Jacob let Him exist for the race that believe in the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. We Negroes believe in the God of Ethiopia, the everlasting God – God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, the one God for all ages. That is God in whom we believe, but we still worship Him through the spectacles of Ethiopia. Garvey is by many considered to be the “apostle of black theology in the United States of America.

#### 4.4.7 Edward Blyden (1832-1912)

In this section, I feature the prominent West-Indian Pan-Africanist, Edward William Blyden. I consider Blyden as an ardent campaigner in terms of the “notion” of Blacks Africans and Black Africans of African descent together with Africa as a continent being postulated as the beneficiaries of what I deem as exclusivist claims to be God’s chosen people (ECGCP).

Blyden is a native of the Danish Island of St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands. During the period 1851-1912 Blyden’s destinies included Liberia, Sierra Leone and Lagos. Blyden was no doubt a most talented and devout individual (Pawliková-Vilhanová, 1998:165). Blyden’s parents Romeo and Judith; a tailor and a school teacher respectively; were born in 1794 and 1795 on St. Eustatius a Danish West Indian Island. His parents stemmed from “unadulterated African blood” and weren’t the victims of slavery (Pawliková-Vilhanová, 1998:165). Blyden after having been the victim of racism in the United States, Blyden at the expense of the American Colonization Society Liberia, decided to immigrate to the Republic of Liberia in Africa. Liberia was established as an American colony in 1822 and became independent in 1847. In Liberia, Blyden enrolled as a learner at the Alexander High School in Monrovia, studying theology, geography, mathematics and the classics (Pawliková-Vilhanová, 1998:165-166). Blyden in after completing his high school education was 1862 appointed professor of Classic Languages at Liberia College, the first secular English-speaking institution of higher learning in Tropical Africa, at which institution, he continued lecturing until 1871 (Pawliková Vilhanová, 1998:121). Blyden read Greek and Latin fluently, mastered all the Roman languages together with Arabic and Hebrew, and became versed in several West African languages (Pawliková-Vilhanová, 1998:156). Apart from his knowledge of African history, thought, culture, and traditions, Blyden also distinguished himself as a publicist of note, exhibiting outstanding skills in the writing of the English language, and public speaking (Pawliková-Vilhanová, 1998:168). At the tender age of nineteen Blyden was appointed as a correspondent of the *Liberian Herald* of which he became the editor in 1855-56. He subsequently in 1872 in Freetown founded his periodical entitled *Negro* (Pawliková-Vilhanová, 1998:168). Blyden’s journalistic acumen is evident in the array of articles he wrote, with these having appeared in several West

African journals (Pawliková-Vilhanová, 1998:168). Blyden was also a resident editor of a British periodical *The African World* (Pawliková-Vilhanová, 1998:168).

Blyden grew up among a Jewish community and since a young age was intrigued by the ancient and current history of “God’s chosen people” (Pawliková-Vilhanová, 1998:167), including “that marvellous movement called Zionism” (Blyden, 1898:209-210). Blyden’s (1898:23) passion for the ancient Hebrew language is reflected when he, states:

... to understand the Hebrew language – to read with facility the poets and prophets of the Old Testament, and the Talmud in the original ... was, as he himself admitted in *The Jewish Question*, one of the strongest wishes of his life and he taught himself Hebrew in his spare time.

Importantly, Blyden was motivated to study the Jewish question from the African “worldview,” (Blyden, 1898:211). To Blyden “the history of the African race, their enslavement, persecution, proscription, and sufferings, closely resembles that of the Jews” (Blyden, 1898:211). Blyden’s fascination with Zionism and its fervent appeal was engendered by the similarities between the hardships of the Jews and those of the Black Americans. Blyden (1898:210-212) in confirmation of the latter analogy declares:

The message of the great Zionist movement to the Jews, in some of its aspects, is similar to that which at this moment agitates thousands of the descendants of Africa in America, anxious to return to the land of their fathers.

Blyden’s vision was the “vindication of the African race” (Pawliková-Vilhanová, 1998:167). Blyden’s writings which featured in American journals on colonisation were characterised by a condemnation of slavery, racism, and a fervent vigour for the emigration of liberated Negroes to Liberia (Pawliková-Vilhanová, 1998:167). To Blyden, Liberia embodied the pinnacle of African and Western cultures, a culmination of a contemporary, advancing, African nation elected to fulfil a paramount vocation representative of the entire African race, and an exhibition of African prowess and skills (Pawliková-Vilhanová, 1998:167).

According to Blyden, Black Africans have been chosen for a corporate special mission and task, akin to that of Israel. Blyden (1967:127) confirms these aspirations and assessments when he avers:

It is the earnest desire of Liberians to see American Slavery speedily abolished ... Their object is the redemption of Africa and the disenthralment and elevation of the African race!!! Object worthy of every coloured man, of every Christian.

Blyden held Africa's past and its unique culture in high esteem, despite the persecution which the Negro race has had to endure. Blyden (1967:127) in this regard states:

In spite of it all, the Negro race has yet its part to play – a distinct part – in the history of humanity, and the continent of Africa will be the principal scene of its activity.

I consider Blyden's extolling of Black African culture and his assigning of Africa as the prime "scene of its activity" (Blyden 1967:127) of its future cultural dominion on humanity's history, a claim for superiority i.e. that some aspects of traditional African culture and also religion are superior to Western or Christian notions (which rhetorically may be a response to decolonised resistance). Blyden had no illusions in terms of his conviction of Black Africans being endowed with unique attributes and missions (Pawliková-Vilhanová, 1998:173). He campaigned for the cultivating of a West African cultural nationalism using as his manifesto the "African Pride", which to him vests in African history and culture (Pawliková-Vilhanová, 1998:173). To Blyden, Black Africans have a collective vocation similar to that of Israel. In this regard, Blyden asserts:

Africa may yet prove to be the spiritual conservatory of the world... when the civilized nations in consequence of their wonderful material development, shall have had their spiritual perceptions darkened and their spiritual susceptibilities blunted through the agency of a captivating and absorbing materialism, it may be that they may have to resort to Africa to recover some of the simple elements of faith; for the promise of that land; is that she shall stretch forth her hands unto God.

I interpret Blyden's projection of Africa destined to become the spiritual bastion of the entire world as a claim for Black Africans to as corporate agents have a special mission and task (akin to that of Israel amid the nations i.e. chosen for a special task). Blyden (1971:7-9) depicts the misery of the victims of slavery when he declares:

What under the sun can be worse than American slavery, that ‘mystery of iniquity by which energies of men are crushed and their spirit of manliness and independence almost extinguished? What condition can be worse to a rational being than that which deprives him in such a way, as he deems advantageous to himself, and makes him the tool and chattel of another man, with whom he stands equal in the eye of the great Creator?

At the Proceedings of the National Convention of Colored People and their Friends held in Troy, New York from 6 to 9 October 1847, Blyden said that God had ordained the present as the time when the people of Africa, long-dormant, long benighted, would awaken from their national slumbers. The result to Blyden would be the re-emergence of a black nation onto the world stage since to Blyden “Long years of darkness, imbecility and slavery have been our portion” . . . but God hath appointed us unto restoration: “For princes shall come out of Egypt and Ethiopia shall soon stretch forth her hands unto God” (Rael, 2003:271). Blyden’s thought in all its stages, centred “on the idea of race, race-pride, love of the Fatherland (Africa), and belief in a brilliant African renaissance” (Blyden, 1967:4). Blyden held the view that every race is a natural unit, having its own home, continent, character, and mission (Blyden, 1967:4). “He preached that following “the dictates of Providence, Negritia or Ethiopia” will soon “stretch out her hands unto God” and will be reborn” (Blyden, 1967:4). His ultimate goal was the vindication of the African race (Pawliková-Vilhanová, 1998:167). Blyden considered slavery “to be part of this divine plan because it was through the New World slavery experience that “the sons of Ham” (Black Africans) could absorb Christianity in order to affect “the regeneration of the African continent.” (Blyden quoted in Pawliková-Vilhanová, 1998:167).

At the same time as being a Christian abolitionist, Blyden was also a Pan-Negroist striving for the reunification of black peoples all over the world” (Blyden, 1967:4). To Blyden, a distinct gift with which African Blacks are endowed, is “the spirit of service born of the African’s spiritual genius” (Blyden, 1895:207). In this regard, Blyden (1895:207) asserts:

The supple, yielding, conciliatory, obedient, gentle, patient, musical spirit that is not full of offensive resistance – how sadly the white man needs it.

Blyden’s experience of the racial discrimination and humiliation of the Negro in the USA made him negative towards the Western culture (Bediako 1995:9). He also

began to see Western Christianity as an affirmation that Western people's sense of dignity of human nature is superficial and cannot provide a basis for establishing "the sense of dignity of the human nature" (Blyden 1967:31). Blyden maintained that the only way that Blacks could attain dignity was to sever themselves from those who were non-Black (Blyden 1967:31). Blyden (Blyden 1967:31) remarks:

The way the Negro would achieve their sense of dignity of human nature is to make a separation from Western people" maintaining racial exclusiveness.

Blyden branded Africa as "The Sphinx," using it as Africa's metaphor, thereby indicating that Africa "must solve her riddle at last" (Blyden, 1967:127). Blyden was the pioneer of engendering among Black Americans that they shared the same destiny as the Black Africans (Pawliková-Vilhanová, 1998:169). In Blyden's assessment of Blacks, I discern common reflections of an "African-Black-American superiority", an "American-Black-paternalism", over those Blacks who were and are currently residing in Africa, (Black like América) which in my opinion warrants further research. To Blyden, Black Americans had to return to Africa to impart to their fellow Black Africans "skills and standards"... "in order to improve the Africans' lot" (Pawliková-Vilhanová, 1998:169).

Blyden argues that: "Only the Negro will be able to explain the Negro to the rest of mankind" (Blyden 1967:263). Blyden (Blyden 1967:263) observes that:

The African at home (here denoting Africa) needs to be surrounded by influences from abroad, not that he may change his nature, but that he may improve his capacity.

Blyden, like Delaney, was fascinated with ancient Egypt and the seminal contribution of Black Africans to its civilization (Young III, 1992:55). Blyden contended that Black Africans "had been partly responsible for the gems of all the arts and sciences" (Blyden, 1971:57). Furthermore, subscribing to the diffusionist theory, Blyden intimated that to him, the Western Sudanese kingdoms' ancestors were the "progeny of the ancient black Egyptians whose ancestral home was above the sixth cataract" (Young III, 1992:55). In typical Garveyan vein in my view, Blyden has no illusions about Black Africans and Africa having a special mission and task akin to that of

Israel amid the nations, with Ethiopia being depicted as the bastion for this mission. In this regard, Blyden (quoted in July 2004:19) contends:

... no people in whom the religious instincts are deeper than among Africans. And in view of the materializing tendencies of the age, it may yet come to pass that when in Europe God has gone out of date... then earnest enquirers after truth leaving the seats of science and the “highest civilization”, will take themselves to Africa to learn lessons of faith and piety; for Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands unto God.

Considering Blyden’s contention that religious instincts and virtues are more profoundly vested in Black Africans than in any other race I wish to raise the question as to where or from whom this unparalleled spirituality originated? Blyden developed his own theory of the human being, and this constituted the premise of his concept of ‘Africanness,’ which evolved into the “*African personality*” (Pawliková-Vilhanová, 1998:170). His motivation sprang from a reaction to European notions of the inferiority of Black Africans (Pawliková-Vilhanová, 1998:170).

In my opinion, Blyden through his obsession to feature the human equality of Black Africans succumbed to the exact perception of which he was accusing the Europeans of. This through his exaltation of the Black African race as a superior race. Blyden (quoted in Cohen, 1980:214) notes the superior accomplishments Black Africans have maintained:

... [and they have] not made their existence by remarkable works by superior monuments in the political fields. Literature, Science or industry.

Through his notion of the “African personality”, Blyden argues, that in the case of Black Africans, as has been pursued by other races, Black Africans have a vocational duty that cannot be underestimated. Blyden (1893:201-203) avers:

For every one of us (here denoting Africans) – there is a special work to be done ... a work of tremendous necessity and tremendous importance – a work for the Race to which we belong. It is a great Race – great in its vitality, in its powers of endurance and its prospect of perpetuity ... there is a responsibility, which our personality (African Personality), our membership in this Race, involves. It is sad to think that there are some Africans especially among those who have enjoyed the advantages of foreign training, who are blind enough to the radical facts of humanity as to say, ‘Let us do away with our *African personality* and be lost if possible, in another Race.

Blyden advocated that Black Africans are not to be sheer puppets of Europeanised value systems, but should acknowledge and treasure their own customs and ordinances through their innate “African personality” (Pawliková-Vilhanová, 1998:172). Blyden has been celebrated as ‘the first African personality’ who attempted and succeeded in fashioning a total philosophy of Africanness which not only had great appeal for his contemporaries but for future generations of Africans as well (Pawliková-Vilhanová, 1998:175). Léopold Senghor applauds Edward Blyden, as the “foremost precursor of both the Négritude and the African Personality” (quoted in Lynch, 1978:xv). Blyden (Pawliková-Vilhanová, 1998:170) conceptualised his own human races theory that became the foundation of his image of Africanness or the “African personality,” formulated to amongst other aims, refute European perceptions of African inferiority. To Blyden (Pawliková-Vilhanová, 1998:171), and some subsequent Black Nationalist leaders, it would “be in the spiritual and cultural sphere that Africans were destined to make their major contribution to world civilization”. For Blyden, virtues vesting in the African personality are cheerfulness, love of nature and willingness to serve (Pawliková-Vilhanová, 1998:171). Blyden (1971:197) states:

... simple and cordial manliness and sympathy with every interest in actual life and every effort for freedom.

To Blyden, each race had its own “personality” and “mission”, and in the case of African customs and institutions, these attributes represent a significant aspect of the “African Personality” (Pawliková-Vilhanová, 1998:172). To Blyden, the conferment of the “African Personality” implies that “the Negro race has yet its part to play, a distinct part, in the history of humanity, and the continent of Africa will be the principal scene of its activity” (Blyden, 1898:276). In my opinion, Blyden signals a triumphant prophetic announcement, that propels African Blacks to be elected as the creators of the rest of the world’s well-being. In my opinion, Blyden here succumbs to the view that some aspects of traditional African culture are superior to Western or Christian notions (which rhetorically may be a response to decolonised resistance. Blyden (1971:37) in this regard remarks:

Africa is distinguished as having served and suffered. In this, her lot is not unlike that of God’s ancient people, the Hebrews, who were known among the Egyptians as the servants of all; and among the Romans, in later times, they were numbered by Cicero with the

‘nations born to servitude’ . . . The lot of Africa resembles also He who made Himself of no reputation, but took upon Himself the form of a servant, and, having been made perfect through suffering, became the “Captain of our salvation. (ECGCP)

Blyden with the help of other “intellectuals of his time, considered it his duty to dispel the misconceptions of Africa’s insignificance in history, which were perpetrated by Whites and accepted by some Blacks” (Hendriksen, 1975:281). Hendriksen (1975:281) in this regard states:

Blyden emphasized four main themes in the defense of the Negro race: it possessed past achievements worthy of pride; its African traditions and culture must be preserved; its progress was thwarted by adherence to Christianity and enhanced by the pursuit of Islam, and it had intrinsic qualities which he termed the “African Personality.

I conclude this section with a quote from Blyden which to me reveals Blyden’s conviction, vision, and mission of Africa having been chosen to impart the rudiments of faith in God to non-African peoples. Blyden (1988:190) declares:

... God has something in store for a people who have served the world. He has something to accomplish by means of a country [Africa] of which he [God] has so frequently availed himself in the past ... out of it will yet come some of the greatest marvels which are to mark the closing periods of time ... so it may be when civilized nations in consequence of their wonderful material development shall have their spiritual perceptions darkened and their spiritual susceptibilities blunted through the agency of a captivating and absorbing materialism, it may be that they may resort to Africa to recover the simple elements of faith for the promise of that land is that she (Africa/Ethiopia/Eden) shall stretch forth her hands unto God. Psalm 68:31. (ECGCP)

#### **4.4.8 Henry Sylvester Williams (1869 – 1911)**

In this section, I provide a brief synopsis of Henry Sylvester Williams. It is of significance to note here that the term “Pan-Africanism” is attributed to Williams and that before Williams’ new designation, Pan-Africanism has been commonly known as the “African Movement” (Bhenkinkosi & Ramsamy, 2014:661). Henry Sylvester Williams was born from immigrant parents who originated from Barbados and had relocated to Trinidad. His parents belonged economically to the esteemed middle class (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:190). Williams later studied and accepted a teaching post at the Arouca Government Primary School (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:190). Williams subsequently continued his teaching career in the districts of Trinidad (Adi

& Sherwood, 2003:190). Williams was compelled to further his studies in the USA, due to the lack of further educational courses in Trinidad (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:190). Williams enrolled for law at the Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia between the years 1893-1894 (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:190). During his time in the USA, it was commonly accepted that Williams was active in anti-lynching protest meetings, where he campaigned for unity and other forms of protests due to the abdication of the commitments and prospects of reconstruction (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:190).

Upon arriving in London in 1896, Williams continued his legal studies and became a lecturer at the Temperance Society (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:190). Williams' subject matter was related to colonial issues prevalent in Britain and Ireland (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:190). During his public lectures, Williams expressed his criticism of the manner in which Britain administered Trinidad, and was an activist for local citizens being represented *pro-rata* in the local government, free and compulsory education, and an increase in salaries (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:190). Through his association with liberal-minded citizens from London, when addressing the House of Commons, Williams campaigned arduously for a representative government in Trinidad (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:191). Williams solicited the support predominantly of Black students in Britain, and in 1898 launched the African Association, in which association and membership were restricted to those of African descent (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:191-192). Those who were natives from other countries were only allowed to become associate members (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:191). This association soon became a force to be with which to be reckoned. This, through the conducting of public meetings at which the Empire's policies towards the "native" (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:191), were condemned (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:192). A "Memorial of the distress of the West Indies," was forwarded to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, highlighting the grievances and demanding changes in the land tenure system, improving the standard of education, and condemning the Empire's monopoly over agriculture that crippled small farmers (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:191-192). Williams' African Association also envisaged the hosting of a Pan-African Conference, mustering amongst others, the support of Booker T. Washington, President of the Tuskegee College, Professor W.S. Scarborough, President of the Wilberforce College, both USA institutions. Further support was

obtained from Judge David Straker from Detroit, who was a native of Barbados, the Rev. Majola Agbebi, the head and founder of the first West African independent church, and Bishop James Johnson, an American African nationalist from Nigeria (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:191). Williams subsequently convened the first Pan-African Conference in July 1900 in London (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:191). It was the first international gathering of people of African origin. The phrase and the notion of “Pan-Africanism” were established at this conference (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:191). The objectives that featured prominently on the conference agenda as noted by Adi & Sherwood (2003:191) were:

Establishing closer contact amongst those of African descent in the world. To devise a strategy which could lead to amicable relations between African and Caucasian races. Launching a movement which aim would be for Africans residing in “civilized” countries being assigned full rights and the promoting of their business interests.

The conference’s contingent consisted of Caribbean, American, and British Blacks (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:191). One of the crucial issues that were discussed was the common opinion held by the delegates that the British capitalists aimed to enslave Black South Africans (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:191). The prevalent conditions and an envisaged settlement in South Africa were also discussed (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:192). A petition was submitted to Her Majesty, Queen Victoria (see the section on W.E.B. Du Bois above, on the contents and response to this petition). The consensus among the delegates was that human civilisation originated in Africa and, hence, Africans should not be treated as “brutes” (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:192) because Black Africans excelled in the disciplines of science, the arts, and literature even when assessed by Western criteria, (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:192-193). A final declaration issued by a committee included, amongst other issues, W.E.B. Du Bois’ now-famous “colour-line” theory as being the universal problem. It further featured demands for the termination of racial discrimination, the responsible governing of British colonies, and the termination of the oppression of the *Negroes* (“Blacks”) in Africa, America, the British Empire, and other parts of the world (Adi & Sherwood 2003:192). After attending the Anti-Slavery Conference in Paris in the same year, Williams departed to the West Indies to promulgate the Pan-African Association, hereafter referred to as the PAA (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:193). Jamaicans and Trinidadians joined the PAA en masse and many branches were established (Adi &

Sherwood, 2003:192). In October 1903, Williams released the first edition of *The Pan-African*, of which only six editions were published (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:193-194). Employing the slogan “Liberty and Light,” Williams announced that the publication would be the “mouthpiece of the millions of Africans and their descendants” (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:193). In 1902, Williams published the text of two of his lectures entitled *The British Negro: a factor in the empire. The Ethiopian eunuch. Two lectures delivered before many distinguished clubs and associations in the United Kingdom of Great Britain, at the request of several British friends, interested in the progress of the Negro race*, in which he emphasised the “valuable service rendered by African and West Indian troops in the Boer (and other) wars” (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:193). Williams also stressed that West Indians were liable for taxation without representation in the government (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:193). In addition, Williams expressed the hope “that throughout the British colonies a man’s colour will form no hindrance to advancement... At present colour prejudice operates . . .” (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:193-194).

Williams was admitted to the London Bar in 1902 (Driver & Gilbert, 2003:260). His good friend, a Trinidadian attorney, Emmanuel Mzumbu Lazare, who at the time, was in London taking part in Queen Victoria’s 60th-anniversary celebrations, as an officer of the Trinidad Light Infantry Volunteers. Lazare mentioned to Williams the name of a South African woman, Mrs. A. V. Kinloch, who at a meeting of the Writers’ Club in London, had discussed “under what oppressions the black races of Africa lived” (Driver & Gilbert, 2003:260). Williams subsequently met Kinloch, who was touring Britain on behalf of the Aborigines’ Protection Society (APS), speaking, in particular, about South Africa (Driver & Gilbert, 2003:260). In 1903, Williams went to practice “as a barrister in South Africa, becoming the first black man to be called to the bar in the Cape Colony.” This, despite various obstacles (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:193). Amidst these obstacles that included being dissociated by White lawyers, Williams soon got into local politics “and was appointed as a board member” of the Wooding School which was a Cape Coloured school (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:193). Williams became president of the SA Citizen’s Committee whose mandate was equal civil and political rights for all South Africans (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:193). In this regard, Williams worked in close conjunction with the African Peoples’ Organisation under the presidency of Dr. A. Abdurrahman (Adi &

Sherwood, 2003:193). In all probability through the “boycott” and being disassociated by White lawyers, Williams struggled to survive financially and consequently had to return to London with his family in 1905 (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:193). After joining the National Liberal Club, he was elected by the Fabian Society as a member of its African Industrial Committee, whose objective was to investigate the black and white labour relations issues thoroughly in South Africa (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:193). Williams became a sought-after speaker on the topic of colonialism throughout Britain (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:193). Despite failing in his endeavour to become Britain’s first MP of African descent, in 1905, Williams, through the backing of the Workers’ Union was elected as a Progressive member of Marybone’s Council (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:193). In his capacity as a barrister, through his chambers at Essex Court, Williams soon became sought after for matters appertaining to African affairs by delegates from Africa in London (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:194). No stranger to South Africa, in 1905, Williams liaised with the South African government on the issue of land ownership being denied to South African Blacks (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:194). Williams was also partisan to the arbitration of an issue between the Basuto chiefs and the British government, where the traditional chiefs demanded the right to buy property in the then “Boer/British Orange Free State” (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:194). Williams returned to Trinidad with his family in 1908 where he continued practising in Port-of-Spain and San Fernando (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:194). Williams passed away on 26 March 1911. His wife, who shortly after his death gave birth to their fifth child, had, to make ends meet, turn her home into a boarding house. One of the tenants, H.A. Nurse’s son was Malcolm, who later became known as George Padmore who continued Williams’ Pan-African vision (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:194).

#### **4.4.9 Elijah Muhammad (1897 – 1975)**

Martin Luther King, Jr. focused on the integration of Black Americans into the predominantly white American society, through the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and the National Association of Coloured People (NAACP). which strove to make America a more just and equitable society. In contrast, Elijah Muhammad rejected Martin Luther King Junior’s envisaged “beloved community” (Adeleke, 2010:503). The Nation of

Islam (NOI), led by Muhammad, was indomitably opposed to any form of black integration into white American society, and instead, envisioned a distinct black nationality, founded on black consciousness for an independent nationhood (Adeleke, 2010:503). Muhammad preached the imminent destruction of white America for its evil deeds in enslaving blacks and denying them equality and justice (Adeleke, 2010:503). Muhammad urged blacks to seek their own land through their vision of nationhood. Contrary to what was being advocated by ardent Pan-Africanists it was not Africa, but America (Adeleke, 2010:504) (Black like América), Muhammad stated: “In order to build a nation you must first have some land” (Muhammad, 1997:223). Muhammad was adamant that Allah, the God according to the Islamic faith, was angry with whites, and that blacks were his chosen and favoured people (Adeleke, 2010:504) (ECGCP). Furthermore, according to Muhammad, Blacks had been subjected to the most inhumane treatment by whites, as “they had become a ‘nation in a nation’ abused and” brutalised (Adeleke, 2010:504). Muhammad’s solution was, therefore, simple “...we must be separated from them [i.e., whites] and given a place on this earth that we can call our own” (Muhammad, 1997:231).

Muhammed campaigned for the obliteration of all white Americans, urging his followers, through the NOI (“Nation of Islam”), to develop a consciousness of a distinct black nationhood (Adeleke, 2010:504). The realisation of this nationhood in an America rid of whites, would through this enterprise, underscore the chosen status of Blacks (Adeleke, 2010:504), ECGCP! As regards the chosenness of Blacks, Muhammad (1973:158) said:

But God has chosen us to be His people, and He delights in fighting the enemy.

In Muhammad’s view, Allah was in favour of a distinct black nationality in America (not in Africa) (Adeleke, 2010:504). Muhammad was vehemently opposed to an African nationality, to the extreme that he despised those Black Americans who campaigned for a return of all Blacks to Africa (Adeleke, 2010:504) (Black like América). According to Muhammad (1973:150), Africa was a barbaric continent, rebuking such “back to Africa” protagonists advocating that:

... instead of the Black man going to the decent side of his own, he goes back seeking traditional Africa, and the way they did in jungle life and the way you see in some

uncivilized parts of Africa today. They are not using barber's tools, shears, and razors to keep themselves looking dignified as a civilized people should look...Black brothers and sisters, wearing savage dress and hairstyles will not get you the love of Africa. (Black like América)

Muhammad together with the Nation of Islam (NIO) envisioned an internal Black American nation (Adeleke, 2010:505). Muhammad (1973:272) declares:

We want a home on this earth we can call our own. We want to go for self – and leave the enemy who has been sentenced to death by Allah

#### **4.4.10 Malcolm X (1925 – 1965)**

Born Malcolm Little and also known as Malcolm X and el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz (Arabic: الحاجّ مالك الشباز), “was an American Muslim minister and a human rights activist” (Adeleke, 2010:505). To his supporters, Malcolm X was a fearless activist for the rights of Blacks who scolded white America in vehement terms for the crimes it has committed against Black Americans, this giving rise to his opponents accusing him of instigating racism and violence (Adeleke, 2010:55). Malcolm X has been hailed as one of the greatest and most influential Black Americans in history (Adeleke, 2010:55). Malcolm X, a protégé of Elijah Muhammad, marketed his separatist apolitical philosophy of the NOI (Nation of Islam), and his philosophy of nationhood reflected the separatist convictions of his mentor, Elijah Muhammad, who was also his religious role model (Adeleke, 2010:505). Malcolm X, in the same vein as Muhammad, disassociated himself from Martin Luther King Jr. and the traditional civil rights movement and disassociated himself from any notion which implied an integration into a state that by Allah had been doomed for destruction (Adeleke, 2010:505). Malcolm X similar to Elijah Muhammad had a vision for a distinct black nationhood that would triumphantly reign in the aftermath of Allah's destruction of Whites. Malcolm X's futuristic black nation would emerge in America under the banner of the NOI (Nation of Islam) (Adeleke, 2010:505).

Africa occupied a critical role in Malcolm X's philosophy (Sales, 1994:505). Malcolm believed that Blacks were miseducated about their history, culture, and heritage, and consequently developed self-hatred, which undermined self-deterministic consciousness (Adeleke, 2010:505). Malcolm X sought to remedy this

condition by re-educating Blacks about the true history of Africa (Shabazz, 1970:505). Malcolm X did not advocate a mass emigration to Africa (Breitman, 1965:210). To Malcolm X, Africa itself must serve as a “symbol” of black nationhood consciousness, however, this does not necessitate a physical, but a psychological and philosophical “return” to Africa, cultivating a positive spirit of nationhood, resulting in the uniting, strengthening and empowering of Blacks (Breitman, 1965:210). Breitman in *Malcolm X Speaks: Selected speeches and statements* (1965) states Malcolm X own words as regards the figurative “return to Africa” of American Blacks. Malcolm X (quoted in Breitman 1965:210) states:

I believe this that if we migrated back to Africa culturally, philosophically and psychologically, while remaining here physically, the spiritual bond that would develop between us and Africa through this cultural, philosophical and psychological migration, so-called migration would enhance our position here because we would have our contacts with them acting as roots of foundations behind us. You will never have a foundation in America.” (Black like América)

From an African perspective, the three individuals who were historically the most ardent advocates of Pan-Africanism were Jomo Kenyatta, Kwame Nkrumah, and Julius Nyerere, who all resided in Africa.

#### **4.4.11 Jomo Kenyatta (1891-1978)**

Jomo Kenyatta a leader of Kenya, has since the dawn of Pan-Africanism, been an ardent promoter of a united Africa (Nyangena, 2003:2). Kenyatta is a native from Ng’enda which vests in the Gatundu district of Kiambu (Nyangena, 2003:2). In his preface to his book, Kenyatta *FACING Mount Kenya: The Tribal Life of the Gikuyu*, (1961), rectifies the incorrect usage and spelling of Gikuyu (Kenyatta, 1961) (see also Nyangena, 2003:2). The European spelling “Kikuyu” is incorrect according to Kenyatta (Nyangena, 2003:2). The correct spelling is “Giguyu” (Nyangena, 2003:2). Kenyatta acknowledges that the word “Gikuyu” refers to the country itself (Nyangena, 2003:2). However, he chose to use the term “Gikuyu” in his book throughout (Nyangena, 2003:2). Born in 1889, Kenyatta was given Christian names, John, Peter by his parents. He later decided to change his name to Johnstone (Nyangena, 2003:2). He renamed himself “Jomo” in 1938 (Nyangena, 2003:2). Thirteen years before his third name change, Kenyatta in 1925 became one of the

leaders of the Kikuyu (Gikuyu) Central Association (KCA), where he was appointed to represent Kikuyu (Gikuyu) land issues to the Hilton Young Commission in Nairobi (Nyangena, 2003:2).

In his review of the acclaimed Kenyan academic and author, Thiong'o's book *Weep not Child* (1966), Chabi makes numerous references to Kenya, the Gikuyu people, as being the chosen people of God, and that Jomo Kenyatta was God's Black Moses (Chabi, 2017:138). ECGCP! The Gikuyu people considered land as sacred (Chabi, 2017:138). Their land was commonly believed to have been assigned to them by God, the Creator (Chabi, 2017:138) This land was occupied by the Gikuyu tribe peacefully up until the invasion of the "white man" (Chabi, 2017:138). "God, according to Gikuyu tradition had bequeathed the land to them through a covenant he had entered into with two of their ancestors, Gikuyu and Mumbi" (Chabi, 2017:138). Chabi (2017:138) declares:

God showed Gikuyu and Mumbi all the land and told them, "This land I hand over to you. O, Man and woman. It's yours to rule and till in serenity sacrificing only to me, your God, under my sacred tree. (see also Thiong'o 1966:24)

In his book, *Weep not Child*, Thiong'o (1966) features a narrator whose name is Njorogo and who narrates the divine chosenness of the Gikuyu (Kenyan) people and its then-leader Jomo Kenyatta. Thiong'o (1966:49) states:

His belief in a future for his family of the village rested then not only on a hope for sound education but also on a belief in a God of love and mercy who long ago walked on the earth with Gikuyu much difference that he had come to identify Gikuyu with Ada and Mumbi with Eve. To this God, all men and women were united by one strong bond of brotherhood. And with all this, there was growing up in his heart a feeling that the Gikuyu people whose land had been taken by the white men, were no other than the children about whom he had read in the Bible. So although all men were brothers, the black people had a special mission to the world because they were the chosen people of God. This explains his brother's remarks that Jomo (Kenyatta) was the Black Moses." (ECGCP)

The KCA (Kikuyu "Gikuyu" Central Association) delegated Kenyatta to represent the Gikuyu (Kikuyu) in England and solicit British support for the indigenous legal ownership of tribal land (Nyangena, 2003:2). Kenyatta lectured Gikuyu at the University College, London where he authored a book in 1937 on the Gikuyu

language (Nyangena, 2003:2). He authored a further book on Gikuyu customs, entitled *Facing Mount Kenya* which he completed in 1938 (Nyangena, 2003:2).

Kenyatta together with other leaders of African states such as Kwame Nkrumah from Ghana was a delegate at the Fifth Pan-African Congress (1945) in Manchester (Nyangena, 2003:2).

In 1947, Kenyatta ousted James Gikuyu as the leader of the Kenyan African Union (Nyangena, 2003:2). Kenyatta's reign was of relatively short duration since Sir Evelyn Baring, who had been appointed as the new Governor of Kenya on 2 October 1952, upon having declared a state of emergency in Kenya, arrested Kenyatta and other prominent leaders (Nyangena, 2003:3). Kenyatta stood trial on charges of instigating Mau Mau revolutionary conspiracies and was sentenced to hard labour imprisonment (Nyangena, 2003:3). "After having spent nine years in prison," he finally was released on the 21<sup>st</sup> of August 1961 (Nyangena, 2003:3). Jomo Kenyatta was appointed as President of the Kenyan African National Union on 28 October 1961 (Nyangena, 2003:3). Kenyatta, who became Kenya's first Prime Minister, assuming the name Mzee Kenyatta, was largely instrumental in Kenya becoming a Republic within the Commonwealth (Nyangena, 2003:3).

Kenyatta's conviction on how the "Divider of the Universe" allotted Kenya to Gikuyu, the founder of the tribe, features in his book *Facing Mount Kenya* (Kenyatta, 1961:3). Kenyatta (1961:3) explains:

According to the tribal legend, we are told that in the beginning of things, when mankind started to populate the earth, the man Gikuyu, the founder of the tribe, was called by the Mogai (the Divider of the Universe), and was given as his share the land with ravines, the rivers, the forests, the game and all the gifts that the Lord of Nature (Mogai) bestowed on mankind. At the same time, Mogai made a big mountain which he called Kere-Nyaga (Mount Kenya), as his resting-place when on an inspection tour, and as a sign of his wonders. He then took the man Gikuyu to the top of the mountain of mystery and showed him the beauty of the country that Mogai had given him. While still on the top of the mountain, the Mogai pointed out to the Gikuyu a spot full of fig trees (*mikoyo*), right in the centre of the country. After the Mogai had shown the Gikuyu the panorama of the wonderful land he had been given, he commanded him to descend and establish his homestead on the selected place which he named Mokorwe was Cathanga. Before they parted, Mogai told Gikuyu that, whenever he was in need, he should make a sacrifice and

raise his hands towards Kere-Nyaga (the mountain of mystery), and the Lord of Nature will come to his assistance.

#### **4.4.12 Kwame Nkrumah (1901-1972)**

In this section, I refer to Kwame Nkrumah with special reference to his quest for a “United States of Africa”. Kwame Nkrumah is widely considered one of the most prominent African Nationalists of the twentieth century (Kanu, 2013:111). Nkrumah a native of Nkrofil, Ghana, was born in 1909 (Kanu, 2013:111). Nkrumah qualified as a school teacher at Achimota School, Accra (Kanu, 2013:111). Upon completing his studies, he taught at several schools on the Gold Coast (Kanu, 2013:111). Apart from boasting a BA degree through Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, Nkrumah also studied theology and achieved his bachelor’s degree in Sacred Theology from the same institution in 1942 (Kanu, 2013:111). Nkrumah achieved an MSc in education and a MA in Arts and Philosophy through the University of Pennsylvania (Kanu, 2013:111). Kanu (2013:11) notes that Nkrumah served as a preacher in “black”, to Presbyterian congregations in both New York and Philadelphia.

The Pan-African congresses hosted in Paris, London, and New York, served as inspiration and motivation for Nkrumah to assist with the organising of the fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester, 1945, England (Sturman, 2007:3). Nkrumah’s vision entailed a “seamless melding of Pan-Africanism and African Nationalism” (Sturman, 2007:3). Nkrumah (1963:135; see also Sturman, 2007:3) points out that:

The fundamental purpose [of both ideologies] was identical: national independence leading to African Unity.

Nkrumah established the West African National Secretariat whose vision was to decolonise Africa (Kanu, 2013:111). Nkrumah was appointed in 1947 as the General Secretary to the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), which is commonly regarded as the platform from which the pace of Africa’s liberation was accelerated (Kanu, 2013:111). Nkrumah is accredited with being the conceptualiser of the OAU (The Organisation of African Unity) (Kanu, 2013:111). The ethical aspirations on which the OAU was founded, were underpinned by unity (Sturman, 2007:1). This entailed improved and expanded development and security for Africa, rooted in a Pan-African identity and unity (Sturman, 2007:1). However, the first OAU meeting

held in Accra, served as a major disappointment to Nkrumah's vision of a "United States of Africa." (Sturman, 2007:1). However, his vision for a "federation of African states" (Sturman, 2007:1), was wiped off the table (Sturman, 2007:1).

Nkrumah was elected as the Prime Minister of Ghana on 6 March 1960, in which capacity, he formulated a constitution to convert Ghana into a Republic (Kanu, 2013:111). This constitution was formally accepted on 19, 23 and 27 April 1960, respectively (Kanu, 2013:111). Nkrumah was assigned a messianic status by his co-parliamentarians during his tenure as Prime Minister. This is confirmed in an article published in "*The Ghanaian Times*" editorial in September 1961, and then again during a parliamentary debate during April 1961. I below provide a quote from "*The Ghanaian Times*, Sept. 16, 1961" by Brophy which confirms Nkrumah's claimed divine status and endowment of a special mission as God's chosen agent. Nkrumah (Brody 1972:7) declared:

Yes, a thousand voices shall sing. Sing the praises of Africa's great Redeemer. Sing the Glories of the Great Messiah. Who returns today (from an overseas trip), in triumph from a mission of peace, over the seas.

The heralding of Nkrumah by the Ghanaian parliament constituency continues with the "doxology" below:

Our great and illustrious leader as I know Him – Osageyfo (A title indicating Esteem) Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of the Republic of Ghana, is blessed with the possession of rare powers of memory ... Osageyfo Dr Kwame Nkrumah is our king of peace. Long may he live. (Brophy 1972:71)

Below I quote a plea for penance from Nkrumah addressed through the Speaker of the Ghanaian parliament during Nkrumah's reign:

Mr. Speaker, I wish you to tell the Osageyfo. That He should forgive us our mistakes. (Brophy 1972:71)

Nkrumah (1970:64-65) regards Black Africans as naturally being spiritual, contrary to the Christian teaching of original sin. Nkrumah (1970:64-65) states:

That man is regarded in Africa as primarily a spiritual being, a being Endowed with a certain inward dignity, integrity and values. It stands Refreshingly opposed to the Christian idea of the original sin and degradation of man.

Nkrumah's classification of Black Africans possessing a natural innate spirituality. void to the Christian teaching of "the original sin and degradation of man " reflects a claim for superiority i.e. that some aspects of traditional Black African religion and culture are superior to Western or Christian notions (which rhetorically may be a response to colonial resistance).

Nkrumah was commonly regarded as the "Messiah." Omari (1970:116) attests to this by referring to an article which appeared in the Ghanaian publication commonly known as the "*Evening News*" on 23 October 1961 which stated:

When our history is recorded, the man Kwame Nkrumah will be written off as the liberator, the Messiah, the Christ of our day, whose great love for man-kind wrought changes in Ghana, in Africa, and in the world at large. (ECGCP)

Due to him having been removed by a military coup spearheaded by General Emmanuel Kotaku and Major Amansa Akwasi Afrika, Nkrumah's reign was of relatively limited duration (Kanu, 2013:111). Nkrumah authored several works amongst which are *Towards colonial freedom* (1962), *Africa must unite* (1963), *Philosophical Conscientism* (1964) and his *Autobiography* (1965) (Kanu, 2013:111). In *Africa must unite*, Nkrumah (1963), attributes his ideas for a "United States of Africa" to several Pan-Africanists referred to in this study, such as Henry Sylvester Williams, W.B.E. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey. Garvey, who was the first proponent of the "United States of Africa," became Nkrumah's proverbial protégé while he was studying in the USA (Sturman, 2007:3). The idea of a "United States of Africa," a designation that was also employed by Colonel Gaddafi, was first mooted by Nkrumah in a Pan-African meeting in Cairo in 1960 (Sturman, 2007:3). Nkrumah is the father of the "radicals" (Sturman, 2007:3) and who, with Julius Nyerere, first argued for the building of regional unions and then improving on these to create the "United States of Africa" (Sturman, 2007:3).

Nkrumah envisaged a union of states falling under a common federal government having one president, a uniform currency, and holistically applicable economic and foreign policy (Sturman, 2007:3). In *Africa must unite*, Nkrumah (1963:216) states:

Europe, by way of contrast, must be a lesson to us all. Too busy hugging its exclusive nationalisms; it has descended, after centuries of wars... into a state of confusion, simply because it failed to build a sound basis of political association. It is ... hoped that the European Community will perform this miracle. It has taken two world wars and the break-up of the empires to press home the lesson, still partly digested, that strength lies in unity.

Many academics and senior government officials have conceded that Nkrumah's vision was the right one at the wrong time (Sturman, 2007:3). Nkrumah's vision for a unified approach for the resolving of conflicts in Africa, chronologically and substantially, preceded the "norm of humanitarian intervention" (Sturman, 2007:3). Nkrumah contended for an African peacekeeping force to avoid the interference of Cold War powers and foreign business interests when the Congo's (DRC) independence materialised (Sturman, 2007:3) Nkrumah maintained strongly that if at the time of foreign interference, July 1960, Africa had been a united front, the Congo may have achieved its independence without the intervention of non-African foreign powers (Sturman, 2007:3). Kanu, notes that according to Nkrumah, Africa has been the victim of contradictory and confusing worldviews throughout its history, with specific reference to colonial-imperialism, Islamic teachings, and Euro-Christianity, resulting in confusing and conflicting visions on the continent (Kanu, 2013:12). This was further worsened by the West's presentation of African history as a country where lions roam freely (Kanu, 2013:112). Affecting a united and liberated Africa, a "*Philosophical Conscientism*" which as referred to above, is the title of a book Nkrumah wrote, a country which comprised a reforming, revolutionising and inspirational philosophical system, was Nkrumah's vision (Kanu, 2013:112). In *Philosophical Conscientism*, Nkrumah (1964:78) points out:

Our philosophy must find its weapons in the environment and living conditions of the African people. It is from those conditions that the intellectual content of our philosophy must be created. The emancipation of the African Continent is the emancipation of man. This requires two aims: first the restitution of the egalitarianism of the human society, and second, the logistic mobilization of all our resources toward the attainment of that restitution.

In the excerpt below from a speech he delivered during the first Editorial Board of the Encyclopaedia Africana hosted at the University of Ghana on September 24, 1964, Nkrumah expressed the view that Black defines a person of African descent. Nkrumah (quoted in Poe, 2003:145) urges:

I would like that people of African descent and Africans, in general, should be described as a Black man.

Kwame Nkrumah remained faithful to his views until his death in exile at the age of 63 on 17 April 1972 in Bucharest, Rumania (Kanu, 2013:111).

#### **4.4.13 Julius Nyerere (1922- 1999)**

In this section, I provide a brief overview of Julius Nyerere. Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere was the first President of Tanganyika, currently known as Tanzania. Nyerere is regarded as one of the African architects of Pan-Africanism. He was given the title “Mwalimu” as a mark of honour for being a teacher. He was a secondary school teacher, and when he became the President of Tanzania, he led his people firmly and wisely like a good teacher guides his pupils (Akinpelu, 1998:9). Nyerere contended vigorously for an independent African continent, devoid of foreign influences and power (Akinpelu, 1998:9). Nyerere’s fervour for an autonomous Africa is prominent when he, Nyerere (1963:2) notes:

What we need ... is unity of action together with the greatest possible degree of local self-expression on things which affect only that locality. This will be in accordance with the oldest traditions of Africa; it will be a new growth on the deep roots of our life.

Nyerere supported the cause of a “United States of Africa” vigorously. In an article by the same title, published in the first issue of the *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Nyerere (1963:2-3) expresses the following wish:

Our goal must be a United States of Africa ... As long as there remain separate African nations there will remain too a danger that other states will exploit. Our differences for their own purposes. Only with unity can we ensure that Africa really governs Africa.

Unlike Nkrumah, Nyerere was wary of the danger internal to an Africa of a hegemonic state, using unification as a guide for regional domination. Nyerere (1963:12) expresses the following view:

Historically, areas of the world have been united by two methods, by conquest or by negotiated terms association. It is absurd to imagine African unity coming from the domination of one African country over another. Our unity can only be negotiated unity, for it is the unity of equals.

## **4.5 AFRICAN NATIONALISM, THE AFRICAN UNION (AU), THE “UNITED STATES OF AFRICA” AND PAN-AFRICANISM**

### **4.5.1 African Nationalism and Pan-Africanism**

Pan-Africanism established a platform for African nationalism, differing from European nationalism in that it is a quest for independence, instead of expansion (Pontinen, 2013:48). Political nationalism among the African churches was connected to religious nationalism (Pontinen, 2013:48). Some African churches after the Second World War became independent and subsequently engaged in exploring their own theological identities (Pontinen, 2013:48). The influence of the political movements of Pan-Africanism and African nationalism cannot be overestimated in the move towards independence among African churches, and their impact on African theology is obvious (Appiah-Kubi & Torres, 1979:190). African nationalism embraces all ideological elements designed to improve the status, rights, and position of Africans in a society having emerged from white intrusion and conquest (Duncan, 2015:209). African nationalism is a political movement, with the unification of Africa (Pan-Africanism), national self-determination, and the transformation of an African identity as its aim (Duncan, 2015:206-209). Duncan confirms my conviction that: “Black” in the context of African Nationalism denotes distinct ethnic groups.” (Duncan, 2015:209). Rather than perceiving themselves as Zulu, or Sotho, for example, nationalist leaders wanted Black Africans to view themselves as Africans (Duncan, 2015:209). Esedebe (1982:3) supports the idea that the term “Africans” denotes people who are of African origin when he states:

Africa is the homeland of Africans and persons of African origin, solidarity among men of African descent, belief in a distinct African personality, and rehabilitation of Africa’s past, pride in African culture, Africa for Africans in church and state, the hope for a united and glorious future Africa.

The national fervour which was ignited among Black Africans was borne from a rediscovery of their African memory, which encapsulates the greatness of their origin (Dibeela & Vellem, 2012:231). Dibeela & Vellem (2012:231) declare:

Africans in the continent and in the diaspora, need to know that they were birthed from a great people who have bequeathed humanity the earliest systems of civilisation.

In my opinion Dibeela & Vellem's (2012:231) conferring of Black Africans' having conferred the "earliest systems of civilisation" denotes a claim for superiority i.e. that Black Africans had according to Dibeela & Vellem imparted to humanity the foundation of the "earlier systems of civilisation" (Dibeela & Vellem, 2012:231).

#### **4.5.2 Pan-Africanism and the African Union**

The link between Pan-Africanism as both a theological and politically driven movement, and the founding of the African Union (AU) in 2002, is in my view a natural and obvious vision and mission transition. Sturman notes that the fundamental difference between these two entities is that Pan-Africanism also strongly manifests a fervent theological component that emanated from a socio-political context, whereas the AU has a secularly driven political agenda (Sturman, 2007:1). The African Union (AU) has since its separation from the Organisation of African Union (OAU), dedicated itself to the establishment of a sovereign, regionalisation and unity in Africa (Sturman, 2007:1). The institutions of the AU evolved within the organisation over several years (Sturman, 2007:3). The degree of continuity between the AU and the Pan-African Movement; which I consider both a predecessor and a current partner; can be traced to the roots of Pan-African thought according to Sturman (Sturman, 2007:3). Below I provide a brief synopsis of both these entities, intending to show the commonalities between the visions of the Pan-African Movement and the African Union with the ultimate goal being the materialising of the "United States of Africa."

Libya was opposed to the route upon which the AU had embarked since this organisation had been under the leadership of South Africa in 2002/03, Mozambique 2004/05, and Nigeria 2004/05 (Sturman, 2007:6). Libya continued to muster support for a "United States of Africa" (Sturman, 2007:6). Libya's proposal was not considered due to procedural processes not having been adhered to (Sturman, 2007:6). Its proposals finally featured on the agenda at the 4<sup>th</sup> ordinary assembly of the AU, held in Abuja in January 2005 (Sturman, 2007:6) A committee made up of the heads of state of Botswana, Chad, Ethiopia, Niger, Senegal and Tunisia and chaired by Uganda (Assembly/AU/Dec 69 IV) was formed to consider Libya's

proposal (Sturman, 2007:6). At the time of the completion of this thesis, (2021), Garvey, Gaddafi and Libya's dream of a "United States of Africa" had not materialised. This can, by no means be interpreted as a dream having been abandoned by Africa (Sturman, 2007:6). Hence for this reason I provide a brief overview of the origin and advocates of the concept of the "United States of Africa" in the sections below.

#### **4.5.3 Pan-Africanism and the "United States of Africa"**

The "United States of Africa" is a visionary concept for a federation of some, or all of the 54 sovereign states on the African continent" (Sturman, 2007:7). The concept has its origin in Marcus Garvey's 1924 poem, *Hail, United States of Africa* (Sturman, 2007:7). Garvey envisaged himself as the president of this futuristic amalgamation of all African states (Sturman, 2007:7).

In his opening address at the OAU Assembly, held in Sirte, Libya, from 6 to 9 September 1999, Muammar Gaddafi announced the blueprint for a "United States of Africa", with a "single African army, a common currency, and a continental leader with presidential powers" (Sturman, 2007:1). Gaddafi used the AU Summit in Sirte, Libya in July 2005" as a platform to accentuate "the need for a United States of Africa" (Sturman, 2007:6). At this conference, Gaddafi warned that the AU would fail, just like the OAU, if it did not move faster towards the full unification of Africa (Sturman, 2007:6). Gaddafi rejected the EU regionalisation model explicitly, stating that "...for a hundred years now, we have been calling for the "United States of Africa" to be patterned on the United States of America and not Europe" (Sturman, 2007:6).

Möller (2010:63) provides a chronological scenario envisaged by the AU for the realisation of a "United States of Africa". The AU Commission created an advisory board, which, in turn, commissioned a study to review the proposals during 2006 (Möller 2010:63). This became the "Study on an AU government towards the United States of Africa" "drafted at a technical workshop in Abuja in April 2006, "that was hosted by the African leadership. During these work sessions, the AU confirmed its commitment to unity in extremely vague and general terms, (Möller, 2010:63). The

study explicitly referred to instrumentalism as the appropriate strategy and envisioned three stages. In the first stage (2006-2009) a “Union government” would be established; in the second stage (2009-2012) it would become operational, and at the third stage (2012-2015) the “United States of Africa” would become a reality (Möller, 2010: 63). The only concrete decision to date; here even including the year of the completion of this thesis in 2020, had according to Möller been a change of name from the AU commission to the “African Union Authority” (Möller, 2010:63).

Okoloise spells out the AU’s “Agenda 2063” proposed vision in *Ghana e Co. Governance and human rights in twenty-first century Africa* (2017), in “Transactional Democracy in Africa and the African Union’s Agenda 2063: Beyond Nkrumah’s Pan-African Pushbacks”, which amongst others, includes the goal of a “United States of Africa” (Okoloise, 2017:346). The AU aspires to have integrated all of the 55 African states politically by 2063 (Okoloise, 2017:346). The “Agenda 2063,” hereafter referred to as the *Agenda*; reflects the Pan-African vision that Africa needs to unite to achieve its renaissance, and therewith amongst others, fulfil Nkrumah’s vision (Okoloise, 2017:346). The “*Agenda*” stipulates seven crucial objectives (Okoloise, 2017:346). These objectives as stated by Okoloise (2017:346) are:

- i. A prosperous Africa founded on African growth and sustainable development.
- ii. A politically unified Africa grounded in the goals of Pan-Africanism and the targets which the African Renaissance, strived for.
- iii. A continent where good governance, democracy, regard for human rights, and justice and the law, prevail.
- iv. An Africa which is characterised by peace and security.
- v. An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics.
- vi. A continent within which development is driven by its people, and where the potential of women and the youth are explored and cultivated.
- vii. An Africa which is powerful, unified and globally influential; not just as a player but also a partner.

## 4.6 THE PAN-AFRICAN FLAG

The Pan-African flag originated from the colours that were adopted by Garvey's Black Star Line fleet (Knowlton, 2017:39). There are numerous speculations regarding why Garvey decided upon the colours red, black and green. There is a tradition in Rastafarianism of "red representing the spilled blood of blacks, green as nature, and black the colour of Africans' skins" (Cashmore, 1979:160; see also Knowlton, 2017:39). The colours of the Pan-African flag; also referred to as the "Ethiopian Flag" (Knowlton, 2017:39) are claimed to symbolise the "idealised African homeland" (Crampton, 1993:197).

The Pan-African flag is further referred to as the "African Nationalist Flag" and the "African Liberation Flag" (Knowlton, 2017:39). There is speculation that Kwame Nkrumah upon having contracted the early followers of the Rastafarian movement during his visit to Jamaica in the 1930s, had the Ghanaian flag designed thereafter, in 1957, which is a combination of the Ethiopian, green, yellow, and black flag, with the colours of the UNIA's Black Star Line (Crampton, 1993:175).

The flag was conceptualised "in 1920 by members of UNIA in response to the enormously popular 1900 coon song "*Every race has a flag but the coon,*" which has been listed "as one of the three songs that "firmly established the term "coon" in the American vocabulary" (*Africa Times and Orient Review* 1912:134). In this report, Marcus Garvey emphasises the significance of the flag for Black Americans. Garvey (1927):

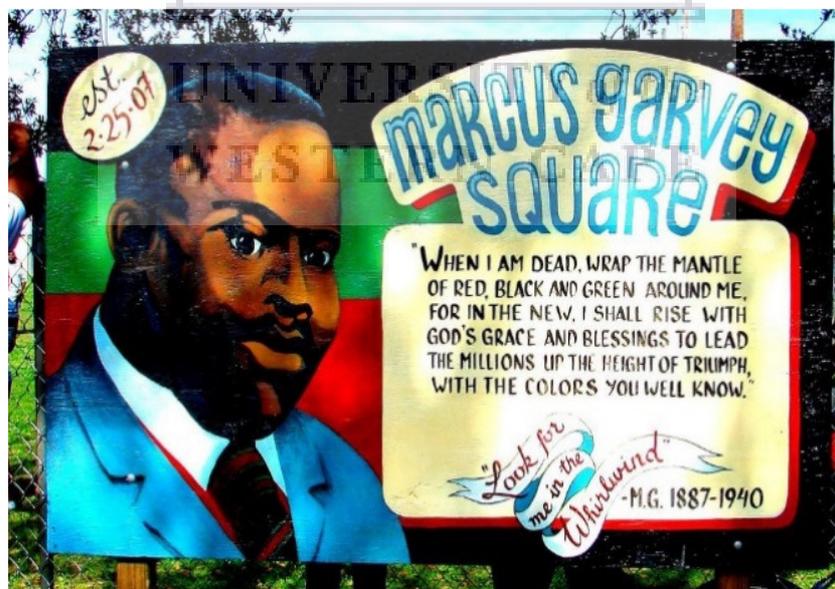
Show me the race or the nation without a flag, and I will show you a race of people without any pride. Aye! In song and mimicry, they have said, "Every race has a flag but the coon." How true! Aye! But that was said of us four years ago. They can't say it now.



Garvey (quoted in Hill, 1984:65) explains:

I see the angel of God taking up the standard of the Red, the Black saying, “Men of the Negro Race, the Green saying, “Men of Ethiopia” Follow me!

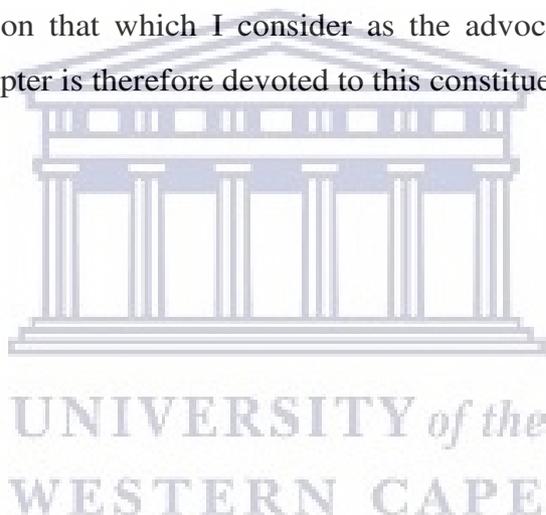
In the inscription in the art nouveau below, featured at the Marcus Garvey Square in New Orleans, Garvey identifies with the Pan-African flag coloursof red, black and green, and depicts himself as a messianic personality (ECGCP).



## 4.7 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, through readings of Pan-Africanism and the strong religious impulse fuelling it, has in my view made inevitable a “Pan-African theology”. And as such, this Pan-African theology, clarified for me as a movement wherein there is an indispensable theological alliance between notion and quest. “Notion” - that Black Africans are God’s chosen people, and that Africa the chosen continent; and the “Quest” of certain prominent North American Theology founders and lay people.

I acknowledge that the latter theologians are not contemporary, yet I have from the outset chosen to focus on some of the founders of North American Black Theology with special emphasis on that which I consider as the advocating of the notion (ECGCP). The next chapter is therefore devoted to this constituency.



# **NORTH-AMERICAN BLACK THEOLOGY ON BEING GOD’S CHOSEN PEOPLE – A SELECTION OF VIEWS**

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## **CHAPTER**

# **5**

### **5.1 NORTH AMERICAN BLACK THEOLOGY - THE ORIGIN**

According to James Cone (1938-2018), North American Black liberation theology originated on July 31, 1966, when 51 pastors bought a full-page advertisement in the New York Times and demanded a more aggressive approach to eradicating racism.

Cone & Wilmore (1979:101) define North American Black theology as:

... a theology of black liberation. It seeks to plumb the black condition in the light of God’s revelation in Jesus Christ so that the black community can see that the gospel is commensurate with the achievement of black humanity. Black theology is a theology of ‘blackness’. It is the affirmation of black humanity that emancipates black people from white racism, thus providing authentic freedom for both white and black people. It affirms the humanity of black people in that it says ‘No’ to the encroachments of white oppression.

North American Black theology permutated through notable historical stages. These are;

- i. “African religion as the problem of slavery” (mid-eighteenth century to 1863);
- ii. “African American religion and the problem(s) of emancipation” (1864);
- iii. “African American Religion, the city, and the challenge of racism” (1903 to 1954);
- iv. “African American religion and the Black freedom struggle” (1954-1969);
- v. “The golden age of African American religious studies” (1969 to the present).

The latter four stages “delineate the historical, homegrown, unsystematic black theology” (West & Glaude, 2003: xiii-xv). In the traditional African religions which Black Americans stem from, a powerful, providential creator God was worshipped, who at one stage in human history lived close to humanity, but through ungrateful

human acts withdrew to the sky (Evans, 1992:56). According to Kelly, a poem entitled “Dreams of the new land” written by Ted Joans, does encapsulate the deep-rooted aspirations many Black Americans yearned for and longed to return to what they deemed their Motherland, namely, Africa. I cite Joans’ poem with specific reference to the following excerpt from this particular poem: “Land of my mothers, where a black God made me” (Kelly, 2002:13). This indicates that the North American theology claims of God/Christ, being Black, were not just confined to theologians and members of the clergy, but was advocated among a broad spectrum of Black Americans. Joans (quoted in Kelly, 2002:13) exclaims:

Africa, I guard your memory. Africa, you are in me. My future is your future. Your wounds are my wounds. The funky blues I cook are black like you—Africa my motherland. America my fatherland although I did not choose it to be Africa, you alone can make me free. Africa where the rhinos roam. Where I learned to swing. Before America became my home. Not like a monkey but in my soul. Africa, you are rich with natural gold. Africa, I live and study for thee. And through you, I shall be free. Someday I’ll come back and see Land of my mothers, where a black God made me. My Africa, your Africa, a free continent to be.

Joans authored more than thirty books including prose, poetry, and a collage, which included “Black Pow-Pow, Afrodisia”, and “Jazz is our religion” (Kelly, 2002:188). To Joans, the African-American poets were the literary conscience of the enslaved African Americans, who were “seers, clairvoyants, visionaries” not needing to be feared since they expressed the truth (Kelly, 2002:190). No book or text in America during the 19<sup>th</sup> century was being read more eagerly than the Bible (Andrews, 1986:22). Maria W. Miller Stewart was the first Black feminist abolitionist in America, and in her 1832 Franklin Hall address featured elements of the “Black Jeremiah”, a rhetorical term taken from the prophet Jeremiah, which has structured American discourse since the time of Puritan New England (Andrews, 1986:22). Wilson (1993:31) defines the Black Jeremiah as an adaptation for the means by which black America warned whites of “the judgment that was to come from the sin of slavery” (Wilson, 1993:31). The Black Jeremiah “pre-empts the image of America as a chosen people in thrall to Britain, delivered as was Israel from the control of Egypt, with the superior claims of a people still in bondage” (Wilson, 1993:31-33). The term “Black Jeremiah” is taken from the prophet Jeremiah, believed to be the author of the book of Lamentations, and his description of the humiliation of Israel,

prostrate at the feet of Babylon (Wilson, 1993:31-33). Black Americans could speak of themselves as chosen (“ECGCP”) characterizing their enslavement as a sign that God was perfecting them through oppression and would certainly bring forth a mighty judgment (Wilson, 1993:31-33). The “Black Jeremiah” did not challenge the notion that America itself was a chosen nation, but it charged that Whites had broken their heavenly covenant in their treatment of Blacks (Wilson, 1993:31-33) (ECGCP).

A single prophetic verse in the book of Psalms, Psalm 68:31, was, and currently is frequently employed to describe the religious and political identity formations and aspirations of Black Africans. Psalm 68:31 (KJV) states: “Princes shall come out of Egypt, and Ethiopia shall soon stretch forth her hands unto God”. George Shepperson provides a transcontinental overview of the spiritual status assigned to Ethiopia (Shepperson, 249-250). Shepperson maintains that “Ethiopian” is a term used for a black man in the authorized King James Version of the Bible, dating back to 1611 (Shepperson, 1968:249-250). The word “Ethiopia” received a much wider reference during the time of the Trans-Atlantic slavery period, than what modern Ethiopia currently reflects, and was often used for sub-Saharan Africa as a whole (Shepperson, 1968:249-250). Ethiopian references in the Bible came to be cherished by the multitude of the victims of slavery (Shepperson, 1968:249-250). I concede that the scriptural reference to Ethiopia as mentioned in the Bible is frequently mentioned in both this chapter and the thesis at large. Its significance for a plethora of Black African aspirations is and has been applied in diverse contexts, which can in my opinion not be overestimated. This, and the spirituality being attached to Psalm 68:31, will further be elaborated in the section on Rastafarianism and Ethiopianism in chapter 6.

Religious practises which reflected the stamp of specific African influences struggled yet persevered in the former societies of Central America (Young III, 2012:14). This was affirmed by the historian Albert Raboteau who in 1978 wrote “that in British North America, the slaves’ African religious heritage was lost” (Raboteau, 1978:47). Raboteau attributes this to the reasonably small percentage of slaves within the greater United States population. This says Raboteau, implied that “it was not possible to maintain the rites of worship, the priesthood, or the ‘national’ identities which were the vehicles and supports for African theology and cult organization”

(Raboteau, 1978:92). “Instead, slavery in the United States destroyed the African religious heritage as “the gods of Africa gave way to the God of Christianity” (Raboteau, 1978:92; see also Young 2012:14). This reflects a decolonial resistance against an internalised sense of inferiority. To me, it further signals claims for superiority, in that the perception of some aspects of traditional African culture and also religion, were superior, to Western or Christian notions, which rhetorically may be a response to the decolonial resistance. I qualify the latter by Raboteau’s (1978:92) theology of “the gods of Africa. . . giving “way to the God of Christianity.”

The primacy of African culture and religion is asserted in the development of black cultures in the United States (Young III, 2012:2). Young (2012:2) in this regard refers to Melville Herskovits’s campaigning for this “primacy” who in *The myth of the Negro past* (1941) focuses on “the substantial, significant, and continued influence of Africa in the histories, lives and cultures of blacks throughout the Americas” (Herskovits, 1941:12; see also Young III, 2012:2).

A critical reflection on Black American faith was instigated by the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements of the 1960s (Hayes, 2000:616). Black Americans started once again to ponder over the meaning of the God of Christianity for them, and the reason they existed (Hayes, 2000:616). They analysed their situation and meditated over the question of “Who is God for me?” (Hayes, 2000:616). Through their particular searching of the Scriptures, they found a God who was in solidarity with the poor (Hayes, 2000:616).

The Exodus theme featured prominently in the Black American Protestant mind-set (Maffly-Kipp, 2010:163). The application of Moses leading the Israelites out of Egyptian slavery to the land God promised, here denoting Canaan, was among Black Americans a figurative *fait accompli* that their “Canaan” (Maffly-Kipp, 2010:163) was “Africa” (Maffly-Kipp, 2010:163). This, in my view, constitutes a claim for Black Americans to have been chosen for a special mission and task amid the nations, akin to that of Israel. What troubled the Black Americans “en route” to Africa’s aspirations was that, as was the case with Canaan, “little mention is made of the peoples already inhabiting the land of Canaan” (Maffly-Kipp, 2010:163). Maffly-Kipp (2010:163) notes that the Bible contains limited references to “what happened

between Israel and pre-existing inhabitants once the Israelites laid down their tents and settled”. Because Africa is a type of Canaan, it would be idyllic if its political and social hegemony complied with Yahweh’s rule (Maffly-Kipp, 2010:163). However, how would the situation in Canaan be addressed if it was found that the existing inhabitants disagreed with Yahweh’s rule and refused to comply with it (Maffly-Kipp, 2010:163)? The same problem applied to the Ethiopia prophecy, prophetically anticipating that “Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God” (Psalm 68:31, KJV), (Maffly-Kipp, 2010:163). To whom exactly “Ethiopia” refers is a problem (Maffly-Kipp, 2010:163). Is it a reference to everybody of African descent, or only to those who were born physically in Africa (Maffly-Kipp, 2010:163)? A further concern was the issue of local Ethiopians contesting the salvation as prescribed to them by the new-arriving Black American Christians, and which of the two entities salvific “vision would prevail” (Maffly-Kipp, 2010:163)? I discern two types of geographical nationalisations. One is that of Black Americans and the other being Black Africans. Maffly-Kipp (2010:63) confirms this when she asks whose “salvific vision would prevail” (Maffly-Kipp, 2010:163). Would it “be the new-arriving Black American Christians or local Ethiopians, here implying Blacks who reside in Africa (Blacks like America)? The Exodus narrative and the “popular-Ethiopia” scriptural reference also featured prominently among the early Black American missionaries. Those who saw a resemblance between the two biblical references, namely the Exodus and Ethiopian themes, included Alexander Crummell (1819-1898) and Edward Blyden (1832-1912). It is important to note that both Crummell and Blyden were fervent emigration agents for Black Africans returning to Africa (Maffly-Kipp, 2010:160).

James Africanus Beale Horton, Albert Cleage, Gayraud Wilmore, and James Cone are commonly regarded as prominent North American Black theologians. For further reading, the works of the following authors came highly recommended: *The Oxford handbook of African American Theology* (Cannon and Pinn, 2014) and *The T & T Clark Handbook of African American theology* (Ware et al., 2019). In the next sections, I draw particular attention to the rudimentary belief among them that all that Blacks, regardless of their current location, through their ancestry are originally Black Africans.

## **5.2 PIONEERS AND PROPONENTS OF NORTH AMERICAN BLACK THEOLOGY**

### **5.2.1 James Africanus Beale Horton (1835-1883)**

James Africanus Beale Horton was educated partly in Sierra Leone, and partly in England where he adopted the name, Albert Africanus to show his African identity (Esedebe, 1982:21). After studying medicine at King's College, London, and the University of Edinburgh, Horton was commissioned to the British Army where he for twenty years served in West Africa (Esedebe, 1982:21). Horton's interests were not confined to military and medical matters (Esedebe, 1982:21). Horton's knowledge of the classics, history and anthropology was remarkable for his time (Esedebe, 1982:21). Horton's best-known publications are *West African countries and peoples; British and native* (1868), along with the same year publication of the *Requirements necessary for establishing that self-government recommended by the committee of the House of Commons 1865*, and *Vindication of the Pan-African race* 1868 (Esedebe, 1982:21). Several ideas of Pan-Africanism can be found in Horton's books (Esedebe, 1982:21). One is the notion of a great African past (Esedebe, 1982:21). In my opinion, in his recalling of the pre-eminence Africa enjoyed in past ages, Horton assigns chosenness to Africa and African Blacks as corporate agents that have a special task and mission, akin to that of Israel, amid the nations. In this regard, Horton (1969:120) states:

(Africa) ... was the nursery of science and literature; from thence they were taught in Greece and Rome so that it was said that the ancient Greeks represented their favourite goddess of Wisdom – Minerva – as an African princess. Pilgrimages were made to Africa in search of knowledge by such eminent men as Solon, Plato, Pythagoras; and several came to listen to the African Euclid, who was at the head of the most celebrated mathematical school in the world and who flourished 300 years before the birth of Christ. The conqueror of the great, African, Hannibal made his associate and confidant, the African poet, Terence.

For Horton, Africa produced many of the famous theologians of the early Christian church, notably Origen, Tertullian, Augustine, Clemens, and Cyril (Esedebe, 1982:21). Horton in no small measure strove to restore the self-confidence of Blacks, which was necessary for the further progress of the cause of Pan-Africanism (Esedebe, 1982:21). To Horton, wherever Africans found themselves, they tended to

flourish even in the face of unspeakable odds (Esedebe, 1982:21). From this Horton inferred that the Black Americans were “a permanent and enduring people” (Esedebe, 1982:21). To me, Horton’s acclamations of Black Africans and Africa, indicate claims for superiority e.g. that some aspects of traditional African culture and religion are superior to Western or Christian notions (which rhetorically may be a response to colonial resistance).

### **5.2.2 Albert B. Cleage (1911-2000)**

There is an inextricable bond between Albert, B, Cleage and the Shrine of the Black Madonna (Knight, 2006:1). The Shrine of the Black Madonna in Atlanta was founded in 1975 as the ninth congregation of the Pan-African Orthodox Christian Church (Knight, 2016). The denomination was originally founded in the 1950s by the Holy Patriarch Jaramogi Abebe Agyeman (born Albert B. Cleage Junior, the father of writer Pearl Cleage), in response to the theological spiritual and psychological needs of the Black African American people of Detroit, Michigan (Knight, 2016). The central theological belief of this church, namely, the Shrine of the Black Madonna, is that God supports the freedom of Black African Americans from all forms of oppression (Knight, 2016). Jesus is at the Shrine of the Black Madonna, hereafter referred to as the “Black Madonna,” called the “Black Messiah” (Knight, 2016). The Hebrew nation of the Bible is understood by the Black Madonna to be a black nation, while Jesus is viewed as the saviour of black people, the saviour of all humanity, as well as the Jesus who supports all struggles for liberation (Knight, 2016). All the congregations were named after the Black Madonna to emphasise to the members that the mother of Jesus was black, instructing the members to recognise other images of the Black Madonna that are worshipped around the world, and to honour black women (Knight, 2016). The rationale for the dogmas means subscribing to the belief in a black saviour and the Madonna that entails empowering the members, through the adherence to these dogmas, to counteract the damage that the mind-set called “AMBI” (acceptance of the myth of Black inferiority), had imposed on the members of the Black Madonna with (Knight, 2016).

Cleage is widely regarded as the founder of the Black Christian Nationalist Movement that had a considerable impact on traditional black members of the clergy

(Lewis, 1974:52-53). Cleage rejected the scriptural teaching of “patience, longsuffering and forbearance” (Lewis, 1974:53) and encouraged Blacks to declare boldly that they were God’s chosen people who had been charged with a mission (Lewis, 1974:53). ECGCP! This vision of Cleage (1968:277) is:

To build one Black community, one Black Nation, all stemming from the hub, which is the Shrine of the Black Madonna.

Cleage’s support base covered a broad spectrum, consisting of traditionalists, young nationalists, and those in their fifties (Lewis, 1974:53). They all attended his services and thrived on his fierce denouncement of the anti-Black political system in the United States (Lewis, 1974:70). Cleage’s audience further consisted of ardent believers in, and campaigners for, Martin Luther King’s dream (Lewis, 1974:70). Fully equipped with the dictates of King’s dream, they were however still experiencing gross marginalisation in terms of active participation in the American political and economic arena (Lewis, 1974:70). Cleage’s constituency certainly resembled those who hoped that racial integration would materialise, yet having realised that it was destined to remain a “dream” (Lewis, 1974:71).

Albert Cleage’s ministry deliberately excluded a white audience (Lewis, 1974:72). Cleage (1972:xviii) states:

White people will find it difficult to accept either my position or my conclusion because I am black and an enemy, and ‘ought not’ understand them so completely and ‘ought not’ presume to build a realistic position for Black people which may, someday, threaten their position of white supremacy.

To Cleage, the Black Church had to be devoid of any white theological dictates (Lewis, 1974:79). Through his Shrines of the Black Madonna places of worship, Cleage strove for a church that would be free from oppression, thereby creating a sound spiritual ambience within which the black person’s self-worth, responsibility, and liberty would be respected (Lewis, 1974:79). Cleage formulated the vision of the Church; when he wrote that the Church they envisage would be the epitome of a “heaven on earth for all Black people everywhere,” a church in which Black Africans would be emulating Jesus, the Black Messiah. Whilst reflecting inclusivity, Cleage’s

vision for an exclusive Black church in my opinion entails an exclusivist claim of Blacks being God's chosen people (ECGCP). In this regard, Cleage (1972:80) states:

The new Black church moving in a new direction is not going to be essentially a preaching church. It will preach, and it will teach, but only because they make meaningful action possible ... This is the kind of new Black church we are building under the banner of Black Christian Nationalism. Shrines of the Black Madonna are being set up in cities across the country. This is the kind of ministry to which we are calling young Black men and women. We have merged the heaven process with the survival process, and we are engaged in building a heaven on earth for all Black people everywhere. We are an African people and we walk in the footsteps of a revolutionary Black Messiah, Jesus.

Cleage rebuked Black people of the cloth and Black churches who were puppets of "Whites'" modes of worshipping and preaching (Lewis, 1974:81). To Cleage, the White man's church was structured exclusively for the American Whites. Cleage (1968:107) advocated a "Black man's Church":

In the United States, the Church was developed to meet the white man's needs. He decided what it should be. He decided the form, the structure, the theology, everything. The Blackman's Church has tried to work within the framework of the white man's decisions because we were so hell-bent on being integrated that everything he said had to be right. Only recently have we begun to understand that the whole development of the Christian Church has been something that the white man was building for himself.

In his sermon, "We are God's chosen people", Cleage unequivocally claims that according to the Bible, the Israelites are the ancestors of Black Africans and that that, constituted God's chosenness of African Blacks. Cleage (1968:48) avers:

We know that Israel was a black nation and that descendants of the original black Jews are in Israel, Africa, and the Mediterranean today. The Bible was written by black Jews. The Old Testament is the history of black Jews. The first three gospels, Matthew, John and Luke tell the story of Jesus, retaining some of the Original material which establishes the simple fact that Jesus was a Black Messiah. He came to free black people from the oppression of the white Gentiles. We know this now to be a fact. Our religion, our preaching, our teachings all come from the Old Testament, for we are God's chosen people. (ECGCP)

Cleage here affirms that black Africans are God's chosen people. This affirmation serves a pastoral role, namely to console those who violate the human dignity of Black Africans (e.g. in the cases of slavery, civil rights, black lives matter). This

would serve the classic pastoral role of the Christian proclamation regarding being elected by God, being included in the church, being God's people, perhaps being chosen for a particular purpose (like any prophet or priest). The emphasis on an ultimate victory is likewise in line with the classic prophetic proclamation of persecuted Christians. Does Cleage take it for granted that white Christians are also included in the household of God but have no pastoral reason to state that? Or does his rhetoric (the common enemy) indicate that he denies that? Perhaps! But this requires reading between the lines to fathom his ecclesiology. Who are the "we"? Black Africans? Black Africans who are Christian. Is Cleage's divinely chosenness of Black Africans exclusive? I chose to below "hand the stick" to Cleage! Cleage inspired and comforted his audience in their conflict with white Christianity by prophetically reminding his followers that regardless of everybody, Black Africans are God's chosen people. ECGCP. Cleage (1968:59) states:

No matter what the enemy does to us... We are God's chosen people and we must love each other. We fight together against a common enemy, confident of ultimate victory because we are God's chosen people.

Cleage denounced Paul's teaching that the Gospel is for all humankind, with specific reference to the Jews and the Gentiles (Lewis, 1974:91). For Cleage, Paul "bastardised" (Lewis, 1974:91) the original gospel message (Lewis, 1974:91), and claims that the gospel is none other than a "black nationalistic doctrine" (Lewis, 1974:91). Furthermore, Cleage felt that Blacks had lost their identity during the first century Jerusalem Council when Paul persuaded the Jewish believers that the Gospel must be preached to the Jews and the Gentiles as well (Lewis, 1974:91). In my view, Cleage's claim of Black Africans being Israelites constitutes an *exclusivist* claim to be God's chosen people (ECGCP). Cleage's teaching on baptism intimates the vocation of black commitment to an exclusively black nationalist church (Lewis, 1974:93). According to Lewis (1974:96), Cleage's teachings were not accepted unconditionally among all the sectors of the black community. Cleage's response to this opposition revealed a proverbial obsession with martyrdom when Cleage (1968:68; see also Lewis, 1974:96) asserts: "Some of us if need be, must die. Anytime we forget that we must be willing to die. The Nation is through. Because anybody can oppress us if we're afraid to die" (Cleage, 1968:68; see also Lewis, 1974:96).

Cleage, the “prophet” was not going to be unsettled by his persecutors (Lewis, 1974:97). He regarded himself as ordained to prophesy over the “bones” (Lewis, 1974:97) here paraphrasing the prophecy as found in the book of Ezekiel, Chapter 37:7 and rendering it applicable to Blacks: “Say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the Word of the Lord.”

Considering James Cone’s eminence in the discipline of North American Black theology, Cone’s assessment of Cleage’s claims as being a “prophet” suffices. When delivering his accolade of Cleage, Cone (1974) declares: “In my estimation, Cleage is a prophet. If you read the Old Testament, you will see good parallels. No, I find no problem with that notion at all. He is a prophet.”

Cleage vehemently opposed “universal love” (Lewis, 1974:114). Blacks to Cleage (1968) had dissociated themselves from any notion of universal love and brotherhood. Paul’s teaching of universal love was a contradiction to Cleage of what the Old Testament prescribed (Lewis, 1974:114). In his “Message to the Black Nation” (1968), Cleage (1968) in my opinion segregates the gospel of Jesus Christ within the confines of Black custodianship. Cleage declares:

Jesus was concerned primarily with Salvation of a nation and its growth. This is much different than salvation by the blood of the Lamb. This is Paul who tried to make a religion acceptable to white gentiles by salvation through faith. There are two religions in the Bible, the religion of Jesus and the religion of the Apostle Paul. The basic mission of the black church is to rediscover the religion of Jesus to build a Black Nation.

Motshega notes that “The religion of the Black Madonna (goddess) and child as symbolised by the Nohale Mwali and Maluti/Malundi Mountains in Zimbabwe, respectively, is still a living tradition in Africa. This goddess still appears in forms of thunder and fire on the Matopo Hills and Masase (Zimbabwe), Makonde Bolobedu (Motshekga, 2006:5). “The Black Madonna is also symbolised by the Bird of Muhale (shire ya Mwari), also known as the Raluvhimba/Ra libepe or Zimbabwe Bird” (Motshega, 2006:6).

In *The Quest for a Black Christ* (Poinsett 1969), Cleage is adamant in attesting that Jesus is not merely depicted as black because of His solidarity with the oppressed, but that He, Jesus, was “literally” Black, (Poinsett, 1969:174). Cleage, as quoted in Poinsett (1969:174), states unequivocally: “I’m not saying, ‘wouldn’t it be nice if Jesus was black? (or)’ let’s pretend that Jesus was black. I am saying that Jesus WAS black.”

### 5.2.3 Gayraud. S. Wilmore (1895-1965)

Gayraud Wilmore is regarded as the main proponent of the discipline known as the North American Black theology, with Cleage, Cone, Hopkins, and Hayes following suit. The bulk of this section comprises excerpts from Wilmore’s book entitled *Pragmatic spirituality. The Christian faith through an Africentric lens* (2004). In the conclusion of the latter section on Wilmore, excerpts from an earlier writing of his entitled *The new context of Black theology in the United States* (1978), are provided.

Wilmore prefers the term “Africentrism,” which he defines as engaging in intellectual work with Black Africans and Black African-Americans (Wilmore, 2004:8), “Africentrism” is defined by Wilmore (2004:8) as follows:

Africentrism is not defining everything in the world in terms of what Native Africans have done, thought or believed, it is equally focused on the history and culture of African Americans. Nor is it a total reflection of the value of the European, Euro-American, or any other civilization. It is not an anti-white version of Black Nationalism. Africentrism is rather a studied openness to the knowledge, wisdom, and spirituality of Africa and the African diaspora, and the willingness on the strength of that acquirement to always ask the question: “What does this datum of insight, knowledge, or experience have to do with the suppression of truth about black people and the oppression of the black world, and to what extent will it detract from or enhance liberation, justice, and democratic development for Africans, the diaspora, and all poor and oppressed people throughout the world?”

Wilmore (2004:11) quantifies his designation “Africentrism” when he states:

The “God of Ethiopia” as some of our great-grandparents were not afraid to call the God and Father of Jesus Christ, is the God of all oppressed peoples and holds out to both Africans and African Americans of the twenty-first century yet another opportunity to redeem not only the land that was alienated from its original possessors, but to reinvigorate a spiritual inheritance that actually belongs to all God’s children.

Wilmore expresses God's chosenness of the American Negro through the contents of a booklet entitled *Another chosen people* (Coleman and Walls, 1962), which had been written by a close acquaintance and had made an indelible impression on him. Wilmore acknowledges that this booklet written by Coleman and Walls, is probably not widely read, yet its outstanding feature is "the distinctiveness, if not the uniqueness, of the African" (Wilmore, 2004:167). In this book, Coleman and his sister Mary; who co-authored the book with him; position the history of Black people against the history of Israel, showing how the discovery of the Old Covenant God by the Black Americans was not coincidental, but that Black African Americans were a chosen people, in addition to the Jews, a further chosen people (Wilmore, 2004:167). I pose the question of whether Wilmore through his endorsing of Coleman's view does not present Black Africans as being endowed with exclusivist divinely chosenness (ECGCP). Coleman shows through history with regard to Black Americans, that all nations had to acknowledge that God had elected Black Americans to occupy and fulfil a particular mission, commencing from modernity up to today (Wilmore, 2004:167) (Black Like América). This reflects the claim of Black Americans having been chosen by God for a special mission and task akin to that of Israel, among the nations. Wilmore quotes Coleman to confirm the divine chosenness of Black African Americans: Accordingly, Coleman (quoted in Wilmore 2004:168) announces:

Their birth, their growth, their religious fervour, matched only by early Christians; their gift of the soul-stirring spirituals; their miraculous liberation from physical slavery, their phenomenal and unparalleled progress without human leadership, and an accelerated build-up of momentum and expectancy that surround American Negroes, are more than mere unrelated, unguided, and purposeless incidents of time. They are all part of this great unfolding miracle, which may be another demonstration of God's dealing with another Chosen people, as is suggested by the similarities and identities which they have in common with other chosen people of the past.

I am keen to ascertain whom Colemare identifies as designating the "other chosen people of the past" (Coleman quoted in Wilmore, 2004:168) I examined what I consider as some reasons why Black Africans would consider themselves as being divinely chosen. These are:

- i. Superiority features in the literature, that is, that some aspects of traditional African culture and even religion are actually claimed to be superior to Western or Christian notions.
- ii. The gross alienation of Black Africans having been treated as an inferior human species incited what can be perceived as an obsession for Black Africans to pronounce that they are included irrevocably in the household of God, aimed rhetorically at persuading Black Africans that God loves them too and that they are God's chosen people. This aggressive reaction can also be attributed to decolonialism.

Wilmore concedes that he on numerous occasions in the same vein as Coleman, designated Black Americans as “another eschatological people” (Wilmore, 2004:168). Wilmore thus refers to his forebears as “another eschatological people in the new world” (Wilmore, 2004:168). The Black Church's eschatology is characterised by a more “other-worldly” dispensation (Wilmore, 2004:168). This other-worldliness is contrary to what Western educated theologians would label as a “false spirituality” (Wilmore, 2004:179). The spirituality of Black Americans is an authentic expression of Hebraic and Christian spirituality, here with special reference to the Black American South (Wilmore, 2004:179). The Black African American spiritual experiences were contrary to what the White advocates (theologians) considered to be a “false spirituality,” or what some African theologians discard as a “pragmatic spirituality” (Wilmore, 2004:179) (Black like América).

In effect, the Black American slaves' perception of heaven was an “approximation of the Hebrew background of New Testament eschatology” (Wilmore, 2004:179). What the Black African American spirituality expressed was an authentic faith, which juxtaposed “this world and the next one (heaven) in a creative tension” (Wilmore, 2004:180). What, on the surface, appeared to be a dichotomy, was in fact, an expression of faith which conjured up an eschatology which for the Black African Americans, fused the message of liberation in the Bible with African spirituality, constituting for them a foundation which contained crucial components of the “worldview” of Africa (Wilmore, 2004:180). Wilmore contends vigorously for a reinterpretation of the spiritual history of the Black African Americans and deemed it imperative that the falsifying of American Church history by certain Black and

White scholars, needs to be corrected (Wilmore, 2004:32). The roots of Black African American spirituality vested in the spiritual ingenuity of Black Africa, here also with the inclusion of Egypt and Ethiopia, need to be explored (Wilmore, 2004:33). Wilmore (2004:33) lists a number of scholars who include Crummell, Blyden, Du Bois, Diop, Mazrui, and Asante, who have pioneered research on the aforementioned genre. All these scholars, in addition to others, have demonstrated the courage “to break out of old moulds and explore new inferences and insights” (Wilmore 2004:33).

According to Wilmore (2004:158), Black Theology not only poses a challenge to White theologians, but it is a non-negotiable imperative that black people should practise Black theology from a black perspective. Black theology embodies the correct approach to the significance of Jesus Christ for Black American Christians (Wilmore, 2004:158). I here pose the question as to whether each nationality possesses a distinctly national significance of Jesus Christ? Furthermore, to Wilmore, Black theology is not just paramount for Black Christians, but crucial for the numerous white Christians in the world, to educate them on the insights and passion that Black theology can impart to the “common faith” of believers (Wilmore, 2004:158). This is a further premise by Wilmore that Black American Christians, have a vocation to impart the passion and insights of Black theology to the non-Black Christians of the world.

In this section on Wilmore, I note what he, in his *The new context of Black theology in the United States* (1978) lists as the three distinct contributions Black theologians have made to the theological fraternity in Europe and America since the sixties (Wilmore, 1978:141):

- i. Indisputably, Black theology determined the “indispensable biblical grounds” (Wilmore, 1978:141) for the liberation of the poor and the oppressed, of which Blacks are a dominant component in the West which constitutes the kernel of the Christian faith (Wilmore, 1978:141). This stems from claims in the liberation theology for the epistemological privilege of the poor as those on whose side God is and who, therefore, know God better than the rich.

- ii. Black theology de-Americanised Jesus Christ, re-establishing his essence as the incarnated Son of God, who takes away the sins of the world (Wilmore, 1978:141).
- iii. Black theology has authenticated a rediscovery of the ancestors who emanated from other parts of the world than Europe (Wilmore, 1978:141).

These contributions are rooted in the pioneering work Black historians and theologians have done (Wilmore, 1978:141). Wilmore (1978:41) remarks the following about the “groundbreaking” discoveries:

Because of the work Black historians and Black theologians have done on the African inheritance in black religion in the new world, the beliefs, insights, and religious imagination of “primitive” Blacks can be appropriated as correctives of the deficiencies of the Western version of the Christian faith.

Wilmore’s (1978:41) accolades of the “new (Black African) “world, the beliefs, insight, and religious imagination . . .” does not only exalt Black African religious practices as superior but in my opinion posits such religion as exclusive. This to the extent of eliminating the Western versions of the Christian faith of its deficiencies.

#### **5.2.4 James Cone (1936-2018)**

The publication of James Cone’s *Black theology and Black power* (1969), heralded the start of the attempt to define the concerns of North American Black theology systematically. Cone is considered the chief theological architect of North American Black theology. The release of *Black theology and Black power* caused a religious and theological explosion in both the Black and White Christian communities in America. The attitude that dominated Cone’s polemics, was that of an angry Black man, disgusted with both the oppression of Blacks in America and with the scholarly demands to be “objective about it” (Cone, 1970:2). Cone’s theology stems from his formative experiences growing up as a Black man in Arkansas during the height of Jim Crow,” having been subjected to the oppressive regime of white superiority, which permeated all facets of life (Ellis, 2011). Bearden, Cone’s childhood abode, symbolises an environment of oppression to him (Cone, 1999:11-15). Importantly, Cone’s reminiscences of the twelve hundred membered rural community in which he grew up, were amongst others, those of a community. characterised by continuous

racial conflicts with the White members of the community, together with the “lingering ambivalence” his fellow Bearden Blacks had to suffer (Cone, 1999:12), resulting in him not being revered as a struggle hero from Bearden (Cone, 1999:11-15). Cone (1975:3) reports the following about his existence in Bearden:

It meant attending ‘separate but equal schools, going to the balcony when attending a movie, and drinking water from a ‘colored’ fountain. It meant refusing to retaliate when called a nigger unless you were prepared to leave town at the precise moment of your rebellion. You had no name except for your first name of ‘boy’.

In his own words, Cone (1975:3) concedes that: “my theological reflections are inseparable from the Bearden experience ... What I write is urged out of my blood”. Following this line of thinking, Blacks were perceived by Whites as being inherently, irredeemably inferior (Ellis, 2011:2). This influenced Cone’s perspective significantly, as did his experience as a PhD. student during the 1960s at the Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary and Northwestern University (Ellis, 2011:2). To Cone, “Christianity was seen as the white man’s religion. Cone: “I wanted to say: ‘No! The Christian Gospel is not the white man’s religion” (Ellis, 2011:2). Furthermore, Cone regarded the gospel as a religion of liberation that declares that God created all people to be free (Powell, 2008:1). Cone had come to the realisation that for black people to be free, “they must first love their blackness” (Powell, 2008:1). Cone’s advocacy for African Blacks to love their blackness, is an affirmation of human dignity, which is almost universal by definition applying to all various forms of Black African humanism, as well as notions that “Black is beautiful.” Concerning Cone and other Black American theologians, Chepkwony notes that the North American Black theologians insist that blackness is the symbol which points to the dimensions of divine activity in America, and that whiteness symbolises the activity of deranged men and is satanic in nature (Chepkwony, 1994:27),

For Cone, both God and Christ are Black because the oppressed in America who are calling “upon Him to relieve their oppression are themselves Black” (Cone, (1979:17). Cone held the opinion that human beings can only be justified and reconciled to God by becoming Black. Skin colour is of no significance here. Whites

need to realise their sinful natures in order to become chosen through reconciliation with God. Cone (1969:151) confirms this when he claims:

Therefore, God's Word of reconciliation is that we can only be justified by becoming black. Reconciliation makes us all black ... Through this radical change, we become identified totally with the suffering of the black masses. It is in this fact that makes all white churches anti-Christian in their essence. To be Christian is to be one of these whom God has chosen. God has chosen black people. (ECGCP)

If hypothetically the non-Black Race should become the en-masse victims of oppression, I wish to pose the question of whether the Christ, would because of the persecution then suddenly transform into a Christ who reflects the new persecuted race exclusively?

Cone (1979:16-17) contends that Jesus Christ and the Black experience, converged in the incarnation when God became man in Jesus Christ. Cone in my opinion assigns to Blacks by definition what I term the divine virtue of "spiritual receptivity." This, I deduce from Cone using the phrase "And because we Blacks accept. . ." (Cone 1979:16-17). Cone by declaring this "virtue" ascribed to Blacks through their acceptance of "God's presence in Jesus as the true definition of our humanity" prompts me to pose the question regarding whether the non-Black section of humanity then has no place in God's presence in Jesus? Cone's further notion of the entitlement of Blacks concerning them being divinely, indisputably, "dialectically" bound to God's presence in Jesus, prompts me to pose a further question regarding whether non-black human beings are then inextricably barred from being in God's presence in Jesus?

Cone (1979:32-33) expresses what I consider a claim in liberation theology for the epistemological privilege of the poor as those on whose side God is and who, therefore, know God better than the rich, when defining Jesus' death and resurrection in terms of the Black experience. Cone (1979:32) in this regard states:

Jesus' death on the cross represented God's boundless solidarity with victims even unto death. Jesus' resurrection is the good news that there is a new life for the poor that is not determined by their poverty but overcomes it, and this new life is available to all. Jesus' resurrection is God's victory over oppression. If this biblical message has any meaning for

contemporary America, it must mean that black power represents God's resurrection in Jesus becoming embodied in the consciousness and actions of Black America.

"Whiteness" to Cone symbolises a type of ethnocentrism, denoting delinquent people who are obsessed with their self-concept of whiteness, showing gross indifference to that which should plague their consciences, namely, the oppression of others (Rhodes, 2009:4). To Cone, White theology is thus a theological product of "sickness and oppression" (Cone, 1970:29). In *A Black theology of liberation* (1970), Cone (1970:32) agitates for the liberation of what he terms "White theology":

In order to be Christian theology, white theology must cease being white theology and become Black theology, by denying whiteness as a proper form of human existence and affirming blackness as God's intention of humanity.

Rhodes notes that Cone's interpretation of blackness is a prerequisite to understand what Cone means by "Black theology" and "Black power" (Rhodes, 2009:4). To Cone, Blackness denotes both "physiological" and ontological aspects (Rhodes, 2009:4). Blackness in *A Black theology of liberation* (1970:30), to Cone, is "an ontological symbol for all people who participate in the liberation of man from oppression" (Cone, 1970:32). To me, Cone's exalting of Black ethnicity, appears ambiguous, here with special reference to when he states that "Blackness" is an identity which can be conferred on all those who engage in liberating people from oppression" (Rhodes, 2009:4).

Cone believes that in order for the gospel message to be relevant, it must be interpreted from within the current, chronological context, thereby implying that the gospel needs to be "re-interpreted by each and every generation" (Hayes, 2000:611). Cone theologises from the Black experience, Black here denoting ALL who are oppressed, regardless of societal pigmentation. Accordingly, Christ's redemptive acts are a sign to the oppressed of God having chosen them as his people (Hayes, 2000:620). Through his claim cited below, Cone subscribes to theologies being founded on the particular nature of the context. Cone (1969:25-26) claims: "[I]n a revolutionary situation, there can never be just theology. It is always theology identified with a particular community. It is either identified with those who oppress or its victims."

Furthermore, Cone affirms that any experience of God, to be contextually relevant and qualify as Christian truth must, within the context of Cone's theology be defined by the contextual Christian community, which community, says Cone, is the Black community (Hayes, 2000:611). In this regard, Cone (1975:16-17) states:

There is no truth for and about Black people that does not emerge out of the context of their experience. This means that there can be no Black Theology which does not take the black experience as a source for its starting point. Black Theology is a theology of and for black people, an examination of their stories, tales and sayings. It is an investigation of the mind into the raw materials of our pilgrimage, telling the story of "how we got over." For theology to be black, it must reflect upon what it means to be black. Black theology must uncover the structures and forms of the black experience because the categories of interpretation must arise out of the thought forms of the black experience itself.

To Cone, the death of Jesus on the cross demonstrates Jesus' inseparable identification with the oppressed and the poor. In addition, to Cone, the resurrection heralds good news for the poor and the oppressed, that regardless of their current state(s) of oppression, the resurrection announces the good news of God having conquered oppression (Cone, 1979:32, 33). In *For my people: Black theology and the Black Church: Where have we been and where are we going?* (1979). Cone expresses the view that during his tenure as an American citizen, the power of Blacks (Black Power) during his era, or any era of oppression, signified the resurrection of God in Jesus, having become engrained in the "consciousness and actions of Black America" (Cone, 1979:32,33). Cone's theology poses and explores the answer to the question "What does the Christian gospel have to say to powerless black men whose existence is threatened daily by the insidious tentacles of white power?" (Cone, 1970:32). In answering such a crucial question, Cone (Rhodes, 2009:4) accentuates the virtually inseparable link between Black theology and "Black power" Cone further confirms that the designation "Black power" is representative of black freedom and black self-determination, where black people no longer view themselves as people without human dignity, but as men and human beings with the ability to carve out their own destiny (Cone, 1969:6). In the latter citation, Cone affirms human dignity (which almost by definition is universal, applying to all humans), including various forms of African humanism, and notions that "Black minds matter" and that "black is beautiful" too.

In *Black Power, Black Theology. Theological Education* Cone (1970) avers that Black theology is the religious complement of Black power. Black theology is the theological arm of Black power and Black power is the political arm of Black theology (Cone, 1970:209). While Black power focuses on the political, social and economic conditions of black people, Black theology puts black identity into a theological context (Rhodes, 2009:4). For Cone, obedience to Christ necessitates blackness (Cone, 1969:151). Cone avers that obedience is revolutionary, and always constitutes the opposite to what human society regards as the norm. Whites benefit from a white racist milieu in order to be obedient to Christ, need to adopt the stature of blackness (Cone, 1969:151). I here wish to pose the question whether to Cone there are then degrees of statures of blackness, “black, blacker, blackest?” Cone (1969:151) acknowledges that the transition for white Christians to adopt the stature of “blackness” is going to be difficult, but in his own words as quoted below, considers this transition to be non-negotiable (Cone, 1969:151). Cone (1969:151) declares:

To be sure this is not easy. But whoever said the Gospel of Christ was easy? Obedience always means going where we otherwise would not go; being what we would not be; doing what we would not do. Reconciliation means that Christ has freed us for this. In a white racist society, Christian obedience can only mean being obedient to blackness, its glorification and exaltation. To be Christian is to be one of those whom God has chosen. God has chosen black people!

Hayes contends that the concept of Christ being black does not imply to Cone that Christ is literally and pigmentationally black (Hayes, 2000:620). Hayes does however concede that there is a school of Black theologians who perceive Christ as being pigmentationally black (Hayes, 2000:620). Cone in this regard states: “But whether whites want to hear it or not: ‘Christ is black, baby, with all of the features which are so detestable to white society’” (Cone & Wilmore, 1979:116-117). Blackness to Cone represents: “A manifestation of the being of God in that it reveals that neither divinity nor humanity reside in White definitions but in the liberations of Black captivity” (Cone 1969:216).

It is extremely important to Cone for black people to view Jesus as black. Cone confirmed this and furnished his reasons in an interview with Barbara Reynolds (1989:11) from *USA Today*:

It's very important because you've got a lot of white images of Christ. In reality, Christ was not white, not European. That's important to the psychic and to the spiritual consciousness of black people who live in a ghetto and in a white society in which their lord and saviour looks like people who victimize them. God is whatever color God needs to be in order to let people know they're not anybody, they're somebodies. (see also Rhodes 2009:5)

I fully agree with Cone that God may choose any ethnic complexion God wishes to. Be it black, white, European, Asian, or African. God can indeed opt to appear in whichever complexion God wishes to. Allow me to paraphrase that God is no respecter of a particular colour! Cone argues that black theologians must reject an image of God as being God for all peoples, God has chosen "blackness" (Cone, 1969:63, 64). Cone (1969:63-64) states:

The black theologian must reject any conception of God which stifles black self-determination by picturing God as a God of all peoples. Either God is identified with the oppressed to the point that their experience becomes God's experience, or God is a God of racism. The blackness of God means that God has made the condition of the oppressed, God's own condition.

In the light of the quote below, Cone in my view is clear and adamant that Blacks are corporate agents who, like Israel, have a special mission and task and that the black clergy should be advocating this vocation. At an early stage of his career, Cone (1968:6) declared:

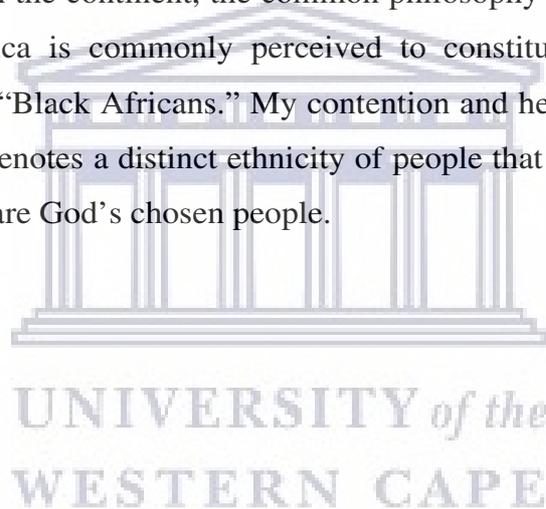
As black preachers, we must tell our people that we are God's chosen people and that God is fighting with us as we fight. When we march, when we take it to the streets in open conflict, we must understand that in the stamping feet and under the thunder of violence we can hear the voice of God. When the Black Church accepts its role in the Black Revolution, it is able to understand and interpret revolutionary Christianity, and the revolution becomes part of our Christian faith. (ECGCP)

My sense with particular reference to Cone's exposition on North American Black theology is that Cone, whilst justified in positing that Christ is in solidarity with the oppressed and, thus designating Christ as Black because of Christ's solidarity with

“all” who are being victimised through circumstances beyond their control, Cone succumbs to an ambiguity by equating Christ being metaphysically and physically Black. This to me begs the question of whether God’s act of creating the human being shouldn’t have been translated as “So God created Blacks in his own image, in the image of God he created Blacks, Black male and Black female he created them.”

### **5.3 CONCLUSION**

There are views that Black Africans cannot be perceived as a uniform race since the continent constitutes a plethora of races. Throughout my research and here with particular reference to Pan-Africanism, I have discerned that whilst there are numerous ethnicities on the continent, the common philosophy is that despite these ethnic diversities, Africa is commonly perceived to constitute what I term an “umbrella” race called “Black Africans.” My contention and here even with regard to Cone, is that black denotes a distinct ethnicity of people that need to be told that they (Black Africans), are God’s chosen people.



# PAN-AFRICAN THEOLOGY ON BEING GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE – A SELECTION OF VIEWS

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## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

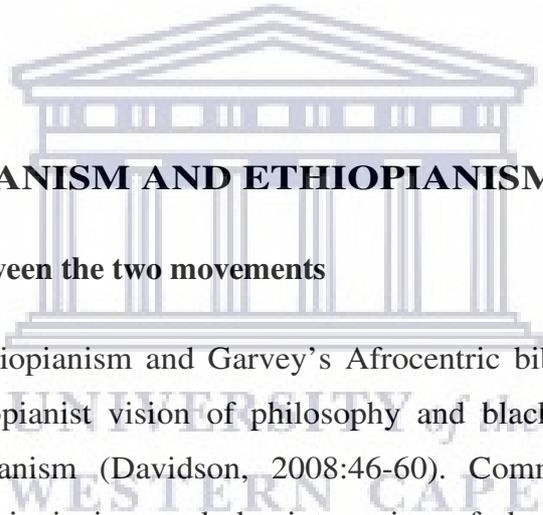
Reflections on, Pan-Africanism and North American Black theology and the evolvment toward a Pan-African Theology, have brought to union that of the politic and the religious, at the centre of which lies the impetus on election of what I termed Black African; “Black”, its elect person/identity/feature, and; “African”, its elect origin/ownership/geography. And particularly that such election, is not merely a particular human world view, but rather predestined, in as far as, its divine election.

Such a union though required in its development a fusion of historicity (revealed and made manifest in history), polity (revealed and made manifest in the struggle for ‘rightful’ rule), religiosity (revealed and made manifest in the revelation of its truths infused by and from the divine - God) and theology (revealed and made manifest in the movement of minds to order, structure, rationalise its foundations). But the missing developmental aspect was the integration of a Black African religiosity, as something distinct from the historic religiosity in scripture (Jewish/Christian) and its religious history. This Black African religiosity found its catalyts through Ethiopionism, Rastafarianism and Africanism (spiritualisms). Here I intend to look at such a development.

Each of these; Ethiopionism (the religious link back in history to the elect), Rastafarianism (the practice and participation of a specific religious paradigm with its own form of doctrine and dogma), and Africanism (the primordial religious impulse seen through spiritualisms (tradition, occult, mystery, rites, ritual, prophetic, communicative and so on), provide body to the development of a true Black African Theology, but which is now only possible to speak of and define as a Pan-African Theology.

I will briefly introduce at the beginning here the synergy, in particular, between Rastafarianism and Ethiopianism. Rastafarianism, seen as a convergence of the heritage of the Maroons (blacks who resisted slavery in the Americas by escaping to the mountains), Ethiopianism, and the emergent Pan-African movement (Simpson, 1985:286-291). A deciding factor in the founding of the movement was the crowning of Haile Selassie as the King of Ethiopia in the 1930s, who was venerated as their god (Chawane, 2014:217). Selassie's coronation was interpreted as the fulfilment of Marcus Garvey's prophecy which inspired the people "to look to Africa when a black king shall be crowned, for the day of deliverance is near" (Chawane, 2014:217).

I also look at the political agenda in these movements and how they politically and religiously synergise.



## **6.2 RASTAFARIANISM AND ETHIOPIANISM**

### **6.2.1 Synergy between the two movements**

Rastafarianism and Ethiopianism and Garvey's Afrocentric biblical interpretation coupled with his Ethiopianist vision of philosophy and blackness permeate the teachings of Rastafarianism (Davidson, 2008:46-60). Commonalities between Rastafarianism and Ethiopianism and the integration of these two movements occurred through the Wellington Movement, particularly prevalent in South Africa in the mid-1920s (Chawane, 2014:222). The Wellington Movement displayed strong resemblances to those of the Rastafarians (Chawane, 2012:222). Wellington Buthelezi, after whom the movement was named, was an ardent supporter of Marcus Garvey, advocating "that a day of reckoning was at hand in which Black Americans were coming to liberate Black Africans from European bondage" (Chawane, 2014:222) (Black like América). In a similar fashion to the Rastafarian rituals, Wellington preached in English, wore the same ministerial outfits, with his meetings commencing with prayer, the reading of the Bible, and the singing of hymns (Chawane, 2012:223). The Wellington Movement's oracle liturgy as is the case with

Rastafarianism, focused on the topics of African freedom and unity (Chawane, 2012:223).

Rastafarianism is seen as a soulmate of Ethiopianism as is evident in the Rastafarians' use of the scriptures. Chawane (2008:132) in this regard states:

In using the Bible, they should be able to differentiate between what is wrong and what is right because many things were added and left out when King James came with his own version. The Christian Bible has been copied from other books such as the *Kebrä Negus*, which is the earliest Ithiopian Bible and, which is the oldest Bible on earth. The Bible is therefore not very important to us and we should instead use writings about Africa's history.

Marcus Garvey is perceived to be the most prominent contender for the Bible being read in an Afrocentric manner, the latter denoting a critical reflection of the "social and political conditions of those who are of African descent" (Chawane, 2012:171). Garvey is inseparably associated with both the ideologies of Rastafarianism and Ethiopianism and is regarded as the "Black Moses" of the Rastafarian movement.

### **6.2.2 Rastafarianism**

In the early 1930s, a religious and social movement called Rastafarianism evolved in Jamaica (Chawane, 2012:92) commonly referred to as the "Rastas." The movement sought to provide a voice for the oppressed amidst the dominant societal structures (Chawane, 2014:218). The origin and expansion of the Rastafarian movement in the Caribbean emanated directly from attempts to destroy the efforts by slaves who were adamant to establish and explore their own cultural identity and passion for freedom (Chawane, 2014:218). The movement's founding further stemmed from a quest for a religion within which a united and independent Africa could find spiritual expression (Chawane, 2014:218). The main reason for the Rastafarian movement's emergence was that Africans who had been captured and transported as slaves to America had no culture or identity of their own in these foreign places of forced abode (Chawane, 2008:154).

Johnson-Hill (1996:154) supports this viewpoint when he avers:

By identifying with the new Black king, the powerless became powerful. Because Selassie was a Black emperor of virtually the only African nation to successfully resist colonialism, he evoked Black Nationalist sentiments and provided hope for an eventual triumph over racism.

“The word “Rastafari” is derived from Haile Selassie’s” original name “Ras” (Ethiopian word for Prince) “Tafari Makonnen” (Bosch, 1996:7). Selassie was hailed as His Imperial Majesty, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, conquering Lion of the Tribe Judah, Elect of God, Light of this World, and King of Zion (Bosch, 1996:7). “Haile Selassie was reported to be the 225<sup>th</sup>” successor of the Solomonic Dynasty, one of the oldest thrones on earth, being more than three thousand years old (Bosch, 1996:7). For Jamaicans, Selassie’s coronation embedded the traditional tenets of Ethiopia and its independent place in Judean-Christendom assigning to the Rastafarian movement its religious character (Napti, 2003:339).

At the core of Rastafarianism is the re-interpretation of the Hebrew Bible with the focus on Blacks as God’s chosen race (Murrell et al., 1998:5) (ECGCP). Their belief system professes that the true Messiah came to them as Emperor Haile Selassie I (RasTafari) of Ethiopia (Murrell et al., 1998:5). Rastafarians await the time of the repatriation of Blacks and a return to Ethiopia, qua Africa, establishing its rightful ruling status (Murrell et al., 1998:5). Despite being a largely unorganised group, the Rastafarians agree on a few central beliefs, such as the beauty of black people’s African heritage, the belief that RasTafari Haile Selassie I is the Biblical Messiah, a belief in the eventual fall of “Babylon,” the corrupt world of the white man, and a reversal in the slavery based societal hierarchy (Murrell et al., 1998:5). The Rastafarian movement “endorses most of the principles and objectives of liberation and African theologies” (Chawane, 2014:231). Contrary to the Exodus motif in accordance with the Bible interpretation vested in liberation theologies, Rastafarianism’s biblical impetus is vested in “Babylon,” which to them embodies “any place outside of Africa” (Chawane, 2014:231), with the continent Africa signifying “Zion” (Chawane, 2014:231).

Employing the designation “Babylon” can be attributed to Marcus Garvey’s notion of “Black Zionism,” in which the “Babylon” ideology constitutes “evil” seated in the rest of non-Africa, here with particular reference to the British Empire, with “Zion”

denoting Africa (Chawane, 2014:231). The Rastafarians believe that the Bible is the history of the African race recorded by Europeans at the time of enslavement, and mistranslated deliberately in an effort to deceive the slaves (Waters, 1985:47). Rastafarians have and are often called the “Black Jews” (De Cosmo, 1994:2). They refer to themselves as the true authentic Israelites (DeCosmo, 1994:2). The Rastafarian teaching of being the “true Israelites” (DeCosmo, 1994:2), the “Black Jews” (DeCosmo, 1994:2), raises the question of whether there are people who, whilst regarding themselves as the true Israelites, are if not black, false Israelites. The movement typifies ancient Judaism, which was a religion facing powerlessness and landlessness (DeCosmo, 1994:2). Rastafarianism further comprises claims that they are closer to the essence of Biblical religion and that they grasp the Biblical message more authentically than modern European versions (DeCosmo, 1994:2). Rastas believe that religious morality is focusing too much on the individual rather than on collective sin (DeCosmo, 1994:6). Rastafarians focus on redemption rather than on salvation since according to them, redemption is applicable to the whole community, as opposed to salvation pertaining only to the individual (DeCosmo, 1994:6). As early as the 1930s, the Rasta founder Leonard P. Howell stated that “What is needed today is international salvation, not individual salvation” (Owens, 1976:17). The Rastafarians object to their movement being classified as a religion and being institutionalised as a denomination (Harrison, 2006:132-152). According to Afari (2007:224):

In advancing the argument that their movement is not religious, Rastafarians differentiate between spirituality and religion with some preferring to see their movement as a form of spirituality.

Among Rastafarians, spirituality is regarded as a network that connects human beings, thereby linking all humankind to the Creator, the universe, and each other (Afari, 2007:224). The Rastafarians quest is to return to Jah and righteousness in a mystical manner, through meditative rituals involving drumming, smoking ganja (“dagga-marijuana”), dancing, which they believe will culminate in a physical return to the original homeland, Africa (DeCosmo, 1994:5).

Rastas usually stem from disadvantaged situations, here with specific reference to Jamaica when, at the time of Jamaica’s Independence, the Rastafarians comprised

seventy-nine percent of Jamaica's population (Waters, 1985:47). In general, Rastas are pacifists, but when asked if they would take up arms when the time came to repatriate to Africa and the authorities tried to prevent it, they consistently answered that they would do what they had to do if Jah so demanded it (Owens, 1976:210).

The "Rastafarian identity is thus understood as evolving out of cultural resistance," the lack of political freedom, and opposition to an imposed slave identity and religion (Simpson, 1985:286-291). This typifies a Decolonial resistance against an internalised sense of inferiority. Hence, this is the reason why the Rastafarians and some scholars view the movement as a way of life, a philosophy, or an ethical code (Simpson, 1985:286-291). Rastafarians demonstrate and articulate their divinely elected status in what is commonly known as the Rasta-braided hairstyle and are embodied in Bob Marley's (world famous Jamaican composer and singer) lyrics. A thorough comprehension of the Rastafarian movement without consideration of the movement's acclaimed Reggae artist Bob Marley (1945-1981), would in my opinion be an incomplete account of the movement. It may be appropriate to in conclusion include some excerpts from Marley's Rastafarian spiritual and musical legacy. In true Rastafarian vein, Marley branded the "western system" as "Babylon" or "Rome" and in his lyrics frequently refers to Babylon as a vampire, a Dracula, an evil place which is inhabited by devils (DeCosmo 1994:6). O'Neill (1993:24) notes that Marley considered Babylon and Rome as resembling whiteness' Marley's definition of whiteness as quoted in O'Neill (1993:24) is:

I see white as a system ... I stand for the black ... Anyone who accepts Selassie 1 in his heart is black. I don't see white skin or black skin.

Marley's songs were overtly political, religious, or a mixture of both, with the exception of love or dance songs, (DeCosmo, 1994:2, 3). Marley has been designated as a prophet, apostle, poet, Black Nationalist, messiah and a Pan-Africanist (DeCosmo, 1994:2, 3). Bob Marley always performed in front of a scrim of Haile Selassie's image and would before and after every concert praise JahRastafari (DeCosmo, 1994:2, 3). In one of his last interviews, the year before he died (1981), Marley (quoted in O'Neill, 1993:23) proclaimed:

We know that there is a God Jah Rastafari, Selassie 1. I believe in Selassie 1 more than I believe in myself ... Jesus Christ came to earth and said, "In two – thousand years I will come again." Well two – thousand years have come, and Selassie 1 is on earth ....

Marley's lyrics express the theme of exile which features prominently in Rastafarianism. These include "... My home is what I think about" – Time will, "No chains around my feet ... Bound here in captivity ..."– Concrete Jungle. "This morning I woke up in a curfew / Lord knows, I was a prisoner too" – Burnin and Lootin (DeCosmo, 1994:7). Marley's lyrics also reflect revolutionary and prophetic demands intended to command justice from the power of elites and to challenge the system (DeCosmo, 1994:7). Examples of these songs (DeCosmo, 1994:7) with regard to Marley are: "... stand up for your rights ... don't give up the fight ... life is your right– Get Up, Stand Up. "It takes a revolution to make a solution..." – Revolution.

Marley's Rastafarian legacy as expressed in the genre of reggae music is phenomenally popular, even during the time of this study (2021), with multi-millions of people donning the Rastafarian braided hair look and feel, stomping their feet, clapping their hands, and swinging their heads to the late Bob Marley's Rasta music. Rastafarianism is vibrant throughout the world among all age groups. I was pleasantly surprised to discover a Rastafarian communal district known as Marcus Garvey, in the Jo Slovo informal settlement situated in Cape Town, South Africa, the latter being my "city of refuge," or should one say "abode." "Rastafari" as the designation commonly used for the movement known as Rastafarianism, officially appeared on South African soil on 28 December 1997, when a congregation of Rastafarians from throughout South Africa gathered in Grasmere, Johannesburg South (Chawane 2014:220). The movement's "ideological foundation" had taken roots in South Africa long before 1997 (Chawane 2014:220). The arrival of Rastafarianism in South Africa is linked to both Garveyism and Ethiopianism (Chawane 2014:220).

Pan-Africanism and African Nationalism evolved from the coronation, which resulted in the Rastafarian Movement being perceived by some of its followers as a political and not a religious movement (Chawane, 2014:218).

One extremely powerful impulse behind the Pan-African theology is the movement commonly known as Ethiopianism, which constitutes one of the cornerstones from which Pan-African theologians draw their roots (Clarke 2013:156, 157). To contend the notion of exclusivist claims to be God's chosen people – (ECGCP) vested in Black Africans and Africa as God's chosen continent as advocated in the Pan-African theologies, is in my view problematic if not viewed against the backdrop of Ethiopianism.

### **6.2.3 Ethiopianism – “Out of Egypt Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hand unto God” (Psalm 68:31)**

The heading of this section contains an excerpt of Scripture, “Out of Egypt Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hand unto God” (Psalm 68:31), which is invariably quoted as confirmation of the unique, divinely favoured status of Ethiopia in particular, Black Africans and Africa as a continent, occupy in the claimed salvific counsel of God. The abovementioned verse is probably the most quoted in Afro-American religious history. The eminence of the application of the verse is captured aptly in the following quote by the South African, John Langalibalele Dube (1897). Dube was a South African essayist, philosopher, educator, politician, publisher, editor, novelist and poet. He was the founding president of the South African Native National Congress, which became the African National Congress in 1923. Dube served as SANNC president between 1912 and 1917. Dube (1972:68-69) exclaims:

Oh! How I long for that day when the darkness that gloom have passed away because the “sun of righteousness has risen with healing in His hand”. This shall be a dawning of a brighter day for the people of Africa. Christianity will usher in a new civilisation, and the “Dark Continent” will be transformed into a land of commerce and Christian institutions. Then shall Africa take her place as a nation among the nations. Then shall her sons and daughters sing aloud. Let us rise and shine, for our light has come. The glory of the Lord has risen upon us. May the day speedily come when “Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands unto God (Psalm 68:31).

The movement known as Ethiopianism could be regarded as the first reaction by Africans to the challenging of African values, culture, and practice of the Christian faith in the modern era, as posited by White representation (Clarke, 2013:157). This signifies an affirmation of cultural identity, which is necessarily particular although

claims of an underlying Black African worldview need to be noted. Ethiopianism, rather than having originated as an ideology, theological school, or a programme, was a compendium of ideas, traditions, and assumptions of what being Christian in Africa constitutes (Clarke, 2013:157). This construct of the aforementioned ideas was adhered to by Christian leaders between the years 1890 and 1920 (Clarke, 2013:157). 'Ethiopianism,' or 'Ethiopia' as a concept, was a generic reference to Blacks on the continent of Africa. which emanated from the Old Testament and is a messianic prophecy (Milkas and Metaferia, 2005:192). "Ethiopian roots can be traced to biblical times and the then known" region of Northern Africa, and that a Pan-African expression of Christianity is based on the text of Psalm 68:31 (Duncan, 2015:199). Ethiopianism entrenches a sense of cultural and political identity amongst black people throughout the African continent as an affirmation of the place Black Africans occupy in God's salvific plan (Duncan, 2015:199). This represents a claim for corporate agents who have been chosen for a special mission and task akin to Israel amongst the nations.

The founding text of Ethiopianism, Psalm 68:31, stems from the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-40) and is considered in Ethiopianism as a demonstration of Ethiopia's, and thus Africa's response to the call of God prior to the dawn of European Christianity (Duncan, 2015:199). Ethiopianism represents Black Africans' corporate liberation ideals and their endeavours to improve their educational, economic, social, and religious status in society (Duncan, 2015:200). The rise of Ethiopianism with regard to shared political and religious experiences was implanted in Africa by Black African Americans who were repatriated to Africa, the continent of their ancestry (Kalu, 2013:265). The crux of the return to Africa by American Blacks was to shake off the religious and political tutelage of European Christianity (Kalu, 2013:265).

Edward Blyden is regarded as an ardent advocate of the virtues and spirituality, which is vested in Africa and culminated in Ethiopia (Esedebe, 1994:27). This Africa-Ethiopia heralding by Blyden is evident in Blyden's appealing to the Bible, and classical writers with the likes of Homer, Herodotus, Pindar, and Aeschylus, to substantiate his view that Africans were held in higher esteem than their contemporaries (Esedebe, 1994:27). This signifies a claim for superiority, namely,

that some aspects of traditional African culture and religion are superior to Western or Christian notions, which may be a response to the decolonial resistance. To assert the divinely chosenness of Africa, Blyden musters the support of the ancient philosopher Homer, who, according to Blyden exalted the philosophers from Africa above the status of mortals and regarded them as associates of the gods (Esedebe, 1994:27). With regard to the hospitality and blamelessness of Ethiopians, in *The African Repository* October 1881, Blyden asserts that the gods, Homer and Herodotus, had written eternal laudations about the African race, hailing African Blacks as “blameless Ethiopians” (Blyden, 1881:112). Furthermore, Blyden writes that Homer reminds us that the Ethiopians are the only people among mortals whom the gods had selected to be elevated to the social level of the “Olympian divinities” (Blyden, 1881:112) (ECGCP). The entire Olympian pantheon frequently transported themselves to Ethiopia to experience Ethiopia’s virtues (Blyden, 1881:112; see also Esedebe, 1994:27). Blyden argues that it has been commonly determined that Ethiopia did not only inhabit a particular precinct in Africa but Africa itself. Ethiopia “meant the continent of Africa ... occupied by the great race who inhabited that continent,” and that the biblical writers were familiar with Black Africans (Blyden, 1881:111).

The unique physique of the Africans was commonly known by the ancient Greeks and Hebrews (Blyden, 1881:111). Moreover, Blyden writes that when the ancient Hebrews and Greeks referred to the Ethiopians, they described them as “the ancestors of the black-skinned and woolly-haired people” (Blyden, 1881:111) and it is these people, the inhabitants of Ethiopia in Africa, to whom the Psalmist referred when he said: “Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God” (Blyden, 1881:111). This in my opinion confirms that the designation African physiologically constitutes a black complexion.

To me, Young III (1992) endorses spiritual supremacy, possibly even an ECGCP as promulgated by Blyden, when he heralds Blyden’s spiritual and intellectual primacy of Africa. Blyden (quoted in Young III, 1992:56-57) claimed:

... no people in whom the religious instincts are deeper than among Africans. And in view of the materializing tendencies of the age, it may yet come to pass that when in Europe God has gone out of date... then earnest enquirers after truth leaving the seats of science

and the “highest civilization” will take themselves to Africa to learn lessons of faith and piety; for” Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands unto God. (see also July 2004:219)

Kalu (2013:265) in the same vein as Blyden, announces that the glory to which the Black Americans strived to return, was the glory which was vested in ancient Egypt, Nubia and Ethiopia. The Septuagint, which the Ethiopian chamberlain (eunuch) had been reading when he was met by Philip, was according to Kalu (2013:266) mistakenly translated from the Hebrew word “Kush” into the Greek word “Aithiop” (Kalu, 2013:266). The latter word (Aithiop), was used by the Greeks to describe a country of their then known world, resulting in the ancient Greeks employing the word “aithiop” to describe a “black face” (Kalu, 2013:266). This says Kalu (2013:266), resulted in the whole region from Egypt to Ethiopia/Abyssinia becoming known as Ethiopia. Kalu (2013:158) notes that the Ethiopian eunuch was in the employ of Candice (Queen Mother) of the Nubian kingdom of Meroe, where he held a position as a treasurer. Ethiopia the country, signifies a symbol of “Black pride.” Regarding the geographical spiritual positioning of Ethiopia, Blyden (1881:111) states:

To anyone who has travelled in Africa, especially in the portion north of the equator; extending from the West coast of Abyssinia, Nubia, and Egypt, and embracing what is known as Nigritian and Soudanic, there cannot be the slightest doubt as to the country people to whom the terms Ethiopia and Ethiopian as used in the Bible and classical writers, were applied.

Kalu (2013:266) maintains that ancient Ethiopia was a delightful country, hosting the exalted, primary age of African civilisation, the grandeur of the Meroe and Aksum monarchies which had overcome the Islamic invasion of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, maintaining the ancient principles and traditions of early century Christianity (Kalu, 2013:266).

An Ethiopian millennium was promulgated in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by a Swedish philosopher, Emmanuel Swedenborg, who advocated through his followers in both Europe and the US, that Black Africans were the race that God and nature had endowed with the greatest aptitude for Christianity (Milkias & Metaferia, 2005:193). The Swedenborgians believed that the Psalm 68:31 prophecy meant that the redemption of Africa would realise the Kingdom of God on earth (Milkias and

Metaferia, 2005:193). This resembles the claim that Black Africans have been chosen for the special mission and task of effecting God's kingdom on earth, akin to that of Israel.

For the enslaved or freed communities of Africa, the Bible had become a model with which they could identify as descendants from Africa (Bonacci, 2015:148). The numerous references in the Bible to Ethiopia and the Ethiopians, gave Black Americans a premise in terms of which they could identify themselves as Ethiopians (Bonacci, 2015:148). To the Ethiopians, Psalm 68:31 is a messianic prophecy, constituting a covenant between the Black race and God (Milkias & Metaferia, 2005:192). (see the section on Otabil regarding this "covenant"). In substantiation of the notion that Ethiopianism denotes all Black Africans, Milkias and Metaferia (2005:192) refer to an article that featured in a West African newspaper from 1920. Milkias and Metaferia (2005:192) announce:

When we speak of our prospects we speak of the prospect of the entire Ethiopian race. By the Ethiopian race, we mean the sons and daughters of the entire Ethiopian race. By the Ethiopian race we mean the sons and daughters of Africa scattered throughout the world.

Ethiopianism was a kind of religion, a messianic and quasi-religious movement, which subscribed to the belief that African Blacks were superior to other races (Milkias & Metaferia, 2005:192-193). The movement glorified Africa and the Black Africans of the past and held that the Black Africans' vision was that God would redeem Africa and its people from bondage and recapture their lost glory and civilisation (Milkias & Metaferia, 2005:192-193).

The contemporary residents of the country known as Ethiopia, embrace the idea that Ethiopia is a nation of the "covenant" inspiring the Ethiopian citizens to anticipate a dramatic divine blessing (Kalu, 2015:51,52). Many theologians entertain the notion that the current Ethiopia will wake up and "stretch her hands unto God" in a figurative way, which will result in a divine bestowal of abundant blessings upon the country (Kalu, 2015:51, 52). Prophecies about the latter divine awakening with specific reference to Ethiopia's end-time blessings are common in religious traditions (Kalu, 2015:51, 52). Accordingly, Ethiopia's divine destiny is proclaimed in songs

and lyrics, and the realisation of the covenant constitutes the contents of prayers across all religious divides (Kalu, 2015:51-52).

Marcus Garvey called for the return of black people to Africa and used Ethiopia as a symbol to express both the African continent and the Black Africans in exile (Bonacci, 2015:149). He exhorted black people to see God in their own image "... to see God through the spectacles of Ethiopia" (Garvey, 1986:44).

Among American Black church leaders, the likes of Henry McNeal, Turner (1834-1915) can be considered as the chief protagonist among Black Americans with Ethiopian political and religious aspirations during his era (Kalu, 2013; 267). Turner had such a fervent belief in Black North American personhood that he conceptualised a providential theology, borne from the belief that God has the interest of the American Negro ("Black Americans") so much at heart that he, God, is a *Negro* (Kalu, 2013:267) (Black like América).

Furthermore, the ideology of a Negro or African nationality received considerable impetus from an African American publicist, Timothy Thomas Fortune (1856-1928), who advocated a scenario involving the proliferation of African nationalities, which would arise from the European partition and would culminate in some sort of a "United States of Africa" (Esedebe, 1994:32). Fortune, in Esedebe harboured a spiritual conviction that Ethiopia is the bastion of a divinely chosen civilisation (ECGCP). Accordingly, Fortune (quoted in Esedebe, 1994:33) proclaims:

It is written in the Holy Book that Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hand to God. Is it the power of men to make of no effect the divine prophecy? Perish the thought. There shall yet be evolved out of the conflicting race elements on the continent of Africa a civilization whose glory and whose splendour and whose strength shall eclipse all others that now are, or that have gone before.

The enslavement of Black Africans had been a providential act of God so that the slaves could acquire the resources of the gospel to redeem their fatherland Africa, symbolically vested in Ethiopia. For some enslaved Black Americans, Psalm 68:31 pronounced that Africa would one day rise to rule the world (Kalu, 2013:268) (Black like América).

After 1915, Ethiopianism started to lose momentum. To the extent that by 1930, it had become removed from its religious status and merged into the Pan-African political movement (Kalu, 2013:275). This transition from a spiritual to a national movement is referred to by Duncan (2015:205) as follows:

Ethiopians laid the foundations for modern forms of African nationalism whether in the political or ecclesiastical realm and initiated the current debates on inculturation and vernacularisation in African theology. They voiced a new form of Christianity in Africa.

Ethiopianism had deployed Christianity as a tool to reconstruct the development of African nationalism (Kalu, 2013:277). Poe elaborates on the reputation of sacredness that Ethiopia has in the Pan-African worldview (Poe, 2003:66-67). Ethiopia is believed by many to be the ancestral home ground of African classical civilisations (Poe, 2003:66). Organised societies have been in existence in the Ethiopian geographical territory for more than 600 years (Poe, 2003:66). These cultures, which had successively been built on the sacred ground of Ethiopia include those of Nubia, Kush, Meröe, Aksum, and Abyssinia; the namesake of the Greek-based nomenclature Ethiopia (Poe, 2003:66-67). Poe (2003:64) draws attention to Kwame Nkrumah whom he regards as the most influential agent of African liberation since Marcus Garvey with reference to the influence Ethiopia exerted on African nationalism. A speech delivered by Nkrumah at a state dinner held in Accra, Ghana, for the emperor of Ethiopia Haile Selassie, confirms Nkrumah's adulation of Ethiopia (Poe, 2003:64). Nkrumah (1972:11) asserts:

“Ethiopia, because of her existence as an ancient and Free State in Africa and the oldest continuously independent country in our continent, has always stood as a symbol of our political aspirations as a people. Ethiopia in our minds has stood for African freedom, African independence, African dignity and African self-respect.”

Despite Ethiopianism having ceased by 1930 to be a spiritually aspirational mission according to Kalu, it was rejuvenated and has not only recuperated as a symbol of the chosenness of African Blacks, and Africa respectively, but appears to have become an even greater factor concerning Africa's divinely assigned vocation (Kalu, 2013:75).

In a paper presented by Muchie on *The relevance of the philosophy of Ethiopianism to present day Ethiopia* (2016), Muchie states that Ethiopianism is a movement that came into being as a “method of winning Africa for Christ and God” and claims that it is a forerunner of the “Africa for Africans, Africans for humanity, humanity for God” movement (Muchie, 2016:1). In the abstract of the article, Muchie further reports that two *Ethiopia manifestos* in 1829 and 1896 in America and Southern Africa respectively, express the rights to be African, human, as well as the right to worship God and that no nation on this planet, except Ethiopia, has had this distinction, grace, opportunity, and recognition (Muchie, 2016:1) (ECGCP).

I deduce from Muchie’s assertion that current day Ethiopians must take cognisance of the fact “that Ethiopia has a distinctly spiritual quality bestowed upon it on the planet, and that Ethiopia is a spiritual fountainhead for the liberation of Africans in particular” (Muchie, 2016:1). Here I deduce that Black Africans thus have a special mission and task in the world, akin to that of Israel. Furthermore, Muchie (2016:1) notes that the term “Ethiopia” features more than forty times in the Bible and that Psalm 68:31, as stated previously, is the most widely quoted verse in the Afro-American religious history (Muchie, 2016:1).

To indicate the remarkable significance of Ethiopianism amongst the Black African fraternity, I below refer to the late Nelson Mandela, the honourable former President of South Africa. Nelson Mandela attributes the dawn of Ethiopianism in South Africa to Nehemiah Tile, an accomplished preacher, who seceded from the Wesleyan Methodist church in 1884, to found the Tembu Church in the then Transkei (Muchie & Demissie, 2014:185). In an address to the Free Ethiopian Church of Southern Africa on 14 December 1992, Mandela accentuated the religiosity and nationalism vested in Ethiopianism (Muchie & Demissie, 2014:185). Nelson Mandela assigns the birth of the African National Congress (ANC) to the Ethiopian movement. In an essay by Muchie & Demissie (2014:1850), Mandela recounts:

African clergymen sought to free themselves from the fetters of white missionaries by establishing African Independent Churches. One of the most celebrated breakaways was that of Nehemiah Tile who founded the Tembu Church in the Transkei in 1884...That political movement was to culminate in the formation of the ANC in 1912. It is in this

sense that in the ANC we trace the seeds of the formation of our organisation to the Ethiopian movement of the 1890s.

In his world-renowned autobiography, *Long walk to Freedom* (1994), Mandela notes that his African ancestry is vested in Ethiopia. Mandela (1994:362) comments:

Ethiopia always has a special place in my imagination and the prospect of visiting Ethiopia attracted me more strongly than a trip to France, England and America combined. I felt I would be visiting my own genesis, unearthing the roots of what made me an African.

A significant event concerning the effect of Ethiopianism as a movement on South Africa was the founding of the Ethiopian Church of South Africa by Mangena Mokone (Muchie & Demissie, 2014:185). Ethiopia became the hallmark for independent African churches which had broken away from White missionary churches (Muchie & Demissie, 2014:185). By 1912, the Ethiopian movement had served as the catalyst for seventy-six African independent churches in South Africa (Muchie & Demissie, 2014:185). It is estimated that by 2014 the number of Ethiopianism-rooted independent churches in South Africa had grown to approximately six thousand (Muchie & Demissie, 2014:185). Muchie & Demissie (2014:185) classify Ethiopianism as a “truly transnational movement,” thereby placing Ethiopianism, in terms of the power it wields, with African armed revolutions of both the nineteen sixties and seventies (Muchie & Demissie, 2014:186).

Muchie & Demissie (2014:186) refer to Mutero Chirenge to substantiate what seems to be an irrevocable national liberation tenet brewing in Ethiopianism. Chirenge (1987:168) contends:

If the activities of the Ethiopian movement and allied organisations ... are viewed in the context of their time, they will be seen to be no less acts of self-determination than are the armed struggles for national liberation now taking place throughout Southern Africa.

The religious and political dimensions of Ethiopianism are a fundamental fusion (Muchie & Demissie, 2014:188). This inseparable fusion is manifest in the Ethiopia of the Bible and the East African kingdom (Muchie & Demissie, 2014: 188). Hastings expresses this political and religious unity vested in Ethiopianism and assigns to the movement, a chosenness for a vocation to have a special mission and

task (similar to that of Israel amongst the nations), with regard to being chosen for a special task. Hastings (1979:74) states:

“Ethiopian” is an oddly misleading name for what has been characterised as ecclesiastical “Ethiopianism” because it is not a Protestant name at all, but in itself is already evocative of quite other things. It is both symbolically African (proto-African, pan- African, one might say) and it can actually be found in the Bible. “Where can you find the name of Dutch reformed in the Bible? Or “Methodist”. This was no idle question but a very serious one. You have given us the Bible, and then to the Bible we shall go. The names of Zion and Ethiopia are most undoubtedly there.

Hastings’ discourse on the spiritual significance of “Ethiopia” (Ethiopianism), through which Hastings juxtaposes “Ethiopianism” against Protestant denominational designations reminds me of Shakespeare’s word-play “What’s in a name?” If the mere frequent featuring of a “name” in the Bible signifies a divine endowment, and the non-featuring of a name in the Bible signifies insignificance and even inferiority, it would be the breeding ground for great biasedness and confusion in my opinion.

The Rev. L. N. Mzimba, the founder of an Ethiopian church, contends that the niche that the Ethiopian churches must occupy entails that the churches reflect the “African genius” and not be mere blueprints of the European church. Mzimba (quoted in Pretorius & Jafta, 1997:212) states:

To plant a self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating African Church which would produce a truly African type of Christianity suited to the genius and needs of the race [African Blacks] and not a black copy of any European Church.

With regard to the “genius of Africa,” in their advocacy of the contemporary relevance of Ethiopianism, Muchie and Demissie (2014:183) also refer to Pixley Ka Isaka Seme, the first secretary of South Africa’s ANC (African National Congress), 1906 medal-winning “Black Africa/n” speech at Columbia, entitled *The Regeneration of Africa* (1906). Accordingly, in an essay by Muchie and Demissie (2014:183), Seme observes:

The ancestral greatness, the unimpaired genius, and the recuperative power of the race, its repressibility, which assures its permanence, constitutes the African’s greatest source of inspiration.

### 6.3 MENSA OTABIL – PAN-AFRICAN PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY

In this section, I feature Mensa Otabil's quest pertaining to substantiating theories for a Pan-African Pentecostal theology that is indicative of what Otabil considers to be God's purpose for the "Black Race." I identify the claims which I consider affirmations of exclusivist claims to be God's chosen people - ECGCP being assigned to Black Africans – The Black Race, and Africa respectively.

Mensa Otabil is the founder of the International Central Gospel Church, in Accra, Ghana. In his world-acclaimed book among neo-Pentecostals, entitled *Beyond the rivers of Ethiopia: A Biblical revelation on God's purpose for the Black race* (1993), Otabil draws on the references to Ethiopia in the Bible to promulgate a Pan-African Pentecostal theology. This, that Ethiopia has been chosen for a special mission and task amid the nations, similar to that of Israel. Otabil (1993:80) declares in this regard:

God had to take Philip from a whole city crusade to get to one lone Ethiopian! Africa received the Gospel before Europe. He is a covenant keeping God.

Muchie & Demissie (2014:192) regard Mensa Otabil as the embodiment of the revival of Ethiopianism whose mission is to revive Ethiopianism as a "Christianised sequel to Pan-Africanism" (Muchie & Demissie, 2014:191). I deem it important to confront the question of "what Pan-Africanism has in common with Christianity?" by referring to Clarke's later claim of Ethiopianism is to be revived as a Christianised sequence to Pan-Africanism.

Significantly, Mensa Otabil is considered to be an axe wielding protagonist of a new-Pentecostal-inspired Pan-Africanist ideology. Through his *Beyond the rivers of Ethiopia* (1993), as a sequel to Pan-Africanism, has laid the foundations of a Pentecostal liberation theology (Van Dijk, 2004:165-167). Otabil's Africa and Black consciousness ideologies that originated in Ghana under his influence have spread to Ghanaian migrant settlements in the United Kingdom and have started taking root among Black American communities in New York (Van Dijk, 2004:165-167).

American charismatic teachers and preachers, such as Fred Price, Myles Munroe and Leonard Lovett, attribute the global impact of Otabil's book to his focussing on the African identity. Lovett, in Otabil (1993:8), claims that "Otabil is at the forefront of a reverse thrust in history, which empowers those persons whose birth, self-understanding" and worldview fall within the African race" (see also Van Gorder, 2008:3). Lovett's claim of Otabil's positioning is an affirmation of cultural identity (which is necessarily particular although claims for an underlying Black African worldview need to be noticed).

Van Gorder (2008:3) notes that the Afrocentric themes of Otabil's *Beyond the rivers* are often not found among African Pentecostals. Otabil's theology proclaims the worldwide redemption of the Black race through an African acculturation of the Bible and the Gospel (Van Dijk, 2004:176). Accordingly, Otabil is developing a particular type of liberation theology which "redefines the African Blacks' position in the Bible as being paramount to God's redemptive and messianic mission for the world" (Van Gorder, 2008:176). I interpret Van Dijk's interpretation of Otabil's theory on Black Africans and Africa, whilst not a claim to divinely chosenness (ECGCP), but having been assigned a chosenness as corporate agents, having a special mission and task, one of being paramount to God's redemptive and messianic mission to the world, similar to that of Israel. Otabil (1993:81,82) claims that there are demonic attacks on Black Africans aimed at preventing Black Africans from exercising their spiritual office vocation throughout the world. Otabil (1993:81-82) asserts:

Normally, you will not try to destroy someone who is poor. No one goes out of the way to destroy a poor or a weak person. . . You always want to attack the strong. You have to ask yourself why it is although the black people are supposed to be weak everyone attacks them. They are supposed to be weak, poor and not have anything, but it seems that everything is being done to suppress them. Both on the home continent and away there is a "demonic attack from hell to stop Africans from executing their spiritual office. When these people [African Blacks] start to stand in that place, there is going to come a light and a redemption to the nations.

Otabil whilst solely laying the blame of Black Africans execution of their "spiritual office" being obstructed by the non-Black Africans of the world, should perhaps

engage in introspection among the Black Race and identify the proverbial Judas Iscariots, who are executing their corruption “office” on an unprecedented scale.

The essence of Otabil’s book to Davies (1998:130) is:

...to retrace within the Bible [the King James Version, no less] the purposes of God for the Black Race. Thus, we have an exegetical exercise in which the Bible is rethought in terms of Abraham’s third wife, Keturah, of Moses’ father-in-law, of the Midianites, of the Cushites, of Simon the cross-bearer, of sons of the early Church.

Otabil (1993) notes God choosing to place the boundaries of the Garden of Eden “within Africa” along the Gihon and Pison River in Havilah, which was Cushite land (Otabil, 1993:55). In promulgating that the Garden of Eden is located in Africa, Otabil concludes this “claim” with what he terms “a very disturbing question”: “Did Almighty God locate the Garden of Eden in a land later to be occupied by black-skinned people?” (Otabil, 1993:56). Otabil (1993:56) juxtaposes his assertion regarding what he terms the improbability of the clay having been light pink, a clear reference to “non-Blacks” with what he regards as the “natural” colour of the human being’s skin when he Otabil (1993:56) asks:

What was the color of the clay from which Adam was made? Well, as far as I know, it is very difficult to get light pink clay anywhere in the world. It is, however, general knowledge that dark brown is more in abundance.

Otabil (1993:67) attaches a great degree of spiritual significance to Ethiopia by asserting that Moses was betrothed to a black woman, since Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law was an Ethiopian black man, which, to Otabil serves as a refutation of the claims of some theologians, of the “superiority of the Caucasian race and the inferiority of the Negroid race...” (Otabil, 1993:67). Otabil (1993:60) assigns a divinely interventional role to Jethro, the Ethiopian; the black man; through whom Moses could be delivered from the foreign land (Egypt), the foreign beliefs of the Israelites’ worshipping of the golden calf, and their introduction by Jethro to the “covenant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” (Otabil, 1993:60). Jethro, the Ethiopian black man, took precedence over the Aaronic priesthood when he led in the sacrifices as recorded in Exodus 18:12 (Otabil, 1993:62). Otabil (1993:62) comments further: “And Jethro, Moses’ father in -law, took a burnt offering, and sacrifices for God: and

Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God" (Otabil, 1993:62). Otabil's designation of the indispensability of Jethro in that Jethro's "divine" intervention in Moses' dilemmas could be construed as claims for superiority i.e. that some aspects of traditional Black African culture and also religion is superior to Western or Christian notions (which rhetorically may be a response to colonial resistance). Otabil's autocracy is to me affirmatively declared when Otabil (1993:100) says: "When I travel to the nations, I do not go to give them what they have given to me. I give them what God has given me."

From the above, it can be seen that Otabil (1993:65) deduces that present-day Jethros, Ethiopians, and Black Africans, are the people who are required to educate "the nations and leaders of nations the Ways of the Lord" (Otabil, 1993:65). This indicates that Black Africans have been chosen for a special mission and task among the nations, similar to that of Israel. The Biblical Jethro, an Ethiopian black man, was the one who had instructed Moses how to manage the Israelites whom Moses had saved from slavery (Otabil, 1993:64). Having commented on the elevation of Jethro's divinely endowed wisdom, Otabil (1993:66) expresses amazement that Moses, despite having been exposed to Egypt's pivotal civilisation for forty years "system of administration" (Otabil, 1993:66), Moses possessed no knowledge of such a system (Otabil, 1993:66). Otabil's commending of Jethro and his rating of Jethro's knowledge as being superior to that of Moses is a claim for superiority, that is, that some aspects of the African culture and religion are superior to Western or Christian notions. Considering that Jethro was a Cushite, a member of the black race, it refutes the perception that Black Africans are incapable of governing themselves (Otabil, 1993:66).

According to Otabil (1993:66), Israel together, with all the nations of the world are indebted to Jethro, the "black priest" (Otabil, 1993:66), and need to bestow honour on him (Jethro), for being the educator "through whom principles of local government were established". Miriam and Aaron's condemnation of Moses for having married an Ethiopian woman is interpreted by Otabil as typical of people pulling the race card when authoritative positions of power are threatened (Otabil 1993:69). Miriam and Aaron's "finding faults with the skin color of Zipporah, and by inference her family" (Otabil, 1993:69) is the most concrete evidence that Jethro's

race, here including that of Zipporah and his other children, such as Hobab, were black (Otabil, 1993:69). Moses' marriage to Jethro's daughter is "the clearest biblical indication of Jethro's natural race" (Otabil, 1993:67). From the latter Otabil (1993:67) again further deduces that Jethro was, as referred to above, an Ethiopian, and therefore, a black man. Otabil continues with his veneration of Jethro; the black man; when he deduces that it was he, a priest in the order of Melchisedek, who had advised Moses to discard the false ideas of the African-Egyptian religion, and to adhere to a proper understanding of the African-Abrahamic faith (Otabil, 1993:62). In *Beyond the rivers*, Otabil indicates that Moses' Midianite brother-in-law, Hobab, is a typological figure of all African Blacks, who was used by God to reconnect Africans with their lost Abrahamic inheritance (Otabil, 1993:71). Otabil's contention of Hobab and the Midianites having been imperative to Israel's regaining of their portion of the Abrahamic inheritance seems indeed foreign to me. Otabil argues that Moses committed that the Midianites would through the counsel of Jethro, and the leadership of Hobab, their skills and knowledge of the desert (Otabil, 1993:71), upon Israel's embarking through the wilderness. "If Hobab and his brethren accepted the challenge then Moses promised: "What goodness the Lord do unto us, the same will we do unto thee," (Otabil, 1993:71). Otabil (1993:48-49) claims that Black Africans are the descendants of Abraham's seed and that they are unified with Abraham as confirmed in Genesis 25:1-3. (Otabil 1993:48-49). Otabil by designating Black Africans as Israelites do in my view constitute an *exclusivist* claim for Black African "Israelites" to be God's chosen people, being the offspring of Abraham's descendants (ECGCP).

Otabil (1993:47) claims that, despite the infrequent references to Keturah in the Bible, he (Otabil), in his searching of the Scriptures for "Biblical information about the dark skinned race" (Otabil, 1993:47) has come to realise Keturah's significance (Otabil, 1993:47). Otabil (1993:78) poses the question of whether the prophecy as per Genesis 9:11, included "Keturah's children"? (Otabil, 1993:78). He answers superlatively when he writes "O yes it did! It literally linked up these black people with God's purpose in bringing redemption to "humanity" (Otabil, 1993:78). Otabil in my view triumphantly announces that Black Africans have been chosen by God to be the harbingers of salvation to the rest of the inhabited earth when he writes that "It is as if God was saying, "Abraham did not give you an inheritance, he sent you

off but I am going to put you in the centre of my redemption plan to bring salvation to mankind” (Otabil, 1993:79). If Otabil’s mission cannot be designated as an exclusivist divinely chosenness (ECGCP), it, in my opinion, is nevertheless tantamount that to Otabil the execution of mankind’s salvation vests exclusively in the Black Race. This I deduce from Otabil stating that it was as if God was saying: “Abraham did not give you an inheritance, he sent you off, but I am going to put you in the centre of my redemption plan to bring salvation to mankind.” (Otabil, 1993:79). Otabil (1993:98) contends that it needs to be understood that Black Africans and the Israelites have always been sharing the same place of abode (Otabil, 1993:98).

Otabil (1993:98) asserts that the children of Keturah who were born from Abraham were Black Africans that shared in the tribe of Judah’s inheritance (Otabil, 1993:98). Otabil (1993:53) reasons that Abraham was initiated into the Cushite family through his marriage to Keturah. This is affirmed by Otabil (1993:47,48) when Abraham fathered six children through Keturah. Otabil (1993:49) notes that Joksha was Keturah’s second child, which means that Sheba and Dedan were Abraham and Keturah’s grandchildren according to Genesis 25:3. Otabil (1993:49) notes that Dudan and Sheba’s names genealogically stemmed from the Cushites, who were Black people. Otabil (1993:49) toils with the issue regarding whether Black people were ever cursed. Otabil (1993:52) refutes such a perception by noting that neither Cush nor Mizraim had been cursed with Cush here representing the Black race. It was Phut the third born, writes Otabil (1993:53) who was cursed. Alternatively, according to Otabil (1993:53), one must take cognisance of the fact that Cush, Ham’s firstborn, was never cursed but allotted “a double portion of his father’s blessing” (Otabil 1993:53). A further revelation noted by Otabil (1993:53), is that the meaning of Cush is “Ethiopia,” which makes Cush “the father of all the black races of the world. Full stop!” (Otabil 1993:53). Otabil (1993:53) instructs his audience not to find Abraham’s incorporation into the Cushite race strange since it was the Cushites who became the post-flood leaders of the world.

Otabil (1993:54) contends that this is to make Black Africans realise “that over the years, God had chosen to use whom He pleases for His Glory, in spite the color of their skin” (Otabil, 1993:54). Otabil (1993:54) in his glorification of the Black race

notes that Nimrod, one of the descendants of Cush, “was described as a mighty one in the Earth” (Otabil, 1993:54). Otabil (1903:54) reminds his Black constituency that when the Bible addresses someone as Mighty, such an individual is mighty indeed! (Otabil, 1993:54). Otabil remarks that it was the very same Nimrod who had unified the nations of the world and “led them to build the first modern cities after the flood, as found in Genesis 10:9-12” (Otabil, 1993:54). Otabil’s revelling in what he regards as the divine deployment of the Cushites, a designation for Black Africans, continues unabatedly in his book *Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia*. In the case of Judah, Otabil (Otabil, 1993:78) regards Genesis 49:10 as confirmation that Keturah’s children, the Cushite Black Africans, are the “Shiloh,” “the presence of God or Immanuel shall come” (Otabil 1993:78). Otabil (1993:78) declares: “The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be” (Gen. 49:10).

Otabil (1993:79) regards the wise men from the East who had come to pay homage to the Christ child, as well as Simon of Cyrene who bore Jesus’ cross, and the Midianite entourage who transported Joseph into Egypt, as being Black Africans, Keturah’s children, who are evidence of God’s choosing of Blacks for the logistics in the executing of His salvific plan (Otabil, 1993:79). Otabil (1993:80) lays claim to a preferential “covenant” (Otabil, 1993:80) God had entered into with Ethiopians (Black Africans), in that the Ethiopian eunuch had had Christ’s conversion conferred upon him, even before Cornelius the first gentile’s conversion. Otabil (1993:80) claims:

Cornelius was a Roman and therefore a European. Before he knew about God’s redemption offer through the Lord Jesus Christ, the Ethiopian Eunuch had experienced Salvation ... God had to take Philip from a whole city-wide crusade to get one lone Ethiopian! Africa got the Gospel before Europe. He is a Covenant keeping God.

In my opinion, Otabil is virtually obsessed with the assigning of divine authority to African Blacks. This being Otabil’s assumption that African Blacks are integrated into the tribe of Juda. This confers a divine vocation upon all African Blacks in that African Blacks are vested with “Shiloh”, designating African Blacks as the chosen ones through whom God, Immanuel will bring salvation to mankind. Otabil in my opinion further assigns a spiritual superiority to African Blacks, through God having

conferred a covenantal pledge to all African Blacks, by assuming that God through the Ethiopian's conversion before that of Cornelius. This to me constitutes a claim of African Black's spiritual superiority i.e. that aspects of traditional African religion are superior to proverbial Corneliuses (Western or Christian) notions. Concerning the origin of the liturgy performed during worship services Otabil (1993:76, 77), traces its origin back to Zimran (Otabil, 1993:76,77). Otabil notes that Zimran, the name of Abraham's firstborn from Keturah meant "musical" (Otabil, 1993:48). To Otabil, the name "Musical" signifies an endowed gift, which would characterise Keturah and Zimran – alias "Musical's" race (Otabil, 1993:48). Otabil refers to the natural musicality vested in Blacks, in contrast with non-Blacks; here resorting to a gross generalisation by referring to the non-Blacks who have to take dance lessons to swing their bodies rhythmically to the rhythm of music. In this way, Otabil acknowledges Zimran as his Black ancestor. (Otabil, 1993:76,77). Importantly, Zimran's (musical) ability is exhibited in all his Black descendants (Otabil, 1993:77). Accordingly, Otabil (1993:77) avers that this musical ability that is inherited from Zimran (Musical) is apparent today in the exuberant way in which Blacks worship God.

Otabil (1993:77) expresses this special musical grace vested in African Blacks as manifested naturally in the way they worship in song, Otabil (1993:77) asserts:

... we are so full of music that when our ancestors were taken into slavery and pressed on every side out of them oozed what was in the music! A music that was later named Negro Spirituals. They did not produce carnality. They produced spirituality out of the abundance of what was in them. Go to any authentic Black congregation they may not preach right but they sure will sing the anointing upon you! It is through praise and worship that the presence of God is released among his people. Unfortunately, when the missionaries came, they put aside our music and brought their sedate and unexciting music forms, but Thank God, the music is coming back to the church.

I nobly admit that Black Africans are endowed with amazing singing prowess! Considering that I play the piano, sing, and compose gospel songs, I grossly lack the natural harmonious singing of Black Africans! Van Dijk (2004:167) interprets Otabil's Pan-African theological vision to indicate that Otabil, like Danquah, proclaims a "Christianised re-appropriation of Afro-centric ideas capable of achieving two things at the same time. A new ownership of longer dating, but highly

intellectual and secular Pan-African ideals, and a critical confrontation with Western ‘book knowledge’...” (Van Dijk, 2004:167). Otabil’s vision further entails an accentuation of divine wisdom and inspiration regarding the appropriation of Afro-centric visions, and that Africans’ unity is promulgated on the premise of spiritual empowerment from heavenly forces (Van Dijk, 2004:167).

Otabil’s (1993:99) commissions all Cushites-Black Africans to proclaim their collective and individual revelations received from God. Otabil (1993:99) states:

I believe that the Spirit of God is calling on Cushites of this era, that it is time to deliver the message concerning the things that we have seen, that have been taught us personally uniquely, originally and individually I believe that the time of duplicating messages which we have read from others is over.

The contention of a distinct race classically awarded by Otabil to Black Africans in the sub-title of his book *A Biblical Revelation on God’s Purpose For The Black Race*, is the appointed time for Black Africans to declare the message of things having been seen, personally, uniquely, individually and originally taught by God, needs exposition. One, is the unusual revelation by God. A revelation is one of being unique. Two, it entails a disclosure of God which entails a message or a mission which before God revealed it proved a secret or a mystery only known to God! Otabil confines this revelation to a particular race or individual. To my knowledge, God engaged in this particular nature through the Abrahamic – and – Mosaic covenants. This through no distinguishing of the particular merits of the recipients of the revelation, but through God’s unmerited favour. Otabil assigns what I deem a divinely endowed exclusive distinction. One being God revealing! Two, the contents of God’s revelation being manifested uniquely! Three the receptors of God’s revelation comprises the entire “Black Race” (see the sub-title of Otabil’s book)!

This special revelation from God says Otabil is uniquely endowed to one, the entire “Black Race” corporately. exclusively for the “Black Race”! Whilst one would be inclined to designate humanity as the “human race”; not the black, pink, white, brown-yellow race, Otabil separates the “Black Race”, from the rest of the human race, and assigns what to me designates a divinely chosenness by God, through Otabil’s “. . . Biblical Revelation on God’s Purpose For The Black Race!”

Otabil (1993:101) commissions the Black Race ... that it is time to deliver the message concerning the things that we have seen, that have been taught us personally, uniquely, originally and individually...”. This revelation has according to Otabil been conveyed to every single Black African. It is unique. No race, no ethnicity, no individual, has received such a revelation from God (ECGCP). Otabil (1993:100) concerning this revelation in terms of its uniqueness says:

When I travel to the nations. I do not go to give them what they have given to me. I give them what God has given me.

Every time, the world is struck by a crisis, it is the Black African who has always had to come to its rescue (Otabil 1993:108). The prototypes of these saviours, according to Otabil, are Nimrod the son of Cush, as well as Jethro and Hobab- all of the Black Africans. Therefore, it is asserted that Blacks have been present for God to rely on “in times of crisis” (Otabil 1993:108). In the conclusion to his book *Beyond The Rivers Of Ethiopia, A Biblical Purpose On God’s Purpose For The Black Race* (1993), Otabil quotes a poem by Emmanuel Owusu-Sekyere, which in my opinion attests even further to Africa being equated with a race designated as Black, a divine assignment to revolutionise the world through Jesus. Here, I pose the question regarding whether Black Africans through what appears to be a divine mission, have a mission to be conferred, a task through what appears to be a divine chosenness? In this regard, Emmanuel Owusu-Sekyere (quoted in Otabil, 1993:109) announces:

It was long before creation that God predestined that you should be Black. So there would be none, in the whole world like you. Filled with His Glory, Honor and Power You are Blessed Africa. Yes the gold, the diamond and more, of those precious stones. He put those in you, so there will be no place, in the whole world like you. Filled with His Blessing, Wealth and His Glory, You are Blessed Africa. Africa rise, for God, has blessed you, His Glory is shining all over you Reach out and touch the whole world with Jesus. He filled you with Power to turn it around. (ECDCP)

Van Dijk acclaims Otabil’s *Beyond the rivers of Ethiopia . . .* (1993) as profound when compared with other renowned contemporary types of Pentecostal literature, in that it constitutes a reasonably novel “Pentecostal-inspired Pan-Africanist ideology” (Van Dijk, 2004:164).

## 6.4 PAN-AFRICAN POLITICAL THEOLOGY PROGENY OF AFRICAN PENTECOSTALISM

To my knowledge, Clifton Clarke is the conceptualiser of what he terms a Pan-African “political theology.” He draws an interesting analogy between Pan-Africanism and African Pentecostalism by posing a challenging question “What have Kwame Nkrumah, W.E.B. du Bois and Marcus Garvey got to do with speaking in tongues?” (Clarke, 2013:152). The question Clarke chose to examine is “whether African Pentecostalism can assist in the constructing of a Pan-African political theology?” (Clarke, 2013:152).

As mentioned in Chapter 1 of this study, Clarke (2013:153) attributes the inspiration for his discourse known as *Pan-Africanism and Pentecostalism in Africa: Strange bedfellows or perfect partners* (2013) to three factors:

- i. His studying of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> West Indian Pan-Africanists, here with specific reference to Marcus Garvey, Henry Sylvester Williams, George Padmore, Edward Wilmot Blyden, together with African Pan-Africanists with the likes of Kwame Nkrumah, James (Holy) Johnson, Haile Selassie, Jomo Kenyatta. He also studied American Pan-Africanists, such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Henry Garnet Alexander Crummell, Martin Delaney and Henry McNeal Turner.
- ii. The idea of a Pan-African political theology springing from his reading of Josiah Young III’s book *A Pan-African theology: Providence and legacies of the ancestors* (1992).
- iii. Having spent ten years on researching African indigenous and Pentecostal churches in Ghana, together with a reading of Mensa Otabil’s book *Beyond the rivers of Ethiopia*.

Clarke (2013:54) holds the view that African Pentecostalism has an innate grasp on African peoples and that such an understanding is what has been instrumental in Pentecostalism having become the fastest growing movement on the African continent. (Clarke, 2013:153). Contrary to what Clarke (2013:54) terms the perception that African Pentecostalism’s main brands are “prosperity preachers” and “healing crusades” (Clarke, 2013:154), Clarke argues that African Pentecostalism was born from African Indigenous Churches (AICs), which, in turn, arose from the

substrata of Ethiopianism, and the Africa independence movement during the 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Clarke, 2013:154).

Clarke (2013:172) asserts that one of the attributes manifested in African Pentecostalism that can serve to empower Pan-Africanism as a predominantly political ideology is the unique gift of “African Pride” (Clarke, 2013:172). Furthermore, he identifies pride (African Pride) or personal empowerment as constituting a primary component of the appeal of the African Pentecostal message (Clarke, 2013:172). Clarke regards the feeling of pride and self-determination among African Blacks as a gift of the Holy Spirit and a “sign of God’s approval and endorsement” (Clarke, 2013:172-173). This I perceive as an affirmation of cultural identity which is necessarily particular, but Clarke’s African worldview needs to be noted. African Pride is considered by Clarke (2013:172-173) as a gift from and accreditation by God of Black Africans unique to the African worldview.

Clarke’s claim of African Pride being a virtue bequeathed by God to Black Africans, is in my opinion a further claim for Black African superiority, namely, that some aspects of traditional culture and also religion are exclusive in the sense that these virtues are explicit gifts from God thus superior to Western or Christian notions. Clarke (2013:172) in this regard states: “The Holy Spirit is the main empowerment agent within African Pentecostalism and plays a pivotal role with its spirituality. The Ashanti proverb says, “Through others I am somebody.”

Clarke (2013:161) endorses Henry Garnet’s derision of “the despicable and barbaric behaviour of the ancestors of the Anglo-Saxons. Accordingly, Garnet (1848:12), a member of Clarke’s PATS – Pan African Theological School, in this regard states:

When the representatives of our race [Blacks] were filling the world with amazement, the ancestors of the now proud and boasting Anglo-Saxons were amongst the most degraded in the human family. They abode in caves underground, either naked or covered with the skins of wild beast. Night was made hideous by the smoke, which arose from their bloody altars, upon which they offered human sacrifice.

To Clarke (2013:164), African Pentecostalism rectifies what the Pan African theological school (PATS) failed to realise in their Pan-African aspirations, namely,

that in Africa, politics and religion are a unity (Clarke, 2013:164). PATS failed to connect with the rank-and-file among the African population who lived in villages and operated in accordance with “a traditional African worldview” (Clarke, 2013:164). Because African moral values are ethical, existential, holistic, relational anthropocentric, and mystical, this “deep sense of African selfhood” (Clarke, 2013:173), is what makes African Pentecostalism a significant contributor to Pan-Africanism (Clarke, 2013:173). Therefore, Clarke campaigns for African Pentecostalism to form an alliance with the Pan-African Theological School (PATS) to found a Pan-African political theology “that connects to the everyday African personality” (Clarke, 2013:165).

Clarke (2013:175) identifies a shortcoming in the traditional Pan-African hermeneutical approach in that the meaning of the Biblical text “did not connect with the African oral tradition and outlook” (Clarke, 2013:175). To Clarke, African Pentecostal hermeneutics thus illuminates the written word (Bible) to connect deeply with the traditional African “spirit world” (Clarke, 2013:175) and “oral tradition” (Clarke, 2013:175). Furthermore, Clarke contends that the acknowledgement and sanctioning of Africa’s traditional spirituality which he just “rebranded” as “African Pentecostalism,” to me, would result in the Pan-African theologian being converted from an “aloof vertebral orator” to [an] “engaged prophetic leader” (Clarke, 2013:175).

Importantly, Clarke’s heralding of the uniqueness of Africa’s traditional spirituality constitutes a claim for superiority, namely, that some aspects of African traditional culture and religion are superior to Western or Christian notions, which can be perceived rhetorically as a response to decolonial resistance. Clarke’s view that an endorsement and application of Africa’s traditional spirituality would transform the PATS’ members into prophetic leaders, signifies a claim for these corporate agents having a special mission and task, and are chosen for a special task amid the nations like Israel. To me, the equating of Africa’s spirituality to African Pentecostalism is an enactment of Blyden’s (1908:180) claim. Blyden argues that:

The intercommunion between the people of the earth and those in the spiritual sphere is a cardinal belief of the African and will never be uprooted.

## **6.5 PAN-AFRICAN THEOLOGY AND THE NOTION OF CLAIMS TO BE GOD’S CHOSEN PEOPLE**

In my view the discourse referred to here as Pan-African theology, is embryonic. To my knowledge, Pan-Africanism does not feature commonly in the theological curricula of academic institutions. One should also not confuse the current existence of institutions being designated “Pan-African” as being exponents of Pan-African theology. Examples of such schools or institutions are the Pan African Christian University College in Central Ghana, now known as the Prez University College that offers educational services that focus on Pan-African development, and the Pan African Clergy Council and Bible Seminary (PACCS), situated in Ghana.

Pan-African theology, according to Josiah Young III (1986:8-9), may be defined as constituting a logical, “transcontextual” discourse that is being advocated by African theologians, whose ancestry is vested in Africa, and whose objectives are in alignment with and conducive to Pan-Africanism (Young III, 1986:8-9). Concerning Pan-African theology, Young further seeks to “valorise what blacks have in common: “African descent, cultural modalities, and especially among the poor, radical similarity in socioeconomics suffering” (Young III, 1992:10-11). Furthermore, Young III (1992:134) fuses (integrates) Pan-Africanism and a Pan-African theology and regards such integration as paramount because of all Black Africans have had their “own” word of God conferred upon them. Young III (1992:134) declares:

I would hope that blacks drawn to Pan-Africanism can reach unanimity about their word of God. From a Pan-African perspective, the word of God is the actual presence of Jesus Christ in the struggles of the black oppressed.

Instead of regarding the book of Genesis as the prime source of God’s providential design of creation, Young III (1992:137) regards the African myths of creation as the prime source from which the Genesis account of creation stems. Young III (1992:137) avers:

I interpret Genesis, chapters one and two, in a way consistent with primal African myths of the beginning. I do not analyse the relation of several African myths to Genesis. I relate

Genesis to the African values that have served as the leitmotifs to this book (here referring to A Pan-African Theology – providence and the legacies of the ancestors (1992). The first two chapters of Genesis assert that God created Homo sapiens, whose first home appear to be Africa ....

Young's claim of Africa being the location of creation signifies a claim to me of African religion being superior to Western or Christian religions, which may rhetorically be a response to decolonial resistance. To Young III (1992:10), Pan-African theology is not specifically Christian. In this regard, Young mentions Maulana Karenga, the Husia Black Muslims, and black Jews as individual movements and peoples, from whose teachings Pan-African theologies could also be constructed, respectively Accordingly, to Young III (1992:10-11), principles needed to be considered for formulating a Pan-African theology must comprise "African descent" (Young III, 1992:10), traditional culture, and with reference to the African poor, the commonality of extreme socioeconomic oppression. The core function of a Pan-African theology is the exposing of white supremacist capitalism, which, while seated in the West, persists in subjecting the American-South African-Blacks- and the rest of Black Africans, to what Young III (1992) refers to as "neo-colonialism" (Young III, 1992:16). Furthermore, Young III (1992:17) sees the task of a Pan-African theology as the mustering of Black Africans, who must despite indigenous political and geographical boundaries, establish a united and innovative alliance against neo-colonialism through Black nationalism.

Young III (1992:7) lists what he terms "an ancestry of a Pan-African theology". who amongst others, are Alexander Crummell, Edward Blyden, Maria Steward, James Pennington, Majola Agbebei, James Holy Johnson, Samuel A. Crowther, Daniel Coker, Henry McNeal Turner, and Marcus Garvey (Young III, 1992:7). Whilst regarding Alexander Crummell as one of the protagonists of the Pan-African theology, Young III (1992:28) disagrees with Crummell's theory that, through His providence, God permitted the enslavement of Blacks to redeem "pagan" Africa with Christianity Young III (1992:28). Crummell's (1962:416) advocacy of God's providence for Africa is:

The forced and cruel migration of our race from [Africa] ... trained, civilized, and enlightened, are coming hither again; bringing large gifts, for Christ and his church, and the heathen kin!

I here discern a superior status being conferred on Black Americans in that Black Americans are contrary to pagan Africa. To Crummell (1962:146), Black Africans are pagans to whom the “trained, civilized, and enlightened”, being Black Americans are to present large gifts from Christ to Africa (Black like América). Blyden’s scenario of Africa being destined to be the benefactor through which blessings would be imparted by Christ, to His church and the non-African gentiles, constitute claims for Black Americans having been chosen by God to be like Israel, and to be the corporate agents of a special mission and task among the nations, here including the “heathen” Black Africa residents!

Clarke regards “African pride and egalitarianism and the African hermeneutical lens of providence and redemption” as significant themes for a Pan-African theological discourse (Clarke, 2013:160). Importantly, God’s divine providence and redemption are crucial themes in the theories of the Pan-African Theological School (PATS) for Clarke (2013:161-164). Their “redemptive reading of Scripture” here with particular reference to Crummell and Blyden, signified that God, despite the evils of colonisation and slavery, still has a divine vocation for Africa and the African people (Clarke, 2013:163). I fully endorse Clarke’s interpretation of the Scripture signifying a redemptive mission that needs to be proclaimed as a deliverance from all manner of evils. Clarke disagrees with Young III’s (1992:28) criticism of Crummell and Blyden’s providential and redemptive reading of African history (Clarke, 2013:164). For Clarke, Blyden and Crummell’s reading of God’s providence and redemption through the lens of Africa’s history shows a striking resemblance to post-exilic Israel after the period of enslavement and exile (Clarke, 2013:164).

Contrary to Young’s observation that both Crummell and Blyden perceived African traditional religion as “primitive” (Young III, 1992:63), and inferior to Christianity, Clarke (2013:162) maintains that both Crummell and Blyden had a positive view of the Africans’ view on the image of God and that their positive view should, instead, be regarded as a continuation of the legacies of the ancestors for a Pan-African theology (Clarke, 2013:162). Young III (1992:57) does however applaud Blyden’s concept of the way in which Blacks bear the image of God, being natural, cheerful, sympathetic and service-oriented (Young III, 1992:57). Blacks bore the image of

God naturally without having to aspire to the hubristic mores of Whites who dominated them (Young III, 1992:56). Young III (1992:57) draws attention to and endorses what he designates as the unique image of God's conferment on Blacks, as advocated by Blyden. Blyden (quoted in July, 2004:219) remarks:

Africa's lot resembles Him also who made Himself of no reputation, but took upon Himself the form of a servant, and, having been made perfect through suffering, became the 'Captain of our salvation.' And if the principle laid down by Christ is that by which things are decided above... that he who would be chief must become servant of all, then we see the position which Africa and the Africans must ultimately occupy.

Blyden argues that Blacks "had been partly responsible for the germs of all the arts and sciences" (Lynch, 1971:152-153; see also Young III (1992:55). Blyden further claims that the ancestors of the Western Sudanese kingdoms were the progeny of the ancient Black Egyptians whose ancestral home was above the sixth cataract (Young III, 1992:55). This signifies a claim for superiority vested in Africa; here with special reference to Sudan. Young III (1992:69) regards Blyden's scenario of the dawning of the fading of the Europeans' oppression of African Blacks and the emanating of the African Blacks' liberation from the yokes of Europeanism, as "providentially instructive for a Pan-African theology looking toward the twenty-first century" (Young III, 1992:69). Young III (1992:47) avers:

In the providence of God, redemption is coming to Africa. God, having pressed the *imago Dei* first on the dark ancestors, is incarnate today in Africa, which is in quest of a new humanity.

Young's assigning of "the quest for a new humanity" (Young III, 1992:47) to Black Africans through God having impressed His image on the Black Man "first" (Young, 1992:47), in my opinion, reflects a claim to superiority, and preferential chosenness in that Young emphasises that God had impressed His image on Black Africans "first".

Africa-ancestral legacies constitute an indispensable component in God's self-disclosure as accounted for in the Pan-African theology (Young III, 1992:129). When Young equates God's revelation to a sign of God's gift of a righteous spirituality, which sustains the liberation struggles of African Blacks, this appears to assign a trait

of divine chosenness to African Blacks. To Young, this elitist status is mediated through ancestral legacies (Young III, 1992:129). God's "self-disclosure" (Young III, 1992:129) (revelation), would be alien to the Pan-African experience [unique to African Blacks] "without the medium of the African heritage" (Young III, 1992:129). Accordingly, through their ancestors, Black Africans are the prescribers of God's revelation (Young III, 1992:129). Young III (1992:129) affirms: "Indeed, the Pan-African community receives no "revelation" outside of its ancestral values."

Importantly, Young III (1992:137) renders what he deems to be significant substance from the Bible for a Pan-African theology with specific reference to the books of Genesis, Exodus, the Gospels, and Revelations. Genesis 1 and 2 are compatible with traditional, African legends regarding how and where the creation originated (Young III 1992:137). Chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis indicate that Homo sapiens was created by God, with their first location probably being Africa (Young III, 1992:137). To Young III (1992:137), the book of Genesis exemplifies a Pan-African theology "as it commends a return to the source of equilibrium, the ancestral legacies inextricable from the orders of preservation that God has provided for the Pan-African community" (Young III, 1992:137). Black Africans are vested in the God of Genesis to such an extent that it evokes an appreciation among them of their "African heritage" (Young III, 1992:137). Young's adoration of vesting Black Africans as inhabitants of the Garden of Eden to me rather than realising that it that specific geographical location which manifested the Fall, her exalts into a Wall, a Wall of Fame for Black Africans

In my opinion, Young comes close to deifying Africa when he avers that "Africa is the sacred place emblematic of God's creation" (Young III 1992:139). Young's claim of Black Africans being seated in God to an unparalleled extent, reveals a notion of superiority. In the context of Pan-African theology with reference to the Exodus narrative, Young argues that "if a rereading of Genesis valorises the gift of blackness, then a rereading of Exodus heightens a determination to preserve that gift (gift of Blackness) in the struggle for liberation" (Young III, 1992:139). This is an affirmation of human dignity (which is, almost by universal definition, and applies to all humans), including various forms of African humanism (Biko, Fanon, Kaunda, Nyerere, and Tutu and other Black Africans), and notions that "black is beautiful".

Young asserts that God “in liberating African people from their alienation; revealing the chaotic state of self-hatred, in restoring them to their ancestors; recreates, “re-Africanises” Black Africans (Young III, 1992:139).

To Young, the first human beings were of a distinct ethnic nature, this ethnic nature being Black (Young III, 1992:139). Theologically I have no problem with Young’s claim of the first human beings who were created, having been black, pigmentationally, However, the dilemma with which Young is faced, is that these “authentic” Adam and Eve black ancestors were in my view not the victims of any socio-economic oppression, but were living in what I would term an affluent Garden of Eden environment within which they existed in materialistic abundance. Regarding the religiosity of African Blacks, in support of African Black spirituality, Young quotes Oduyoye (1986:89) who claims that: “The religious base of life in Africa enables us to read our history as ‘sacred’ history” (Oduyoye, 1986:89, see also Young III, 1992:140). Accordingly, Pan-African theology interprets the incarnation and the resurrection in terms of a spirituality vested in the African Blacks who constitute an oppressed community (Young III, 1992:142). This bequeathed spirituality is the God-ordained life that protects and upholds the continuous survival of the oppressed Black Africans (Young III, 1992:142). Christ’s suffering in the incarnation is literally, not figuratively present “in the liberation struggles of the Pan-African community” (Young III, 1992:142). To substantiate his view, Young (1992:143) refers to James Cone. Cone (1975:83) says:

Christ really enters into our world, where the poor, the despised, and the black are, disclosing that he is with them enduring their humiliation and pain and transforming oppressed slaves into liberated servants.

The book of Revelation signifies the culmination of the creation and redemption in Christ, the Incarnate Sufferer that transforms the struggles of the oppressed through the Spirit (Young III, 1992:143). Cone’s (1975:83) inclusion of “and the black” in the abovementioned reference to Cone by Young, is an *exclusivist* claim in my opinion instead of limiting Christ’s entry into the world to the poor, despised and “. . . the black” (Young III, 1992:143), substitute “the black” with “the whole of humanity!”

Whilst the book of Genesis expresses the “self-love in the collective form of the Pan-African community” (Young III, 1992:144), this “self-love” (Young III, 1992:144) is in the book of Revelation “incarnate in the Pan-African community” (Young III, 1992:144) sustaining this black community in its “apocalyptic struggle for freedom” (Young III, 1992:144,1 45). Redemption affirms the love of God for the Pan-African community, which love will pen-ultimately be affirmed in the physical manifesting of God’s love as reflected in the Pan-African “community’s love of God” (Young III, 1992:144). With regard to the *imago, deo* Young states that “African people are nurtured in miraculous modes of resistance bearing God’s image” (Young III, 1992:151). Young (1992:152), claims that in “...the providence of God, African people have resisted totalisation in an ancestral spirituality that renews, reforms, recreates and restores African people to the integrity of their persons.” When referring to what he terms the “Pan-African experience,” Young (1992:162) maintains that the divinity of Jesus is linked inseparably to the humanity of the African ancestors. To Young (1992:162), the distinguished African heritage, spirituality, divinely African-allotted image of God, is eradicable and that “Jesus Christ enriches symbols that participate in what cannot dissolve the image of God among African people” (Young III, 1992:162).

In the previous chapters I briefly focussed on the notion by certain founders of North American theology, Pan-African theologies; here with specific reference to Josiah Young III, Mensa Otabil, and Clifford Clarke, of African Blacks having in my opinion been divinely chosen. In the concluding chapter, I will provide a synopsis on notions by some of the founders of North American and embryonic Pan-African theologies, of Black Africans who currently reside in Africa, or who stem from African descent, as having been assigned a divinely chosenness. The notion being also applicable to Africa as a Continent. I reemphasize as mentioned in the introduction in this study, a 9-point grid as to what I deem as some of the reasons why divinely chosenness is advocated by Black Africans. I concede with penitence that some of the circumstances Black African have been exposed to are aspirational for a quest for divine intervention. However, just as societal injustices are inexcusable, as unfortunately also embarked upon by a contingent of Black Africans, I am in disagreement that these factors imply what I regard as divinely chosenness.

## 6.6 CONCLUSION

### 6.6.1 Summarising the conclusion to the Research Problem and the Question of – God’s chosen people

Considering that Africa currently comprises 54 states, the ardent and spiritual claims of divinely assigned favour with regard to the continent, by past and contemporary Pan-Africanists, aroused my sincere interest. Coupled with this fascination was the sincere, bold, and in isolated cases, blunt advocacy by the subscribers to the idea of Africa being divinely ordained as a singularly sacred continent, and that its legal inhabitants are a distinctive divine-human species of Black Africans, whose entitlement stems from traits or notions of exclusivist claims to be God’s chosen people.

Designating Christ as Black figuratively, and literally, in terms of Christ’s solidarity with the oppressed, given the marginalisation suffered by multitudes of members of all ethnic groups, through inhumane laws and deprivation, from a theological perspective in my view does have merit. The issue I have with the former contention does not focus on the issue of skin colour or better termed pigmentation. Even if the incarnate Christ was a Black African, and was pigmentationally Black-skinned, I am anxious to know whether this literal Black Christ also has sheep and prospective “lost sheep in other folds”. Does Christ have a redemptive plan which also applies to the paradoxical “white” sheep, here representing all non-Black African human beings?

Similarly, among these divinely founded agencies, is the common justification of its claims to divine ordination, being the dawning of its divine status and destinations as a post-oppressive revelation of divine rights, having geographically been destined as the Promised Land, assigned and to be claimed as pronounced and promised in the Bible.

Throughout this study, I have referred to the racial, political, and economic reasons which are propounded by the respective historical and current protagonists, for their justification of the promulgation of hierarchies of divine status. I further furnished derogatory, inhumane, power-possessed, and other demonic-driven behavioural

patterns, as having been perpetrated and enacted, by systems, ideologies, ethnic races and other demonic modus operandi, providing stimuli and quests for the notion of claims to divinely chosenness.

I indicated throughout this study if and where claims of Black Africans and Africa's superiority and exclusivist divinely chosenness (ECGCP) feature in my opinion. These are based on a classification of distinct theological views. I used these classifications as an instrument to interpret the positions of the authors discussed in this study. I considered it helpful to repeat this classification in this concluding chapter. These are:

- i. An affirmation of cultural identity (which is necessarily particular although claims for an underlying African worldview need to be noted).
- ii. An affirmation of human dignity which is almost by definition universal, applying to all various forms of African humanism, and notions that "black is beautiful".
- iii. Decolonial resistance against an internalised sense of inferiority.
- iv. Claims for superiority i.e. that some aspects of traditional African culture and also religion are actually superior to Western or Christian notions (which rhetorically may be a response to decolonial resistance).
- v. Claims to be God's chosen people, i.e. that Black Africans are part of the household of God (rhetorically aimed at persuading Black Africans that God loves them too, also in response to colonialism).
- vi. Cases where there are claims for corporate agents to have a special mission and task (akin to that of Israel amid the nations), i.e. chosen for a special task.
- vii. Claims of God's preferential option for the poor, oppressed and marginalised (which could be interpreted in different ways but are rooted in the election of runaway slaves to become God's chosen people).
- viii. Claims in liberation theology for the epistemological privilege of the poor as those on whose side God is and who therefore know God better than the rich.
- ix. Exclusivist claims to be God's chosen people (ECGCP).

### **6.6.2 The Historic, Ideological and Political Problem of Exclusivist Claims to be God's chosen people**

During researching the notion I discerned signals of Black Americans reflecting a Black American superiority towards Blacks who reside in Africa. If and where such superiority claims manifested themselves, I employed an identikit called "Black like América".

What the study featured prominently was that the claim to being divinely chosen was predominantly conjured by the various forms of oppression through which some Black Africans had been exposed to, and still, sadly, to an extent are being exposed to by peoples of other countries. Here with specific reference to Whites, as well as some Black Africans who illegally acted as slave traders! Whilst I condemn such atrocities, the contrary on segments of Black Africans inflicting disastrous conditions upon others, especially other Black Africans, also hold true. If divinely chosenness is then a consolation imparted to the persecuted masses because of these hardships, what about the ungodly behavioural patterns of some Black Africans as briefly referred to below! Below I briefly substantiate that evil knows no clime!

I was drawn by what appeared on the surface to be an ideological movement, one of the unification of a continent commonly known as Pan-Africanism, being clothed in religious attire, the latter postulation having frequently being depicted as the divine justification of the Pan-African movement's mission and vision statement.

The concept of chosenness denoting the exclusive anointing by God to execute a providentially ordained mission has said Cauthen, throughout history proved a uniquely potent catalyst for social mobilization and national coherence (Cauthen 1997:17). Numerous Christian communities, countries, and movements, have throughout the ages perceived themselves, or themselves, as successors to biblical Israel as the collective or co-beneficiaries of divine favour, and therefore as the new Chosen People (Cauthen, 2004:19-33).

To simply equate being Black and the continent Africa on which Blacks dwell or have descended from, unequivocally to the occupying of an ordained divine status, is aptly denounced by Mercy Amba Oduyoye (1979:240):

The popular description of Africans as “notoriously” or “incurably” religious is belied by Africans who call themselves atheists or humanists. Secularization is a factor on the African scene.

Ernst Conradie and Xolani Sakuba draw attention to the notion of inherent goodness vested in African humanity juxtaposed against the widespread prevalence of corruption in Africa (Conradie & Sakuba, 2006:1). While the “inherent goodness” of Black Africans is typically being “affirmed” (Conradie & Sakuba, 2006:2) in the African traditional culture also referred to as the “spirit of ubuntu,” one should be alert to a romanticised version of the “sweet African village of a bygone period” (Conradie & Sakuba, 2006:2).

Importantly, Black Africans need to “come to terms with the hard reality of corruption, which is prevalent throughout the African continent” (Conradie & Sakuba, 2006:3). Contrary to Oduyoye (1979:246) claiming that Africans are binding factorial peoples, who in the vein of the tradition of the elders, engage in building the future. Conradie and Sakuba (2006:3) raise the alarm for Africans to cease being contented, by taking cognisance of the “various forms of corruption in Africa, including bureaucratic and political corruption” (Conradie & Sakuba, 2006:3).

Whilst distinctly acknowledging corruption to be of a global nature, here also including the Western, Eastern manifestations thereof, the “hard question,” which Africans have to confront is “Where does evil really come from? Is there not a need for Africans to accept responsibility for endemic corruption” (Conradie & Sakuba, 2006:3).

### **6.6.3 The Problem of Evil in Africa (Wars, Violence, Genocide, Greed, Tribal & Ethnic Cleansing, Political Oppression, Economic Oppression, Social and Religious Oppression)**

Although I acknowledge that Ethiopionism is, as frequently mentioned in this study, an ideology that is of immense spiritual significance for Black Africans and Africa as a continent. And I address the fact that the precinct known as Ethiopia is, as substantiated in this study, assigned a historical, biblical, figurative, and exclusivist claim to be God's chosen people. Yet, a dichotomy exists between a 'figural or allegorical view of Ethiopionism as a symbolic Jerusalem or City of God, and the factual reality of Ethiopia as a nation with a national political, economic and social reality.

The actuality of proverbial "sweet African village" of bygone days has been reflected upon, and challenged by numerous scholars, historians and political commentators. To illustrate, I take a 2019 article that appeared in a South African daily newspaper, *Cape Times*, that strongly challenges this position. The article entitled "*Abiy Ahmed's unifying work in Ethiopia dealt dire blows,*" (Ebrahim, 2019) alleges that Ethiopia is facing an "ethno-nationalism" disaster which has the potential to trigger a civil war. This question of "ethno-nationalism" written in blood in the history of Africa, as is strife, war, conflict and atrocious violence. But I raise it in the Ethiopian context to draw attention perhaps only to caution the mythologising of electedness.

Ethiopia with the exception of Nigeria boasts the largest population in Africa having numbered 102,5 million in 2019. Its population comprises 80 diverse ethnic groups (Ebrahim 2019). The dominant ethnic groups of which the Amhara is the second largest, are embittered because of what Ebrahim (2019) refers to as "a historic sense of political and political marginalisation". Mounting tensions between the Amhara and Oromo regional states with the quest for land, resources, and political domination, appear to be the major issues with prospective devastating consequences if these conflicts are not resolved (Ebrahim 2019). I found it difficult to endorse in every instance, the frequent quoting of Psalm 69:1 (KJV), namely that: "Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God", with the current (2019) turmoil in Ethiopia.

The adulation of Egypt being denoted as an African country resembling Black Africans and Africa is as indicated in this paper a notion that is subscribed to by several North American, European, and African theologians. In this study, I provided references in support of what I consider the “notion” of exclusivist claims to be God’s chosen people vesting in Black Africans and Africa, through the citing of the idyllic and almost deifying status of Egypt. Such references include Edward Blyden’s (quoted in Lynch, 1971:56). claim that “the ancestors of the Western Sudanese Kingdoms were the progeny of the ancient, black Egyptians, whose ancestral home was above the sixth cataract.”

In “The regeneration of Africa”, Pixley Isaka Seme on 6 April 1906 in a speech delivered at the Columbia University extended the following invitation, amongst others in his exaltation of Africa, and Egypt, in particular:

Come with me to the ancient capital of Egypt, Thebes, and the city of one hundred gates. The grandeur of its venerable ruins and gigantic proportions of its architecture reduce to insignificance the boasted monuments of other nations. The pyramids of Egypt are structures to which the world presents nothing incomparable. The mighty monuments seem to look with disdain on every other work of human art and to view with nature itself. All the glory of Egypt belongs to Africa and her people.

Garvey (1986:77) amongst other accolades proudly revels about Egypt when he states:

. . . Yes, honest students of history can recall the day when Egypt, Ethiopia, and Timbuktu towered in their civilizations.

Mofokeng (1993:144) proclaims that Black Africans will only upon holding hands with their ancestors “on the banks of the river Nile” (Mofokeng, 1993:144) discover what being made in the image of God entails and feels like, as well as reaffirming the best of the African civilisation and discovering “a universal theology which liberates humanity and glorifying “the God of the oppressed” (Mofokeng, 1993:144).

Current Egypt, here denoting 2019, would among Blyden, Seme, Garvey, Mofokeng, and all the other Egypt admirers referred to in this study, be horrified by the recent statistics released on Egypt. At the beginning of 2019, a report released by the World

Bank stated that 60% of Egypt's population is "either poor or vulnerable." It is reported that while Egypt's military elite under the presidency of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi have grown extremely wealthy, the number of poor Egyptian citizens have risen from 27 million in 2015 to 33 million in 2018. This translates to one third of Egypt's population of 99 million being poverty-stricken. According to the Human Rights Watch, this proverbial Africa's "Garden of Eden" has obliterated all the basic rights of the resident Egyptians under Sisi's rule presiding over torture, executing over 500 Egyptians through extrajudicial killings, having detained thousands of Egyptians refusing them access to lawyers and family, and depriving them of basic food and medicine (Ebrahim, 2019). During the latter part of September 2019, hundreds of Egyptian youth protested against the corruption and repression of the Egyptian government, resulting in over 2 000 protesters being arrested and interrogated (Ebrahim, 2019). Cases of sexual and gender harassment of these migrants in Egypt, according to the IOM had been increasing in the latter months of 2019. The majority of the migrants in Egypt live in crowded impoverished areas. In an interesting article "African Migrants face racism in Egypt", Ebrahim (2019) notes that Egypt is notorious for its racist practices.

Since I have been branded by ethnologists as light-skinned, tender sincere apologies for the atrocities which "... European imperial forces had committed in Egypt. However, given the chronology of the abovementioned article being 2019, I am compelled to enquire who the oppressors then were?" Were the culprits in this particular instance not Black Africans? Dare one in support of Oduyoye's calling for Africans to "share their basic tenets with the rest of humanity" (Oduyoye, 1979:246) and realise that "life is not entirely materialistic" (Oduyoye, 1979:247), here briefly refer to Dr. Mensa Otabil's response to the demise of the Capital Bank in Ghana, in which his International Central Gospel Church held a three percent interest. Otabil, who is the Board of Capital Bank's chairperson, laid the blame for the bank's collapse; with which the majority of his church's members held their savings; on the devil. According to an article which appeared in *The Herald*, Ghana, dated 23 August 2017, Otabil attributed the collapsing of the bank to altercations he had been exposed to at the Greater Works Conference, attended by numerous prominent international preachers. According to Otabil, the bank catastrophe had to be attributed to the devil retaliating to what Otabil (The Editors, 2017) refers to as:

... this year's Greater Works, which says Otabil, despite Capital Bank's collapse was a point of departure and something huge took place. We poked somebody's eyes. And when you poke somebody's eyes; here referring to the Bank; he'll hit your hand. So, what we're experiencing is the hard hitting ...

Otabil (The Editors, 2017) is reported to have said that the then takeover of the Capital Bank of which his ICGC is a shareholder, must be interpreted as a signal of prosperity for both his denomination and Ghana.

The conviction that oppression and violence concerning Africa of the instigators, orchestrators, and culprits solely vesting in colonial Christianity, and secular outside Africa territories, is in my opinion repudiated by the brutal Rwandan genocide that was committed by Black Hutu extremists against the Black Tutsis-Rwanda ethnic group in 1994. Over a million Tutsis and others who were opposed to the brutal extinction of the tribe were killed in a 100-day bloodbath (Moyo, 2019). The Rwandan President, Paul Kagame, declared on 7 April 2019 during the 25<sup>th</sup> memorial of the genocide: "Dare to mess with us and we will mess with you big time" (Moyo, 2019). At the memorial service commemorating what was a "Black on Black" atrocity, Kagame further commented, "Looking at Rwanda today, it is clear that God has come back to stay with us. Our prayer is for no people to ever endure the same tribulations especially our brothers and sisters in Africa" (Moyo, 2019). Tinyiko Maluleke (2000:25) nobly admits that despite those Black Africans who fixed their aspirations and dreams in "Mother Africa", in the diaspora, the visions Crummell, Du Bois, Blyden, and others for an idealistic Africa, have been shattered by inbound Black African atrocities such as the Rwandan genocide. In this regard, Maluleke refers to an African American print media spokesperson for the *New York Times*, Keith B. Richburg (1997) who was so horrified by the Rwandan massacre, that in a book he published, he "thanked God that his ancestors were made slaves and taken out of Africa" (Maluleke, 2000:25). Furthermore, Maluleke (2000:25) reminds his readers that it needs to be borne in mind that it was in the very same week that South Africa celebrated the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as South Africa's first democratically elected president, that the genocide was committed in Rwanda.

Edward Blyden in his exalting of Africa; here with specific reference to Sudan; would have turned in his grave if he had known the extent of the massacre of human

beings carried out during the post-Blyden era in West Sudan. In *The African repository*, Blyden is elated about the nobility of Sudan amongst other African countries. Blyden (1881:110-111) claims:

There has been an unbroken line of communication between the West Coast of Africa, through Sudan ... from the time when portions of the descendants of Ham in remote areas began their migrations westward and first saw the Atlantic ocean... She (Africa) has been closely connected, both as source and nourisher with some of the most potent influences which have affected for good the history of Africa ... the greatest religious reforms the world has ever seen ... have obtained consolidation in Africa ... And as in the days of Abraham and Moses, of Herodotus and Homer, so to-day, there is a constantly accessible highway from Asia to the heart of Sudan.

A horrific account of internal Black African violence vested in the very same Sudan “deified” by Blyden. Sudan is the largest country in Africa, with an area of 967.5 thousand square metres. West Sudan is an Arabic name, which literally means the “land of blacks.” According to an April 2019 report, Sudan’s autocratic President Omar al-Bashir finally after years of being the brain behind the brutal massacre of South Sudanese citizens, resigned on 12 April 2019. According to Ebrahim (2019), Al-Bashir’s resignation is the final whistle “on one of the longest-running and most draconian regimes on the continent”. According to Ebrahim (2019), Al-Bashir held the reigns of West Sudan for twenty-two years. Al-Bashir’s regime was responsible for the annihilation of twenty-two million South Sudanese through military violence, famine, and disease (Ebrahim, 2019) that was characterised by the bombing with hundreds of barrel bombs on desolate villages, killing multitudes in the process (Ebrahim, 2019). Al-Bashir is suspected of having amassed \$9billion (R126bn) in offshore bank accounts (Ebrahim, 2019). Al-Bashir and his corrupt comrades’ motive for the atrocities against their fellow Sudanese was a lust for oil production (Ebrahim, 2019). Furthermore, sexual and gender-based violence are rife in South Sudan with 1 281 women and girls having been gang-raped in 2018 and suffering “multiple incidents of sexual violence” (United Nations, 2019). South Sudanese officials are reported to be openly recruiting thousands of soldiers who are authorised to abduct women and girls as the spoils of war (United Nations, 2019).

In terms of the AU’s aspirational chronological deadlines, Okoloise (2017) makes some interesting, yet in my view alarming observations concerning the goals set by

this organisation. Okoloise (2017:348) echoes Sturman's (2007) AU's '*dreaming on . . .*' (see Chapter 4, section 4.5) aspirations, by highlighting a number of the AU's agenda goals as wishful thinking. Okoloise (2017:348-349) continues to outline two major goals of the AU that can only be viewed as unrealistic ideals:

- i. The failure to abolish all intra-African visa laws for all Africans by 2017.
- ii. The silencing of guns and the "end of all wars" by 2020.

At the close of 2017, the African continent was still war torn with armed conflicts on-going in Algeria, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Libya, Cameroon, Sudan and South Sudan, Chad, Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria, Mali, and numerous other African countries. Okoloise (2017) seems accurate in his proofs and skepticism toward the improbability that the supposed goals of the AU's, African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) mechanisms and conflict prevention wing, be resolved.

The Agenda's hidden agenda is reminiscent of Nkrumah's ideal of "African nationalism and unification, which though focused on Africa, was hardly backed by Africans at the time..." (Okoloise, 2017:349). If the AU's Agenda is "not driven by and centred on the African people" (Okoloise, 2017:349) it may be doomed for hopeless failure (Okoloise, 2017:349). Given that the African states have not met the target dates in accordance with the Agenda's national pledge, together with its 50th Anniversary, the Solemn Declaration in 2013, it might as a result be destined for failure (Okoloise, 2017:349).

Okoloise (2017:353) poses crucial questions regarding the executability of the AU's Agenda concerning the African Union's (AU) vision for Africa asked:

Will South Africa, which is about the most technologically advanced state in Africa open its borders to Africans from other countries? Will Egypt which has the strongest military in Africa need an African standby? Will Nigeria which has a population that is half of the entire West-African sub-region, four times as populated as South Africa and nearly 180 times as Lesotho or Djibouti, submit itself on the same terms as these countries?

Nkrumah's Pan-African project, namely, the unification of Africa into the United States of Africa, despite being the AU's dominant ideal, in 2018, still had to take cognisance of "administrative quandaries" (Okoloise, 2017:349). These were:

- i.** The EU (European Union) still bankrolls ninety percent (90%) of the AU's annual budget;
- ii.** The AU's gross, proven, inability to "prevent or halt armed conflicts";
- iii.** Vast scale pandemics and endemic poverty;
- iv.** Its inability to in excess of four decades, despite its AEC treaty, coordinate and facilitate trade amongst African states.

Tinyiko Maluleke (2000:25-26) acknowledges a further gross distortion of the "agency" vested within Africa when he declares:

Thus it can be said that while the old is dying in Africa, the new has not yet been born. Clearly, the demise of the cold war and the emergence of the new world order ... brings no automatic blessings for Africa. It will take more than the "African renaissance" rhetoric (in South Africa and Uganda) to get out of the rut of centuries of exploitation and the more recent ravages of neo-colonialism, dictatorship, and internal decay. Even the end of apartheid is not automatically positive for the poor!

Since the focus of this study is the "notion" that Blacks in and from Africa, are God's chosen (elected) people, Conradie's brief comments on divine election and migration are in my opinion relevant within the broader context of this study, and more specifically with regard to divine election. Whilst migration could be a positive experience in the case of a privileged few, according to Conradie (2016:132) it is commonly associated with hardships in the broader sense, such as, being uprooted, detained, trafficked, or dying on the journey.

The concept of "divine election" may not only exacerbate the trauma experienced by refugees but also help to diagnose the problem (Conradie, 2016:133). Conradie (2016) notes that because there is a similarity between the problems related to migration and those on the debates on divine election, the one can illuminate the other (Conradie, 2016:133). Conradie's questioning of any contemporary claims to being God's chosen people, here with particular reference to the issue of "migration"

is twofold. One is that such a notion may very well be that conflict is the root cause that leads to migration. The second reason is that the problems experienced by refugees in their quest to seek citizenship elsewhere are exacerbated by nation states and notions of national identity, often reinforced by religious claims to privilege (Conradie, 2016:136).

Egypt, which has been a place of refuge for refugees for decades from other parts of Africa, here with special reference to tropical Africa, was hosting six million migrants in 2020. This is according to the United Nations' International Organisation for Migration (IOM). More than fifty percent of these migrants have fled from Sudan and South Sudan. According to Yasmin Sooka, Chair of the UN Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, when reporting to the Human Rights Council, there were over two million South Sudanese refugees living in the DRC, Uganda, Ethiopia, CAR, and Kenya.

In addition to the latter disaster being classified as the largest migrant crisis in Africa, what makes it even worse is that two thirds of the two million migrants, 1.33 million, were children (UN Human Rights Council 2019). Between 2016 and 2018 more than 4,3 million Sudanese were displaced through ongoing battles (UN Human Rights Council 2019). Okoloise (2017:349) argues that the AU's "Agenda," despite claiming to be for-and-about the people of Africa, the peoples of Africa at grassroots level are simply not being involved by the AU and have a gross lack of support from Africans themselves.

The Agenda should in contrast with being driven by the "machinations of a few armrest-sitting people" (Okoloise, 2017:349), engender the democratic consultations and inputs of the African people on the ground (Okoloise, 2017:349). Only a remnant of African countries had by January 2017, complied with the digital migration objectives. The AU had by 2017 hopelessly failed to monitor and support migration processes. This by 2017 having resulted in poorer African countries which have pressing economic issues, being marginalised.

#### **6.6.4 The Problem and Danger of Tyranny in Historic Correlatives of Exclusivist Claims of God's chosen people**

The concept of divine election and/or any exclusivist claims of being God's chosen people is fraught with dangers. Dangers that cut, universally across, political, ethnical, religious, social and economic lines. This has been proven throughout the annals of history, which have produced atrocities ranging from apartheid and mass slave trades to holocausts and genocides and everything in between. I term this the problem in divine election of it being used veil behind which tyranny lurks and lies.

This is well argued by Oberman (2003:14), who, when referring to Philip Benedict, shows how the concept of divine election can be manipulated for selfish, communal, and national gain. Benedict:

Moral rigor shades over easily into self-righteousness, and the elect are rarely loved when they let the remainder of the community know that it is damned.

Ernst Conraide (2016:139) argues deftly that claims of divine election and of being God's chosen agents are used frequently to justify both oppression and terrorism. The claims of being God's chosen people according to Conraide are often expressed in terms of the categories of the boundaries of nation states, the defence of private property, the self-appointment as cultural custodians of such land, and in particular, economic (if not military) control over the available resources (Conraide, 2016:136).

These claims are justified too frequently in terms of reference to tacit or explicit claims of being God's chosen people, with a divine right to land ownership (Conraide, 2016:136). Conraide (2016:136) heeds the warning that:

Such claims have left a trail of blood in human history" that is figuratively visible in South Africa and in Germany.

### 6.6.5 Predestination and Divine Election – A future or something of the past?

I draw to close my research study by seeing whether the concept of divine election still has a future or whether it is a relic of the past, and particularly whether that future can be said to be exclusively vested in Black Africans, who do and will then continue to embody as Black and as Africa the designation of being God's chosen people?

With regard to the above, Conradie poses the question regarding whether it would be possible to retrieve such a notion of divine election in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Conradie also raises the issue of the differences in class and education between the Genevan oppressed, refugees, and contemporary oppressed African refugees. Finding satisfactory consensus concerning these two scenarios seems rather unlikely in a liberal political climate, where tolerance and inclusivity seem to be contrary to any idea of a particular election (Conradie, 2016:139). However, talk about election among reactionary movements and identity politics would be outright dangerous (Conradie, 2016:39). Contemporary publications on election and predestination emanate predominantly from ultra-conservative, reformed, and evangelical circles, or are produced with the aim of attempting to justify the connection between predestination, nationalism, and Zionism (Conradie, 2016:139).

Conradie asserts that the above does not imply that a prospective (namely, kerygmatic) logic is always inappropriate (Conradie, 2016:145). The ethics of gratitude and responsibility, however, outweighs the message of being elected (Conradie, 2016:45). The primary need is “to confirm to the victims of history that even though they are rejected by others, they are not rejected by God” (Conradie, 2016:145). Conradie calls for the confronting of the perpetrators and the admonition of the victims (for example, of imperialism) that they may easily become perpetrators (for example the Afrikaner people) in future (Conradie, 2016:145). Divine election could thus at best, be a doctrine that expresses “God's grace and compassion to runaway slaves and refugees the victims of history, the unlikely underdogs” (Conradie, 2016:146). According to Conradie (2016:139):

There is some retrieval of the particularity of God's grace in the context of liberation theology (the option for the poor), black theology (the epistemological privilege of the black working class) and Pan-African theology, that Blacks in Africa or from African descent

are the chosen people of God This is scarcely ever related to discussions of divine election not to mention predestination.

Conradie notes that the notion of divine election has given rise to much debate and many have abandoned this idea altogether, while others have searched for more inclusive interpretations (Conradie, 2016:137). The Jewish-Christian tradition cannot avoid a debate on being God's chosen people, especially given the role that the notions of divine election have played throughout this tradition (Conradie, 2016:136). While many wish to avoid discussing divine election altogether, Conradie suggests that given those who are vested in the Jewish, Christian, or Muslim traditions, such an evasion would not be a legitimate option (Conradie, 2016:137). Conradie (2016:137) observes that "These traditions are constituted by very particular narratives of God's engagements with equally particular people." Avoiding discussions on the divine election would be tantamount to avoiding discussion about Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and David, Elijah and Isaiah, John the Baptist, Mary Magdalene, Peter, Paul, and Jesus of Nazareth (Conradie, 2016:137). Each of the aforementioned people had a sense of a particular calling (Conradie, 2016:137). This also has a bearing on the history of Christian saints, martyrs, church leaders, and theologians (Conradie, 2016:137). Therefore, acknowledging their vocations without recognizing the theological justification for their respective callings, for better or for worse, would not be expedient (Conradie, 2016:137). A mere focus on the positive traits of the aforementioned, would also not suffice without an assessment of the exclusion of Cain, Ishmael, Esau, and the self-exclusion of Judas (Conradie, 2016:137).

Conradie prefers to refrain from using the term "predestination," with the possible exception of employing the term as a truly ultimate doxology, which would then push a retrospective logic beyond the confines of history. It is exactly that prospective logic, its emphasis on divine foreknowledge, which has given the doctrine of predestination such a negative reputation (Conradie, 2016:144). The primary problem of the doctrine of divine election is that the true God is portrayed as arbitrary, with salvation being treated in a fatalist manner (Conradie, 2016:144). In terms of the latter and if interpreted as indicated above, God's elective grace is thus portrayed in a linear manner with causal effect (Conradie, 2016:144). Accordingly,

Conradie employs the classical, hotly contested, infant baptism debate when he asks an important question): Conradie (2016:144) asks:

What if the child (or grown-up) who has just been baptized later in life does “go astray” and eventually denies the faith?

Oberman (2003:114-115) on the other hand proffers the view that Calvin’s doctrine of predestination is crucial but can be misinterpreted:

The Calvinistic doctrine of predestination is the mighty Bulwark of the Christian faithful against the fear that they will be unable to hold out against the pressure of persecution. Election is the Gospel’s encouragement to those who have faith, not a message of doom for those who lack it. In particular, it responds to the anguish that Calvin already felt in the early wave of persecution, which spread through Paris on the eve of his escape to Switzerland fearing that torture would force him to betray the other members of his underground cell. Rather than providing grounds for arrogance, predestination offers all true Christians the hope that even under extreme duress they will persevere to the end. Later, when the refugees had become settlers and citizens, they developed the scriptural insights fostered by this experience and hardened its doctrinal crust. It was then that election came to be regarded as a civil right.

Oberman argues that what appears to be a doctrine of abstractness and divine election, on the surface proved to be a matter of existential faith for migrants (Oberman, 2003:157). During Calvin’s time, the Genevan refugees also had no permanent place of residence and no valid passport or residence permit (Oberman, 2003:157). Accordingly, predestination and divine election became their identity cards (Oberman, 2003:157). In his journal article, entitled “Reading John Calvin in the African context: any relevance for the social reconstruction of Africa,” Gathogo (2009:221) notes that Calvin’s teaching on predestination is indeed extremely controversial. Examples of such misinterpretations are how the Apartheid era leaders contended that there is “a preservation of certain predestined races” (Gathogo 2009:221). Furthermore, Gathogo (2009:221) notes that “some pan-Africanists, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, seem to have built on it in their quest for an African Renaissance Movement.” Subsequent to the abovementioned article having elaborated on the gross misinterpretation of Calvinism by the Apartheid protagonists, Gathogo (2009:223) avers that “another extreme version of misinterpretation of Calvinism” is evident as mentioned above in the African Renaissance Movement. Whilst the key leaders of the African Renaissance Movement with the likes of

Sylvester Williams, Marcus Garvey, W.E.B. du Bois, Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta, and George Padmore did not profess to be Calvinists, they nevertheless advocated the ideology of “Africa being predestined for black Africans” (Gathogo 2009:223). The latter ideology is confirmed in Marcus Garvey’s slogan; to whom Gathogo (2009) refers as the “guru of the [African Renaissance] movement” (Gathogo 2009:223), namely, “If Europe is for the Europeans, Asia for Asiatics, then WHY IS AFRICA NOT FOR AFRICANS’ (Gathogo, 2009:223). Furthermore, Gathogo (2009) argues that Garvey’s ideology was “set out to balkanise the world into a black’s only zone versus Asiatics only zone and/or even a Europeans only zone amongst others” (Gathogo, 2009:223). If the “Africa are for Blacks only ” contention had to materialise, it would result in a worldwide crisis and Africa, in particular, considering that there are blacks who reside in the West Indies, the Americas, and other parts of the world (Gathogo, 2009:223). Whilst acknowledging that colonialism was reprehensible, and needed to be dismantled, an appeal for humans to return to their ancestral places of birth, in this case, Africa, because of race, may prove problematic in 21<sup>st</sup> century Africa, and the rest of the world (Gathogo, 2009:223). Significantly, Gathogo (2009:225) issues the following warning concerning the interpretations of the doctrine of predestination:

Hence the difficulty in confining Africans into Africa or any group of people into a specific geographical area. In light of the misunderstood doctrine of predestination, it is worthwhile to revise it with the intent to reconstruct our diverse interpretations. . .

Søren Kierkegaard’s approach concerning the issue of corporate chosenness features in his interpretation of salvation. Kierkegaard frequently seems to reflect that a human being in ethical-religious matters is not indebted to any other human being at all (Jackson, 1997:242). Whilst Kierkegaard acknowledges a corporate vulnerability among human beings, we are radically independent in spiritual matters (Jackson, 1997:242). This individual exclusivity in spiritual matters is clearly expressed by Kierkegaard in his interpretation of the woman in the scriptures who suffered from a blood tissue disease. Kierkegaard (quoted in Jackson, 1997:242) states:

Consider, for example, the woman with hemorrhages (Mt. 9:20ff) ... The secret she kept to herself, it was the secret faith which saved her both for time and eternity. This secret you can have for yourself also when you forthrightly profess the faith, and when you lie weak on your sick-bed and cannot move a limb, and when you cannot even move your tongue, you can still have this secret within you.

Kierkegaard in a typical Socratic way was extremely careful to commit to the speculation of human freedom (Jackson, 1997:235). For Kierkegaard, human responsibility to God is radically individual (Jackson, 1997:235). Thus, for Kierkegaard, human beings do not have the capacity to attain spirituality with their fellow human beings (Jackson, 1997:235). Kierkegaard's view is captured explicitly where Kierkegaard (quoted in Jackson, 1997:236) states:

... we are all unprofitable servants, and even good deeds are nothing but human fabrications, fragile and very ambiguous, but every person has heaven's salvation only by the grace and mercy of God, and this is equally close to every human being in the sense that it is a matter between God and him.

Kierkegaard's view that despite the gross injustices which in this instance applies to the sūbhūman prosecutions mány Black Africans, and any other individuals or ethnicities having been exposed to, it seems incorrect that such calamities are a qualification for God's special favour. This is extreme where the victims or their advocates make exclusivist claims to be God's chosen people (ECGCP). Migliore's definition concerning the object of election is significant in terms of the "notion". Migliore (2014:99) explains:

... the goal of election is the creation of a people of God and not simply the salvation of solitary individuals or the privileging of particular nations or ethnic groups. The doctrine of election is not intended to cater to excessive self – concern or to fulfill arrogant national, racial or ethnic aspiration.

McGrath (1995:178) is particularly critical of an exclusivist soteriology, which is of particular relevance to the notion of exclusivist claims to be God's chosen people (ECGCP). McGrath (1995:178) however argues that one cannot conclude from the former, that only those who obeyed the gospel will be saved. The preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ is not restricted to the explicit preaching of the good news (McGrath, 1995:178). McGrath (1995:178) remarks: "We must be prepared to be surprised at those whom we will meet in the kingdom of God." To McGrath (1995:178), an exclusivist soteriology implies the writing off of the greater segment of the human population, in that they did not have access to the gospel due to a "geographical and historical contingency" (McGrath, 1995:178). To McGrath (1995:178), such theology is distorted. It is tantamount to a limitation of God's

*modus operandi* in terms of “action, disclosure and saving power.” The failure of human beings to share the gospel cannot result in God not ascribing salvation (McGrath, 1995:178-179). What is of further significance to me is the notion of claims of an exclusivist divine chosenness (ECGCP), vesting within Black Africans and Africa. McGrath (1995:178):

Salvation is not a culturally inherited or limited accomplishment by human beings. The gospel is God’s unlimited sovereign bestowal upon his people. Therefore, God is not restricted to solicit belief in him through the preaching of human beings. Whilst our preaching of the gospel is important, God does not ultimately depend on it.

Advocates of the “notion” regardless of colour or creed, must have been surprised that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. does not feature prominently in either the chapter on the North American Black theology or in the entire study. The reason is obvious. At no stage did King campaign for the “notion” that the Black Negro-American-Africans are God’s chosen people. King’s position concerning the denouncing of the “notion,” is captured classically in the speech King delivered at the Penn State University North Campus on 21 January 1965:

I think it will keep those who have been on the oppressed end emerging with the right attitude. We will not seek to rise from a position of disadvantage to one of an advantage, thereby subverting justice. We will not seek to substitute one tyranny for another. We will know that a doctrine of black supremacy is as dangerous as the doctrine of white supremacy and that God is not interested merely in the freedom of brown men, and yellow men, and black men. God is interested in the freedom of the whole human race and the creation of a society where all men will live together as brothers, and every man will respect the dignity and the worth of the human personality.

I conclude with with Van der Kooi and Van den Brink (2017:708) who heed, what I regard, as a clarion call to all people: individuals, tribes, clans, denominations, and nations who stake claims of being divinely chosen and in certain cases contending exclusivity:

We are not in the central control room; we cannot watch over God’s shoulder from the perspective of eternity and make the entire history of humanity trans-parent, for this history is far too confusing. It is much better to let election be the final keyword, the capstone of the doctrine of renewal. ... When we use the word ‘God’ – and here we fully agree with Barth – we are referring not to a dark capricious power but to the one who has fully made himself known in Christ as a God of grace. In Jesus Christ, we are justified, and God wants us to share in this new reality.

The *research problem* of this study was formulated “To determine whether and to what extent exclusivist claims to be God’s chosen people can be identified in Africa and Black Africans”, and I attempted to do so by means of two framings:

- i. Primary: Through a critical investigation of discourses in North American Black and Pan-African theologies, focused on the pioneering, foundational and core body of authors and works;
- ii. Secondary: A historical outline of the doctrine of election and predestination, chosenness, and its historical, religious, political, social and theological frameworks, interpreters and interpretations, and the various instances of how such a doctrine created movements of exclusionary and exclusivist nationalisms which reinforced their various ideologies in—and-through, and because of interpretations of the doctrine of election and predestination, and its ‘divine origin’.

The aim of the critical investigation was not to trace North American Black and Pan-African theologies exhaustively across all available literature and to assess such primarily as a critique on its ‘theological positions’. Nor, was the aim to decipher from the historical outline of the doctrine of election the scientific key or keys that gave rise to later developments of religio-socio-politico ideologies of religious nationalisms.

I wished to limit my study “whether or to what extent”; the *designation* of Black Africans, which was a formulation of an empowerment statement, and/or trademark, I developed through my reading of North American Black and Pan-African theologies; can *substantiate* “exclusivist claims” of being God’s chosen people (Black) and of Africa being the chosen continent (Africans); and I structure it particularly in this formulation and order, as it aligns to my own subjective interpretive readings of North American Black and Pan-African theologies’ *claims*; of first the exclusivist creation of a designation (Black) (Africa/n) fuelled by scientific (genetic), political (power and right), socio (culture and tradition, theological (ideological interpretative traditions) and religious (divine ascriptions) affirmations, and its substantiation as the ultimate political and theological position; and my *critique* of its own history, merits, factual basis, motives and those of other

ideologies before it, that shared similarities or dissonances, but nonetheless made exclusivist claims themselves.

I will conclude my study and the research problem by summarising my critiques against the aforementioned claims of exclusivist divine chosenness (ECGCP):

- i. *Anthropological*: An exclusivist divine chosenness be it by, Black Africans, as promoted by North American Black and Pan-African theologies, or as historically identified through nationalist ideologies (British Israelism, Afrikaner, German) *always* requires a schism in the human person. An anthropological deconstruction and dissection. And in each instance the predominant argument seems to utilise identity politics as a justification of the position. I find this dangerous, destructive, historically proven and open to gross distortion and manipulation and so completely liberal, not as egalitarian, but as utilitarian rather. And ultimately it sees the doing away with the human person as a cumulative of all people.
- ii. *Epistemological*: An exclusivist divine chosenness be it by, Black Africans, as promoted by North American Black and Pan-African theologies, or as historically identified through nationalist ideologies (British Israelism, Afrikaner, German) *always* requires a fundamentalist epistemology. For all positions need to eradicate contentions, contradictions and contestations, and because such eradications are not possible or tenable outside of a fundamentalist epistemology, to which all its proponents somehow or another must be indoctrinated. Sadly, the innocence of the epistemology, because this will be attacked, can only be maintained whilst there is no political and economic control, for once there is then such an epistemology much result in a totalitarian epistemology, which is the exact opposite reaction from which the movements initial epistemology was founded, but which history proves it nonetheless is likely to progress.
- iii. *Political*: An exclusivist divine chosenness be it by, Black Africans, as promoted by North American Black and Pan-African theologies, or as historically identified through nationalist ideologies (British Israelism, Afrikaner, German) *always* seeks to embed the political narrative which is

galvanised at creating an overthrow of the political status quo, which in itself is normative and even radically liberational, but only in so far as the body-politic with which the existing politic is to be replaced by, does not suffer from the same contaminations. In my view it by definition does and it is historically showcased in its own organisational and movement structures, the only exception being that such a Pan-Africanism (Black Power) has not yet had the deployment platform it has sought for this to enter the historical relationality.

- iv. *Liberational*: An exclusivist divine chosenness be it by, Black Africans, as promoted by North American Black and Pan-African theologies, or as historically identified through nationalist ideologies (British Israelism, Afrikaner, German) *always* stems from either an actual position of oppression or an ideological interpretation of oppression or suppression. It should be noted here that there are extreme differences, and I do not wish to make light of those, or uncontextually associate them with one another, but rather to premise the proposition that the underlying driver in some shape or form is a liberation from or a liberation to, and inevitably in its literatures it is never a liberation to the position of “neither” one identity, race, people, culture, nation, power, but rather a liberation clearly from one type to a new preferred type but nonetheless exclusionary and exclusive.
- v. *Linguistically*: An exclusivist divine chosenness be it by, Black Africans, as promoted by North American Black and Pan-African theologies, or as historically identified through nationalist ideologies (British Israelism, Afrikaner, German) *always* requires its own ‘lingua’, the first primary assault is one language and the power of language to influence, oppress, suppress, rule and overpower. And the reversal is unilaterally a claim to a new ‘lingua’, even if this takes the manifested form of a language tone or rhythm rather than the actual drive to a specific developed etymology.
- vi. *Historical*: An exclusivist divine chosenness be it by, Black Africans, as promoted by North American Black and Pan-African theologies, or as historically identified through nationalist ideologies (British Israelism, Afrikaner, German) *always* has a history of opposition, challenge, disputation

and vilification. This is not different here. The exclusivist claims have strong opposition in social and cultural spaces of shared racial and ethnic groups, have come under grave challenges politically and have by no means received an unanimous and democratic acceptance with the area of Pan-Africa or within the area of North American politics and/or black politics. In fact, the concept at least designationally has often been factually refuted through the political histories and practices of governance of independent African countries, but not limited to African. Even as I write this, North American black politics is completely torn between radically opposing forces both liberal and conservative, and pertinently within left wing liberal politics. The concepts association with nationalism has its own heavily disputations challenges coming from a variety of diverse fields, nationalities and view points. And lastly, a great deal of the language that embeds the politics and theology, has also come under attack and been vilified for what it presents for the international global movement toward a 'oneness' be it utopian, or idealist, or the technocratic practice of world domination, nonetheless not without critique.

- vii. *Tyranny and Anarchy*: An exclusivist divine chosenness be it by, Black Africans, as promoted by North American Black and Pan-African theologies, or as historically identified through nationalist ideologies (British Israelism, Afrikaner, German) *always* juxtaposes and falls prey to being at once a polarity of tyranny and anarchy. An anarchy against into a tyranny toward. Rightly these are extremities propositioned, but it would seem justified to see this as the end things. Because anarchy is presented as total liberality and tyranny is the political becomings of, at first a reimagined conservatism (old replaced by an equally fundamentally new) and potentially a totalitarianism.
- viii. *Theology*: An exclusivist divine chosenness be it by, Black Africans, as promoted by North American Black and Pan-African theologies, or as historically identified through nationalist ideologies (British Israelism, Afrikaner, German) *has never* managed to produce a universal theology, nor has it even managed to suggest that it can produce a thorough, complete, all refuting theology that can be embraced by all. This is in its theological

doctrine an impossibility. So it will always hold a theological position that in itself can be argued to be fundamentally *untheological*.

- ix. *Biblical*: An exclusivist divine chosenness be it by, Black Africans, as promoted by North American Black and Pan-African theologies, or as historically identified through nationalist ideologies (British Israelism, Afrikaner, German) *always* requires radical interpretive readings of scripture that itself can not be validated in the actual textual analysis, contexts, histories and exegesis. No matter which school of interpretation one selects. It will always require a new revision of interpretive methods, which will ultimately be ideological in its motives. And such a revision, it seems, always requires a particular historical epoch to give it its interpretive essence and emergence, be it historical-biblical criticism or post modern forms of critical or post critical theory. In any event such an interpretation will not be without a forceful critique when presented against the original text.

It should be noted that the above by no means wishes at any given point throughout the study and most particularly here at the conclusion make the argument that Black Africans are not, cannot, should not, and must not, make exclusivist claims of being God's chosen people. In fact, my personal position is that Black Africans are, and are precisely as Black Africans, so I stand by my proposition of the designation being an empowerment statement, but the degree to which they are both chosen, exclusive and are God's very own people, is reserved within the Being of God. And has only its effect in the Kingdom of God, that is the only true Kingdom, in which the designation can take the divine position.

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