THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN LIBERATION PERSPECTIVES OF DALE P. ANDREWS IN CONVERSATION WITH OTHER PRACTICAL THEOLOGIES

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Abstract

This study endeavors a comprehensive conversation between the African-American liberation perspectives of Dale P. Andrews and other contemporary practical theologies and liberationist perspectives. A pertinent question here arises: Will Andrews' approach to ethnic-specific liberation properly dialogue with other practical theologies in correlation? In response, the researched argument intends to evidence that his methodology does, in fact, resonate well with notable scholars from the guild, even those from other cultural backgrounds and diverse geographical locations. In that stride, consider that Westernization and its concomitant individualism have adversely affected ethnic cultures and their collectivist natures, also resulting in power imbalances between America's elite classes and the poor and disenfranchised. African-Americans, specifically, are often marginalized and oppressed, which goes against the biblical narrative and imperative for the church to properly "love thy neighbor" (Mark 12:31) and to seek liberation for those who are poor and destitute (Ps. 9:18; Prov. 14:31). Towards potential resolution, Andrews emphasized robust ecclesiological practices, stressing the importance of a flourishing Black American church, with the additional hope that such Spirit-inspired thriving would pour over into society as a whole. The selected theologians brought into the researched dialogue are intentional in identifying and working toward solutions regarding reconciled race relations and socio-spiritual liberation. Moreover, the increasingly multicultural church of America would do well to allow itself to be openly influenced by the majority of World spiritualities, most specifically the songfulness and communal/cultural aspects of African religion.

Key terms: African-American churches, African spirituality, dangerous memory, justice, liberation, practical theology.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Ever since the era of the discipline's seminal modern scholar, Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), the materials on practical theology have exponentially expanded as the subject area has progressed into the contemporary schema. Specifically, the scholarly black liberation perspectives of Dale P. Andrews (1961-2017) have left a tremendous mark on the practical theological guild. The aim of this study is to set Andrews' homiletical/ecclesiological praxis approach into conversation with other practical theologians who are aligned with the liberation of marginalized and oppressed groups of people in the Americas. That said, for some time now, there has been an anti-liberationist bent here in the United States, as Protestant churches often focus primarily on the "salvific gospel" and do so often at the exclusion of the "social gospel" (the latter being labeled as patently Marxist, and thus considered taboo in Evangelical circles). Nevertheless, for Andrews and those like-minded with him, there is no such dichotomy between the two approaches. The biblical mandates to love others in the present (Matt. 22:37-39) while also being concerned about their future eternal destination (John 3:16-21) ought to be held in synthesis, not set in opposition to one another. Therefore, this study evidences, through correlated inter-scholar dialogue, how various experts from the contemporary practical theological field (contra the common Protestant/Evangelical dissuasions) have identified related problems and thus articulate biblically based, liberationist solutions by way of multidisciplinary praxis.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Andrews (2002) considered the contradictory tendencies of practical theology, as it is regularly impractical in its perception and approach, as there often exists a distinct separation between the academic discipline itself and the praxis application of its technical research. His applied focus was primarily homiletical and ecclesiastical; his desire was to see the African-American church succeed, and its preaching not only positively affect ethnic congregations but also externally enhance the political and social arenas (Andrews, 2002). Doing so much like the preaching and activism of Martin Luther King, Jr. during the time of the Civil Rights Movement in America. Towards the wider picture, Browning (1996) asserts that practical theology begins with churches and institutions of faith, but it also needs to present reasons and justifications for the practical applications of the theology that it proposes. All theology properly conceived is fundamentally practical theology, and much like Andrews, theological attention to church practice serves as a strategic practical theology (Browning, 1996). In other words, practical theology is concerned with Christian praxis, hence locating the theological grounds and methods for inward ecclesial mission, the church's broader social presence, and the practice of liberation ministry (Andrews, 2002).

What is more, Andrews (2011) believed that if racial healing could remain in dialogue with justice, there would then be great potential for race-based and cultural reconciliation. In accordance with Whitehead and Whitehead (1995), his approach was also multidisciplinary, as he believed the prophetic ministry of churches would be sustained by empowering individuals and communities with the necessary theological and psychological tools for flourishing; he was gospel-focused and saw the salvific gospel as being of great importance, with the future eschaton also in view (Andrews, 2002). Thus, the praxis is that the holistic gospel would serve well in reconciling oppressed persons with themselves, the church, and society at large. This is where Andrews is in resonant conversation with the liberation perspectives of Boff and Boff (1994), who held that the true gospel of Jesus Christ prioritizes the poor and that socioeconomic and cultural liberation is of utmost importance in church and societal ministry. Padilla (2013) and Gutierrez (1988)

support this approach as well, all of which provide an influential Latin-American correlation to Andrews' African-American perspectives.

Andrews (2002) was adamantly against the Western individualization that had crept into the black church by way of various historical adversities and pointed out the intentionality of Anglo-American slave traders who intentionally dismantled the collective spirituality of Africans who were enslaved during the pre-emancipation era. Gitau (2018) avers that the extraneous factors of colonization, industrialization, urbanization, expanding scientism, and the emphasis on human rationality had also come into full force; therefore, the sins of oppression at the structural, elite, and grassroots levels were the naturally resulting development. From a counseling perspective, Miller-McLemore (2012) posits that Western individualism falls short in its potential for liberation, as persons need to be assessed in the wider spectrum of what she refers to as the "living human web." This expresses a socio-psychological approach to giving voice to those who have been marginalized and oppressed.

Moreover, the political theology of Metz (2007) helps emphasize the importance of polycentric churches that stand to properly help the marginalized and oppressed (Adiprasetya, 2017). What is more, American slavery, segregation, and racism should not be forgotten (Volf, 2019), as recalling such "dangerous memories" (Metz, 2007; Adiprasetya, 2017) helps to make a case for socio-political activism and is extremely important toward a deeper understanding of black preaching in the public square (Andrews, 2002, 2011). Therefore, the preacher's ability to relate biblical revelation to the experiences of racial and economic oppression weighs heavily in the African-American Christian communities (Andrews, 2002).

Moreover, Osmer (2008) emphasizes the importance of church leaders being benevolent in their ministry approach in order to make parishioners comfortable in receiving their guidance through issues such as racial tension and socioeconomic injustice. Osmer (2008) also stresses that approaches to liberation and practical theology ought to be Christ-centered, as Christ entered fully into the suffering of creation and redeemed these conditions. This provides a benevolent Christological underpinning for Andrews' (2002) homiletical approach.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

While this study relies heavily on theoretical aspects of research methodology, qualitative pastoral situations and reflections are also considered (Groome, 1998). Practical theory, practice, and praxis are also in dialogue with one another throughout the presentation (Browning, 1996). Phenomenological reflection is continually at the forefront of analysis. The descriptive-empirical tasks of Osmer (2008) are employed as a methodological undercarriage along the way. Moreover, the conversation between the referenced scholars is correlatively multidisciplinary in scope, as the political theology of Metz (2007), the socio-psychological counseling perspectives of Miller-McLemore (1993, 2012), and the aforementioned liberation perspectives (Guiterrez, 1998; Padilla, 2013) all coherently synthesize, working together towards a thick description of the analysis, one resonant with the distinctive ecclesiastical and homiletical perspectives of Andrews (2002, 2011) and his practical theological approach.

Moreover, Mburu (2019) articulates the African spiritualities of storytelling and songfulness that have culturally carried over to African-American communities and thus serve well in aspects of integrated theology and liberation. The selected journal literature (Hatch, 2006; Garces-Foley, 2007; Kasongo, 2010;

Vellem, 2015; Joseph, 2018) hence lends further support to the overall articulations of liberation and helps evidence the importance of the whole activity of African spirituality in Andrews' ethnic-specific ecclesiology, as well as toward effective racial reconciliation in politics and society.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Andrews lectured for years as a Distinguished Professor of Homiletics, Social Justice, and Practical Theology at Vanderbilt University's Divinity School. Having also been an ordained minister in the A.M.E. Zion Church, he displayed great insight and prowess as a scholar of religious praxis. This study intends to evaluate perspectives from his book titled *Practical Theology for Black Churches* in conversation with other contemporary practical and liberation theologies. In the words of Andrews (2002), "The term 'practical theology' strikes the ear as an oxymoron," furthering that, in his estimation, "The chasms that stretch between the discipline of theology and our ordinary lives of faith exist because theology does not frequently appear very practical." His desire was to see African-American churches flourish and Black social activism succeed. That said, he would concur with the following statement from Schleiermacher (2011), "Practical theology is conceived with regard to the applicability of its results within a particular, immediate element of life." Thus, Andrews' academic liberation perspectives serve well here: "For such a time as this" (cf. Esther 4:14).

According to Browning (1996), the discipline of practical theology "begins with the intuitions of faith but ends, when needed, with reasons and justifications for the practical actions it proposes." Browning (1996) further posits that all theology properly conceived is fundamentally practical theology, and he distinguishes specific theological attention to church praxis as strategic practical theology." In this stride, by what Andrews (2002) refers to as "the reflexive quality of praxis," his practical theology of African-American liberation (emphasizing expository preaching and the church) strategically intends to transmute the suffering of the oppressed into victory, including appeals to repentance, conversion, and justice. In his view, the prophetic agency of the church should entail a praxis of reform and reconciliation (Andrews, 2002). Thus, he concludes by way of his homiletical emphasis that "The goal of Christian ministry is liberation and reconciliation together. Christian liberation ministry therefore preaches a gospel message" (Andrews, 2002).

Moreover, Andrews (2002) states that practical theology "is not merely an application in systematic or constructive theology." Aligning with the multidisciplinary approach of Whitehead and Whitehead (1995), "The community of faith may take advantage of the methods or findings of the social sciences to better carry out its ministry in a variety of ways," although "it is the gospel which provides the criteria the community will use to form and reform the church's institutional life." Practical theology is concerned with Christian praxis, defining the theological grounds and methods for the church's mission, presence, and practice of ministry (Andrews, 2002). Unruh and Sider (2005) hence stress the "transforming potential of religious faith to bring moral order, hope, and a sense of purpose to the lives of struggling individuals. Trusting that the gospel and faith change people's lives and make them more whole persons and responsible citizens, thus strengthening the social order." The conversion experience, therefore, "reconciles the valued person and God in an experience of personal and spiritual liberation," says Andrews (2002).

Oppression, Injustice, and Civil Rights

From the Latin American context, Boff and Boff (1994) alert to the social and structural sins of oppression and injustice that fester in the institutions of society that incline individuals and groups to behaviors contrary to God's purpose. In North America, similar oppression is also often the case due to the effects of modernization, which, according to Gitau (2018), "was a complex process prefixed by a thousand years of preparation and pre-existing large-scale organizations." As she further explains, "When industrialization and consequent urbanization, expanding scientific knowledge, and faith in progressive human rationality came in full force," the aforementioned systemic sins were "a natural development at structural, elite, and grassroots levels" (Gitau, 2018). Moreover, according to Volf (2019), another form of exclusion is becoming increasingly common, not only in the way that the wealthy relate to the class of the poor but also in the manner in which suburbs relate to inner cities or the jet-setting "creators of high value" relate to "the rabble beneath them." This is a form of "exclusion as abandonment." And it exists here in the United States.

Gitau (2018) furthers that political processes may attempt to address escalating dislocations by developing new arrangements of power; unfortunately, since politics is often entrenched in its old ways (rarely facilitating actual change), the status quo is merely preserved. For those continually excluded by political structures of power, then "alternate mobilizing and activism" becomes the channel to express discontent in the public sphere. A synthesized political/activist example is that of the African-American-led Civil Rights Movement (1954-1968) that paralleled the Vietnam War era. Although it is commonly believed to have made tremendous liberating strides, Andrews (2002) was skeptical of the Movement's ultimate gains, assessing that it only further fed the appetite of American individualism, unable to escape the Western thought centered upon the individual as the principal unit of the value of society. He pessimistically concluded, "Individualism remains the dominating hegemonic culture in American religious life, both white and black, and in black theology itself" (Andrews, 2002). Resembling what Gutierrez (1988) refers to as a "conformist theology," advocating only for a peaceful coexistence of (privatized) faith within a secularized world, which ultimately tends to become an ideology of advanced industrial society.

Metz, Memory, and Miller-McLemore

While it is pivotal to be forward-thinking, the memory-narrative approach of Johann Baptist Metz (1928-2019) should also be considered. As Miller-McLemore (2012) reminds us, "To look to the future, it is crucial not to forget the past." According to Metz (2007), it is memory that generates the stories through which the idea of God can be considered. Metz's political theology is one in which the memory narratives of suffering, conversion, and deliverance are basic to any discussion of the Divine Being. What is more, Vellem (2015) stresses the importance of history in active participation in transforming unjust social structures. In the spirit of phenomenological description, since it is hard to face the brutal memories of America's enslavement of Africans, some argue that the government alone should be held responsible for the evils of slavery. Notwithstanding, "the fact is that the racial dimension is inescapable," says Hatch (2006), "for it is the color line that sustained the disadvantages of having been a slave, generations after the abolition of slavery, even up to the present." Therefore, according to Jemal et al. (2020), "To restore the promise of life, liberty and justice for all, racial reconciliation efforts must restore humanity by addressing the harm in racial disharmony."

While much of American injustice is socio-economic differentiation, the tensions of racial components remain extremely palpable. While economic conflicts may be readily identifiable and (according to Kasongo, 2010) more manageable, the deeper ethical issues of cultural deprivation or identity domination "create more profound problems that are not easy to resolve." Relatedly, in the United States, immigrants and minorities are vulnerable to the normative power of the dominant culture and are subjected to the institutional (and often unfair) universality regarding law, politics, economics, and welfare policy (Modood, 1998). On this side of heaven, there are no easy answers toward tension resolution. Nevertheless, practical theology has a space here to take action. Andrews (2002) explains that "Practical theology is often understood through what it does," holding in deliberation theological revelation, theoretical science, and ministry praxis, there exists an effective critical relationship between theology, theory, and practice. The critical and/or dialogical perspectives of Browning (1996), Boff and Boff (1994), Unruh and Sider (2005), Gitau (2018), Gutierrez (1988), Metz (2007), McLemore (2012), and Whitehead and Whitehead (1995), can thus serve toward effective practical analysis, thick description, and reflexive understanding of pertinent conciliatory issues.

Even though Andrews had become rather pessimistic in his views, he was not cynical. He held that if healing entered into dialogue with justice, there was restorative hope in this life (Andrews, 2011). He firmly believed in praxis potentials, that is, effective pastoral practices that "sustain the prophetic ministry of churches by empowering individuals and communities with theological and psychosocial tools for living" (Andrews, 2002). He relatedly inserts an Old Testament parallel, "Just as God is revealed in the liberation of the Israelites, so too does the covenantal relationship with the Israelites reveal God's desires for the faith community and humanity" (Andrews, 2002). Nancy Ammerman et al. (1998) also emphasize the communal recognition of *humanism* that exists within a congregation, as churches are (in practical theory, anyway) "a human community filled with people whose lives must be treated with respect." According to Ammerman et al. (1998), this *humanum* principle has a broader social context in that "Establishing a congregation's unique balance between gathering with one's own and remaining connected to a larger, more diverse community is at the heart of what it means to congregate." However, she warns of potential cross-cultural dilemmas "that can easily lead to unhealthy exclusion and conflict" (Ammerman et al., 1998).

One might think that as brothers and sisters in Christ, shared faith would be enough to overcome any such potential conflicts, but historically, Christians in the United States have developed their churches strictly along racial, ethnic, national, and cultural lines. This pattern appears to be changing, says Garces-Foley (2007), or at least it has been seriously challenged, as the enduring post-1965 influx of new immigrants has given rise to new calls for integrating churches. Adiprasetya (2017) posits a postbourgeois initiative-taking church that can only be realized if it intentionally becomes culturally polycentric. This new church model (via Metz) would also facilitate benevolence for members through a robust "community of memory." One with a value-based, dialogue-driven approach to conflict resolution that is optimistic of the human condition, namely that every person wants to be connected in a safe environment and take action through dialogue to build a loving community so that all life might flourish (Vogel, 2007).

Osmer (2008) emphasizes church leadership development toward this vision, "congregations need leaders for whom the love of God and the desire to learn go hand in hand." Such leaders offer their communities the gift of sage wisdom. Parishioners want overseers whose wise guidance helps them make sense of their life circumstances in the world (such as racial tension, socio-economic injustice, etc.). This leadership is

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characterized by three qualities: thoughtfulness, theoretical interpretation, and wise judgment (Osmer, 2008). Leaders who discern God's Word must begin by opening themselves to divine pathos, identifying with Christ's suffering over the sin, pain, and evil of creation. Osmer (2008) also warns that our natural tendency is to turn away from suffering and to shield ourselves with protective ideologies that rationalize the pain of things such as social injustices. Nevertheless, the clergical words of grace and hope can emerge from a sympathetic identification with God's Word, the incarnate Christ, who entered fully into the creation suffering and redeemed this condition (Osmer, 2008).

Moreover, bridging African-American clergical pedagogy, the liberation ethics of black theology offers an important hermeneutic for prophetic inspiration (Andrews, 2002). Stressing ethnic-specific homiletics, Andrews (2002) held that black preaching and black worship had established traditions centered on nurturing wholeness and empowerment for living under oppressive conditions. The preaching task has focused on interpreting biblical Christianity in the interests of black humanity and faith development in black life. The anticipation of God's activity and human history makes sociopolitical activism extremely important to understanding black preaching. The ability to relate biblical revelation to the experiences of racial and economic oppression weighs heavily on the black community's trust in the preacher's competence (Andrews, 2002).

African Spiritual Songs and Storytelling

Similar to ancient biblical societies (cf. Ps. 96:1; Eph. 5:18-19), African culture employs singing songs as an essential communicative device. Mburu (2019) explains that "Song is the genre that best represents the heartbeat of African peoples. Whether in our traditional or modern context, songs are never far from our lips." African songs are also a means of recreating experiences for the listener. It is traditionally through them that hope and disappointment, sorrow and joy, pain and pleasure are expressed (Mburu, 2019). "It is therefore not surprising," stresses Mburu (2019), "that songs and poems are heard in almost all contexts, be it social, political or religious." This directly relates to Sunrise Church of Rialto, California (USA) and their recent celebration of *Juneteenth* by corporately singing *Lift Every Voice and Sing*. This culturally specific song (aka the *Black National Anthem*) expresses the spiritual values of strength and resolve in travail, and the hope of future liberation from oppression and suffering. Andrews (2002) explains that "The source of these values is God. When individuals come together for worship, they share these values and their mutual worth as children of God."

There is also the telling of stories. In African tradition, stories serve to preserve civilization, explain natural phenomena, transmit historical and social information, and teach moral and ethical lessons (Taylor, 2000). Andrews (2002) ties together a related homiletical point, recognizing black preachers who would interpret Scripture through the dramatization of the biblical story and its application to African-American life. Applied to the exegetical context of liberation, "The appropriation of the Christian God in biblical stories transformed the corporate identity from an imposed condition into a source of strength" (Andrews, 2002). Andrews (2002) also explains how the communal spirit of African-Americans was adversely challenged under slavery, "Human categorization by race was not indigenous to African cultures. Behind the dehumanizing effects, pervasive alienation by race was an ideological creation of the Western slave systems and social discrimination within Western societies (Andrews, 2002). In the adoption of Christianity under these conditions, slaves and free Blacks began to employ a positive corporate identity based upon race" (Andrews, 2002).

African Collective Spirituality

In African culture, morality and spirituality are indivisible and inseparable. Traditional African ethics arises from the understanding of the universe as an interconnected whole, whereby what it means to be ethical cannot be separated from all spheres of existence (Magesa, 2013). As Miller-McLemore (1993, 2012) might frame it, African spirituality resembles the collective "living human web" of persons in the community, as opposed to the "living human document" of the individualistic self, a psychology that is common in the West. Laurenti Magesa (2013) thus asks, "How can people be known by their 'inner' being alone?" Magesa (2013) thus explains that humanity (or Ubuntu) is manifested by an African's attitudes and actions through his/her observance of customs and traditions (Buth and Cohn, 2017). Everything one does contributes to who one is and to one's identity. Their social justification (in this life and the next) depends on how they live their life in relation not only to themself but also to the community (Magesa, 2013). Singh and Bhagwan (2020) explain that various African spiritualities recognize God as "The Great Spirit," believing that this "Unseen Spirit" can pave the way for justice on earth and uphold social order and morality. Humankind has a connection with this Divine Being, who can be approached through singing, prayers, sacrificial offerings, dancing, rituals, and intermediaries.

In many African spiritualities, humanity is situated within a religious universe, so that the objects and the natural phenomena are holistically associated with God. Accordingly, all phenomena not only originate from God but also bear His witness (Gumo et al., 2012). In cross-cultural alignment, David Tracy (1991) holds that a religion without a sense of the collective reality of the whole is no "religion" at all. Stiver (2012) stresses that ethics is not private and that The Golden Rule is inherently social. Furthermore, Padilla (2013) presented the holistic scope of redemption, as the New Testament Greek word *cosmos* frequently denotes humanity "in relation to the history of salvation that culminates in Jesus Christ, by whom it is judged." Moreover, Greenway (Grigg, 2013) exhorts a holistic approach to missions, combining presence, proclamation, church planting, and community development pursued to the extent possible before Christ's return. Andrews (2002) adds that "The biblical understanding of creation and *imago Dei* conveys the inherent and inalienable value of the person to God." If practical theologies are going to be faithful witnesses to God's active involvement in human affairs, they must contribute to the *whole-listic* transformation of the human condition in the community and the reconciliation of all things through Christ the Liberator (Joseph, 2018).

Preference for the Poor and the Spirit of *Caritas*

The rights of the poor are the rights of God, say Boff and Boff (1994), and the struggle and promotion of human dignity (and defense of threatened rights) begin with a preference for the poor (cf. Prov. 31:8-9; Matt. 5:42). Hence, the need for a certain "hierarchization of rights," the first of which are the basic rights to life and the sustaining means of food, work, basic healthcare, housing, and literacy. Then come the other rights, such as freedom of expression, conscience, movement, and religion (Boff & Boff, 1994). According to Gutierrez (1998), to oppress the poor is to offend God, but to know God is to work justice among human beings (Prov. 21:3; 28:5). We meet God in our encounter with "others," what is done for "others" is done for the Lord (Prov. 19:17; Matt. 25:35-40). The very existence of poverty represents a fracturing both of solidarity among peoples and also of communion with God. Poverty is termed as an expression of sin, a negation of charity (*Caritas*). Impoverishment should be thwarted and compassionately alleviated by a Christian community of *Caritas* and justice. That is, "Poverty is an evil," says Gutierrez (1998),

"a scandalous condition, which in our times has taken on enormous proportions. To eliminate it is to bring closer the moment of seeing God face to face, in union with other persons."

True Justice Leading to Peace

As Veling (2005) exhorts:

> If it is chastened and softened by mercy, then it may be possible for justice to best approximate what it seeks. Otherwise, it will always be deformed and wounded — unable to rise to the heights of justice that always wells up from the concern and responsibility for one another. Acts of charity and mercy may seem small and insignificant in the face of the huge demands of social justice and the necessary concerns of politics in the world. However, it is often these small and fragile acts of love that ultimately watch over justice. Small charitable acts are the very sign of God's goodness in the world.

All Christians are salvifically justified through the benevolent sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and the *Cape Town Commitment* (2011) declares that such "Love calls for solidarity;" that is, if one part of the body suffers, all parts suffer with it, a justice-seeking church is one that is wholeheartedly committed to suffering along with members of the global body of Christ through consoling prayer, advocacy, and other means of support.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions: This study finds that the practical liberation perspectives of Andrews robustly converse with other practical theologians (and liberationists) who earnestly plead for the public cause as they rightfully demand a restoration of a flourishing public life for the oppressed, doing so against the North American tendency toward Western-influenced individualism and privatization. Where specific African-American sociology is concerned, what is statistically revealed are the underprivileged, the outcast, the underclass, and the silenced. If knowledge depends upon power, then one conclusion of this research is that power must be given to the silenced African-Americans (and other ethnic minorities) living in the United States (Miller-McLemore, 2012). Andrews also resonates with Guiterrez, Padilla, and the Boffs in that true liberation (according to their estimations) requires prophetic, transformative challenges to systems of power, authority, and domination that continue to violate, terrorize, and systematically destroy individuals and communities (Miller-McLemore, 2012).

In closing, Miller-McLemore (2012) correlates with Andrews, as the living web of humanity cannot simply be read and interpreted like an individualized document. That is, those who are suffering within the web and who have not been heard must be enabled to speak up for themselves. Toward this supportive end, Andrews (2002) avers that black folk religion thus heavily applies African spirituality to the very struggles for existential liberation from human suffering and evil (Mburu, 2019). As he pointedly concludes, such spirituality attempts to reform African-American ecclesiological praxis in order to reorient the Black church toward its calling to flourish as an intentional alternative community. The hope was that this spiritually influenced flourishing would spill over and positively affect the border society as well. So let it be, then, that the result of Andrews' perspectives in correlation with the broader guild would result in all tribes, tongues, and nations (cf. Rev. 7:9) flourishing as best as they possibly can by way of such applied praxis until the coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. *Sola de Gloria*.

Recommendations: This study recommends that Protestant Evangelical churches in America should consider the practical theological work of Dale P. Andrews and his scholarly interlocutors with regard to developing an improved plan of holistic outreach and multicultural ecclesiology as the Western Church heads deeper still into the third decade of the twenty-first century. While there are elements of the afore-researched liberation perspectives that would not be compatible with Conservative doctrinal approaches, there is enough sharable praxis to be gleaned, applicable toward better-doing justice in society, loving mercy in the church, and walking humbly with the God of the Bible (cf. Micha 6:8).

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