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Black and Brown Pauls: A Pauline Case of Racial Profiling; A Hermeneutical Reading of Acts 21:27-40a and 22:23-29 and the Reality of the African American and Hispanic Communities in the United States

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Abstract: The present study analyzes the socio-historical context and setting narrated in the canonical episode of Paul's arrest and his treatment in Jerusalem according to the narrative of Acts 21:27-40a and 22:23-29. The pericopes become the fundamental platform through which it is possible to present both a hermeneutical and theological interpretation of the liabilities and ultimate consequences of racial profiling, especially when it is exercised by the civil authorities, an institutionalized power, or a general culture. The diachronic and synchronic exegetical analysis of the pericopes are combined with the methodological approaches of cognitive semantics and the practical theology that lead to the elucidations of an applied political theology implied in the racial profiling and discriminatory acts committed against the Black and Brown communities. The theological analysis focuses on the diegetic framework of the famous apologetic speech of Paul which has been underestimated in the exegetical and hermeneutical studies to date. Therefore the biblical text becomes the source domain from which is possible to determine the behavioral patterns that become alive in the pragmatic dimension of any racial profiling manifested in the modern American milieu.

Key words: assumption, judgment, condemnation, racial profiling, forum internum, Pauline

Premise

The present study analyzes the socio-historical context and setting narrated in the canonical episode of Paul's arrest and his treatment in Jerusalem (Acts 21:27-40a and 22:23-29), as the fundamental platform by which to present a hermeneutical and theological interpretation of the liabilities and ultimate consequences of racial profiling, especially when it is exercised by the civil authorities. These biblical episodes embody a

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paradigm of the racial profiling that has become the reality of the marginalized communities in the United States, leading to the incarceration of a large number of African Americans and Hispanics. Accordingly, the essay will present a theological biblical analysis having a distinct focus which concentrates on the ethnic perspectives of the Black and Brown communities as living *loci theologici* through which the biblical text comes to be alive.

The development of the aforementioned theme is articulated in six general sections according to the methodological path of narrative criticism, cognitive semantics, and practical theology: a) The Sitz im Leben and theological themes implied in the canonical text of Acts 21:27-40a and 22:23-29; b) The biblical paradigm of racial profiling manifested in the official legal/judicial exercise of power at the street level; c) The biblical paradigm of racial profiling seen in matters of immigration and deportation of Hispanics; d) Racial profiling and the dignity of a person; e) Evil produces evil: the consequences of racial profiling; f) Racial profiling and the Lukan notion of Christianity: the Lukan theology through the ministry of Paul in Acts.

1. The Sitz im Leben and theological themes implied in the canonical text of Acts 21:27-40a and 22:23-29

The episode's temporal setting indicates an event that took place around the year 58 AD, according to the traditional Pauline chronology. After Paul's so called third missionary journey (54-58 AD), he returned to Jerusalem in order to have a meeting with James and the elders in Jerusalem (Acts 21:17-26). Afterwards he went through some ritual of purification that implied a chronological setting of seven days (Acts 21:26-27).¹ There has been speculation about the reason for such ritual purification. Most probable, after being in a journey for years, Paul, being a pious Jew, felt the need to go through an expected process of purification that most of the Jews practiced before entering the Temple of Yhwh. On the other hand, it is significant to highlight the mitzvah prescribed in Numbers 19:12 that describes the period of purification with ashes on the third and the seventh day. According to Bruce and

¹ Τότε ὁ Παῦλος παραλαβὼν τοὺς ἄνδρας τῆ ἑχομένη ἡμέρα σὺν αὐτοῖς ἀγνισθεῖς, εἰσῆει εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν διαγγέλλων τὴν ἐκπλήρωσιν τῶν ἡμερῶν τοῦ ἀγνισμοῦ ἕως οὗ προσηνέχθη ὑπὲρ ἑνὸς ἐκάστου αὐτῶν ἢ προσφορά. Ὡς δὲ ἔμελλον αἱ ἑπτὰ ἡμέραι συντελεῖσθαι, οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀσίας Ἰουδαῖοι θεασάμενοι αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ συνέχον πάντα τὸν ὄχλον καὶ ἐπέβαλον ἐπ' αὐτὸν τὰς χεῖρας (Act 21:26-27 NA 28th edition). I indicate the references of time and place in the Greek text using bold letters.

Block, this is the ritual command implied in Acts 21:26-27.² However, such mitzvah according to its literary context describes the situations of ritual impurity due by being in contact with corpses (Num 19:11-13). Subsequently, one may infer from the Jewish context of Numbers that Paul, through his missionary journey had been in contact with several situations of impurity, including corpses, that compelled Paul, as a devout man brought up in the Jewish tradition to go through a process of ritual cleansing before entering into the Temple to offer his personal prayers to Yhwh.

It is within the Temple, the spatial and religious setting, around which the events of the riot and the arrest of Paul by the Roman authorities are taking place. The entire episode starts in Acts 21:27 and finishes in Acts 22:29, since Acts 22:30 shows a drastic change of chronological (Τῆ δὲ ἐπαύριον) and spatial (τὸ συνέδριον, καὶ καταγαγὼν τὸν Παῦλον ἔστησεν εἰς αὐτοῦς) settings in reference to the previous episode.³

Following the criteria of the narrative criticism, suitable to the nature of the literary material presented in Acts 21:27-22:29, one may distinguish the following sub-sections of the episode that shows the literary structure⁴:

A. First Part: narrative section: violence and arrest of Paul

- a) Riot in the Temple: Acts 21:27-30
- b) Arrest of Paul: Acts 21:31-40

B. Second Part: Speech of Paul: Acts 22:1-21

A'. Third Part: narrative section: violence and arrest of Paul

- a) Violence of the Jewish community: Acts 22:22-23
- b) Paul under the Roman authority: Acts 22:24-29

According to the stylistic and dramatic criteria manifested in the narrative analysis of the pericope, it is possible to accept this concentric

² Darrell Block, *Acts. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the NT* (Grand Rapids: MI: Baker Academic Publishing Group, 2007), 651; Frederick F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts* (Grand Rapids: MI, Eerdmans, 1988), 408-409.

³ Bruce also proposes the end of the pericope in Acts 22:29, indicating that Acts 22:30 implies a different section in the narrative that opens to the self-defense of Paul developed in Acts 23. However, Bruce does not mention the criteria of the change of place and time manifested in the narrative of the events. Cf. Bruce, *Acts*, 422-423.

⁴ John H. Hayes and Carl R. Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis* (Louisville, KY - London, UK: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 95-96.

structure in which the central part of it corresponds to the main stylistic change that goes from the voice of the narrator to the voice of the protagonist of the story.⁵ Paul's defense speech portrays the characteristic of an intradiegetic story of his conversion combined with his self understanding of the Jewish history of salvation that reaches its summit in the event of Christ.⁶ The main theological themes and Greco-Roman style of the kerygmatic proclamation of Paul in this particular episode is undoubtedly a rich source of academic studies and rhetorical analysis. However, the focus of the present paper is centered on the diegetic framework (A and A') in which the narrator describes the settings and the main events that portray the cause and circumstances of the hostile attitude towards the protagonist and the role of the Roman authority of the time.⁷

From the narrative sections A and A', the reader can observe fundamental elements that exemplify a case of profiling, judgment, and subjective condemnation of a person "before" the accused individual or victim could have an opportunity to face a fair trial. The sequence aforementioned is substantiated by the brief analysis of the social settings, vocabulary, and sequence of the actions manifested in the diegetic context manifested in A and A'.

1.1. Social Settings manifested in the first and third part of the pericope

The narrative analysis of the diegetic framework of A and A' indicates a setting that functions as the background stage upon which the main actions take place.⁸ Consistent with this synchronic approach, the reader identifies the "temporal and spatial setting" manifested in the narrative as the most common settings of any described event, since they serve as literary markers and symbolic notions, revealing elements of the actions performed by the characters, their personalities, the

⁵Jean Louis Ska, *Our fathers have Told Us. Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives* (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2000), 43-44; Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 57-58.

⁶Ska, *Our fathers have Told Us*, 47-49; Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972,1980), 229.

⁷Daniel Marguerat and Yvan Bourquin, *Per Leggere I Racconti Biblici* (Roma: Borla, 2001), 88-89.

⁸James L. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament* (Grand rapids, MI: Baker Academic Press, 2005), 87; Marguerat and Bourquin, *Racconti Biblici*, 86-87.

conflict's contextual origin, and tensions in the drama, as well as structural elements that organize the sequence of the events.⁹

However, it is essential to discover in the pericope other settings that may not be so evident, but nevertheless significant in the analysis of the *Sitz im Leben* of the events. I am referring specifically to "three social settings" manifested in the diegetic framework, presented to the readers as the first narrative level.¹⁰ The social settings reveal the political, public, cultural, and related religious environment revealed behind particular actions or comments of the characters in the narrative. These social settings become the door of the world behind the text and invite the reader to enter and understand the complexity and function of the political institutions, social status, economic systems, social customs, and general cultural elements. The social setting offers valuable hermeneutical tools for the pragmatic application of specific biblical notions to modern problematic situations. The life setting of a biblical pericope can become the hermeneutical apparatus to elucidate and judge actual situations of life that may reflect behavioral paradigms that cause the disruption of harmony in the modern American society.¹¹

Judaism is the first social setting identified in the pericope. The notion of Judaism is not only a simplistic understanding of a religious system, but is also a category that implies ethnicity, culture, and *weltanschauung* in which politics, business, finances, family, and every single dimension of life was understood from the essential parameters established in the Tanak. Even though Judaism is inserted into a predominately Greco-Roman culture during this time, the Jewish identity keeps unto itself, i.e., as a distinctive entity of race, culture, and religion that cannot be separated.¹² Judaism develops into a hostile social setting through which Christianity is deemed to be a heretical movement, attempting to destroy the truth of the revelation of Yhwh. These intrinsic dimensions of Judaism explain why some Jews from Asia (οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς

⁹Mark A. Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990), 70; David Rhoads and Donald Mitchie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of the Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 63.

¹⁰The Lukan author presents the events from a zero point of view allowing the readers to infer the motives and the dispositions of the *forum internum* of the characters. See Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 127. Marguerat and Bourquin, *Racconti Biblici*, 41-43. 75-75.

¹¹Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 87-88; Powell, *Narrative Criticism*, 74-75.

¹²Mauro Pesce, *Da Gesù al cristianesimo* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2011), 145-146; Denise K. Buell and Caroline J. Hodge, "The Politics of Interpretation: The Rhetoric of Race and Ethnicity in Paul," *JBL* no. 123/2 (2004): 240.

Ἀσίας Ἰουδαῖοι Acts 21:27) created the riot against Paul.¹³ The voice of the narrator explicitly indicates the motivations of the hostile attitude: the problem of religion, since they say Paul proclaims a heretical message regarding the Israelite faith (Acts 21:28), and a problem of ethnicity, since the accusers say Paul is bringing some *goyim*¹⁴ into the sacred Temple (Acts 21:28-29). The social setting of the Jews portrays a double discrimination towards Paul based on ethnicity and religion. They are two elements that speak loudly to the life experiences of the minorities in United States today.

However, it is essential to indicate that the discrimination portrayed in the episode is not based on a social construction of race since the ethnic discrimination is based on a biological construct. A non-Jew or a *goy* is a person who does not have Jewish parentage, especially through the mother. The issue was based on the biological, religious, and cultural implications intrinsically interconnected in Judaism. The Jewish discrimination against Paul is because the Jewish crowd perceives a Jew (Paul) who is interacting, living, and teaching a heretical form of Judaism to those who are *goyim*. The biblical episode does not use our modern social constructions of race. Paul or his non-Jewish friends (Christians) could be white, black, or brown but this was not the issue during this historical context of the first century. In ancient Judaism the color of the skin did not determine the status or the privileges of a person. For example, in the ancient Jewish culture, a Jew (male or female) could sell himself or herself as slave for a maximum of six years to another Jew who has the obligation of setting the person free on the seventh year as it is prescribed in Deut 15:12; therefore slavery or discrimination was not based on a social construction of race as it has been during the American history. In the ancient Roman times, racial discrimination was not a social construction either since a white person from a good social status could eventually become a slave in view of the fact that slavery was based on political and military circumstances.

¹³ At this point of the Lukan narrative of Acts, the hostility of the Jews comes to a climax. The Jewish agitation against Paul is a constant in the life of the hero as it can be perceived in Acts 13:50; 14:2.5.19; 17:5-9; 18:12-17. See Joseph Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles. A New translation with Introduction and Commentary*. The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 696.

¹⁴ The nouns *goy* (singular) and *goyim* (or *goyyim* which is the plural of *goy*) are the biblical terminology used by the authors of the Tanak (or Old Testament) to designate persons and nations that are different from Israel, or to indicate those who are non-Jews or strangers (cf. Deut 15:6; 28:12.36; 29:24; Josh 23:4). Also the term may denote a heathen or a gentile who does not believe in the God of Israel and biologically does not belong to the Jewish race. See Emil G. Hirsch and Judah David Eisenstein, "Gentile," in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 5, 615. Digital Format consulted on 8/19/2017: <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/6585-gentile>

Historically many Roman slaves were acquired through warfare and somebody who used to have a privileged position could become a prisoner of war and subsequently a slave or a servant. In this way rich Roman citizens could have as domestic slaves highly educated Greeks or teachers from the conquered regions. The hate and discrimination in this pericope is based on a religious identity of the people of Israel that ethnically have distinguished themselves from other nations (goyim) as it has been divinely established in the sacred Scripture of Israel (see Deut 7:1-6). Therefore the discrimination shown in the episode offers a general behavioral pattern that helps to understand from a biblical standpoint, the complex social construction of race through the modern American way of living that is ultimately based on fear and hate for what is different or diverse.

The Roman authority of the soldiers reveals the second social setting. The Roman figures embody the world of the gentiles which is also a self-standing complex category that simultaneously implies ethnicity, religion, and a very distinct world view of its own. The reader perceives that Greco-Roman soldiers are gentiles who do not belong to the Jewish ethnicity, who speak a different language and have a very different belief system, commonly called paganism. This is not compatible to the Jewish nor to the Christian point of view. It is important to clarify that the Greco-Roman culture tolerated different cultural and religious practices, sometimes even assimilating them. However, it maintained its own essential characteristics that makes possible to understand that they belong to a different and self-standing culture, ethnicity, and religion.¹⁵

The term "culture" has multiple connotations but in this particular study "culture" is used with the meaning of a world view (*weltanschauung*) that embraces a series of particular values typical of an ethnicity, a group of nations, or a historical period that determined its intellectual, artistic, architectural, and literary production. In other words, "culture" emphasizes the objective manifestation of material and spiritual expressions that characterized an ethnical group or a period of time. According to this meaning, the Roman culture manifests the typical values of a polytheistic system that embraces the values of beauty and virtue that are generally in opposition or disagreement with the world view (*weltanschauung*) of Judaism, even though Jewish

¹⁵Mauro Pesce, *Da Gesù al cristianesimo*, 146-147; Buell and Hodge, "The Politics of Interpretation," 240.

culture coexist within the Roman culture.¹⁶ During Paul's time, the Greco-Roman culture is not yet explicitly against Christianity as a religion, as it would become, starting from the year 64 AD. with the Emperor Nero. However, the attitude of the Roman soldiers was equally hostile towards the person of Paul in Acts 21:30-36 and 22:24-25.

They certainly intervene in the middle of the riot against Paul, but without the benefit of doubt they arrested a person who has been abused by the crowd. Even after Paul's own speech, the Roman authority proceeded to physical punishment, assuming the guilt of someone, who, after defending himself was never given the right to face trial. This common Roman practice was disrupted however, by the fear of their consequential punishment once Paul's Roman citizenship was revealed. The notion of social status and citizenship suddenly gave weight to the integrity and basic human and civil rights of the victim that otherwise would have been annihilated by the assumptions and generalizations of those who had a position of authority and power.

In this ancient Roman culture, the racial dynamics were not present in the same way as it appeared in the American history. For example, the Roman culture put in a place of privilege citizenship over race, because a Roman citizen could be from any ethnicity (or race) embraced by the vast Roman Empire, e.g., the famous emperors Trajan (53–117 AD) and Septimius Severus (145–211 AD) illustrate the fact that a person can come from a diverse racial heritage and assume the highest position of power in the Empire. Trajan, for example, was born in the province of Hispania Boetica what it would be today Seville, Spain, and not in Rome. He became an Emperor thanks to the success of his military career.¹⁷ The emperor Septimius Severus was an African who was born in Leptis Magna, in the Roman province of Africa that it would be today Libya.¹⁸ Therefore race is a fluid notion because what guaranteed the civil rights and privileges is the Roman status of citizenship and not the skin color. Paul's citizenship is the only assurance that he had in order to protect his physical integrity and judicial rights, and such status surpassed his Jewish racial identity and religion because the Roman authority considered this status as the absolute criterion that protected the dignity and rights of a person who carried this privileged

¹⁶Romano Penna, "Cultura/Aculturación," in *Nuevo Diccionario de Teología Bíblica* (Madrid: Ediciones Paulinas, 1990), 378-379.

¹⁷Mason Hammond, "Trajan," in *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Digital Format consulted on 8/19/2017: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Trajan>

¹⁸Anthony Birley, *Septimius Severus: The African Emperor* (London: Routledge, 1999), 1.212-213

status. Therefore it was not a privileged determined by the skin color. The modern American society portrays a diametrical reverse system of values because race has consciously or unconsciously placed as the absolute criterion over citizenship and human dignity as it has been evident through the discriminatory judicial and human treatment manifested against the African Americans.

It is in the character of Paul himself where the reader uncovers a third social setting which is Christianity. However, the proto-Christian movement cannot be analyzed with the same criteria as Judaism and the Gentile World. Christianity is in its beginnings and in this process of self-development, Christianity implies basically a religious notion that centuries later would convey its own distinctive and proper identity from a cultural and social dimension. Paul is to become the perfect example of integration between cultures and ethnicity. Being a Jew, he accepted Christianity as his own belief, without denying his belonging to the Greco-Roman social system and culture.¹⁹ This ethnoracial integration is manifested in the episodes that describe the shift of languages when Paul needs to address each diverse group.

The hero of the Lukan narrative spoke proper Greek to the Roman soldier, demonstrating a fluidity and knowledge of the language (Ἑλληνιστὶ γινώσκεις; Act 21:37) as well as Aramaic (Ἑβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ Acts 21:40), versatility that helped him to present the *introitus* of his apologia with an effective *captatio benevolentiae* having a hostile audience.²⁰ This social setting of Christianity presented in the Lukan theology reveals the Lukan intention of presenting Christianity as a religion and a culture that creates bridges and integration into a diverse and often hostile world of cultures, races, and religions. The one who does not discriminate is the victim of the episode, becoming the paradigm of integration and communication of the multiform plurality of Christianity that establishes the possibility of successfully living in an inter-cultural, inter-racial, and inter-religious dimension without eliminating the identity and the dignity of human person.²¹

Paul prioritizes being a Christian as the absolute indicator that goes beyond ethnoracial indicators without denying or eradicating his own ethnical identity. The faith in Christ does not eliminate the

¹⁹Buell and Hodge, "The Politics of Interpretation," 242.

²⁰Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 704.

²¹Diana Hayes, "To Be the Bridge: Voices from the Margins," in *A Dream Unfinished: Theological Reflections on America from the Margins*. Edited by Eleazar Fernández and Fernando F. Segovia. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2001), 57. 60-64.

heterogeneous plurality of the members of the ecclesial community. The pattern of fluidity within a multicultural society is possible when a person without losing his/her personality and ethnoracial characteristics can fluctuate between multicultural contexts and ethnicities without feeling threatened or becoming a threat for others. This ideal hybrid existence of Paul is pragmatically possible, as one can see in the millennial generations or in Dr. Judith Nagata's anthropological studies of multicultural fluidity in the Malay culture.²²

1.2. Vocabulary and sequence of the actions manifested in the diegetic frame of A and A'

The analysis of the vocabulary and the sequence of actions manifested in the characters of the narrative reveal a behavioral pattern that can be summarized in three main notions: assumption, judgment, and condemnation. These three concepts do not necessarily follow the logic of sequential steps since there are subjective dispositions that overlap in the narrative, occurring almost simultaneously within the psychological world of the characters who are the instruments at the service of the plot.²³

According to the social settings previously described, I present the behavioral paradigm of these patterns inferred from the attitude of the Jews and the Roman soldiers manifested in the narrative

1.2.1. Assumption, Judgment, and Condemnation by the Jews

The Jews from Asia, on the seventh day of Paul's ritual purification, saw him in the Temple and made claims against him. The charges against Paul, according to his accusers are basically two:

- a) Paul's teachings are heretical and therefore against the Torah, the Temple, and the people of Israel.
- b) Paul has brought Greek gentiles into the Temple area, defiling the sacred place. The term used to indicate the defiling of the Temple is the verb *κοινῶ*²⁴ in indicative perfect tense (*κεκοίνωκεν*), emphasizing that

²²Judith Nagata, "What Is a Malay? Situational Selection of Ethnic Identity in a Plural Society," *American Ethnologist* no. 1 (1974): 331-350. Dr. Sze-kar Wan affirms that Paul is a good example of a hybrid existence in which there combined multicultural aspects. See Sze-kar Wan, "Does Diaspora Identity Imply Some Sort of Universality? An Asian-American Reading of Galatians," in *Interpreting Beyond Borders*. Edited by Fernando F. Segovia (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 126-127. See also Buell and Hodge, "The Politics of Interpretation," 248-249.

²³Ska, *Our fathers have Told Us*, 87; Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation*, 23-24.

²⁴The most common translations of this verb in English would be to violate ritual holiness, to make something unclean, to defile, to profane, to desecrate, to pollute, to

the action performed in the past continues to carry on its consequences into the present day of the speakers.²⁵

The charges as presented indicate the accused person is already guilty of these crimes, which are very serious in Judaism because the consequences for these kinds of crimes require the maximum punishment as indicated in the Jewish tradition. The judgment and condemnation in this case happen almost simultaneously. It is the attitude and approach that deny the accused person all the basic civil and human rights of partaking in a fair trial, that ironically, are also required and established in the Torah (see Deut 19:16-21).²⁶

The motivation for the accusation is not explicitly indicated in the text, but following the general opinion induced from the literary context, most probable these Jews from Asia were coming from Ephesus, a place in which Paul had had great success in his kerygmatic presentations of Christianity. Success that provoked hate among the Ephesian Jews (see Acts 20:18-20); so odium and contention are the motives behind these Jews who had already plotted against Paul (ἐν ταῖς ἐπιβουλαῖς τῶν ἰουδαίων Acts 20:19). The term ἐπιβουλή used in Acts 20:19 encapsulates the modus operandi of the Jews who are acting as both the accuser and judge, namely, plotting schemes that include their plot to kill an innocent person while denying his basic rights of fair trial, freedom of speech, physical integrity, and ultimately his life.²⁷ Further affirmation of their modus operandi is also substantiated by the explanation made by the narrator in Acts 21:29 where Trophimus, the Ephesian, had been seen previously with Paul in the city, but not in the Temple. The narrator also specifies that without having seen the actual facts, these Jews were assuming or supposing (ἐνόμιζον Acts 21:29) that Paul brought the gentile into the Temple area. It is a contradictory fact that a Jew who is observing a severe process of ritual purification according to the Torah, would bring a Greek gentile to Temple. It simply does not make sense. Additionally to this line of thought, there were large inscriptions in the outer court that surrounded the women's court

make something unacceptable. Cf. Friederich Hauck, "κοινῶν," *TDNT* III, 809; BAGD, "κοινῶν," 438.

²⁵Blass-Debrunner, § 342.4.

²⁶ The Jewish law prescribes that the false witness and the accused person must appear in front of judges and priests and a thorough process of investigating should take place in order to verify the truth of the accusations. See Deut 19:16-21 in Makkot 5b; Maimonides, *Mishne Torah, Hilkhoh Sanhedrin* 12, 4, Sanhedrin 46b; Julius Stone, *Human Law and Human Justice* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1965), 22-23, especially note 61.

²⁷Bruce, *Acts*, 389; Bock, *Acts*, 626-627; BAGD, "ἐπιβουλή," 290.

in Greek and Latin indicating the penalty of death (*Thanatos*) for the gentiles who would enter beyond that point.²⁸ Consequently, every gentile would be clearly aware of such risk and the social status implied in the Roman citizenship would not excuse the trespass to this general rule, since the Roman authority was respectful of the scrupulosity of the Jewish law, allowing the *Thanatos* sentence even when the offenders were Roman citizens.²⁹

The author of Acts uses the verb νομίζω³⁰ in imperfect tense (ἐνόμιζον in Acts 21:29)) indicating a permanent attitude that remains as a constant mindset in time, namely, they were not willing to change their mind in respect to this "assumption" that does not correspond to the reality or factual deeds. In other words, the accusation and simultaneous condemnation of the victim is based not on actual facts but on the "supposition" (νομίζω) that the person committed a grave crime without giving consideration to the possibility of the innocence of the accused.

After determining the "assumption or presupposition" (νομίζω) based on hate and conspiracy, one might see that the hypothetical thinking becomes almost immediately the definite "judgment" and "condemnation" of the victim. The narrator in Acts 21:27 indicates that after observing Paul in the Temple, (not mentioning anybody else, i. e., Paul was alone) the Jews began to incite the people by using tactics to create confusion (συνέχεον). Purposely, I use the expression "creating confusion" because it is the semantic level that is properly implied in the verb συγχέω which also means to stir up, to confuse, to mix, or to cause dismay.³¹ The proceedings of the accusers who try to confuse and stir up the Jewish population become the most negative actions that one can pretend to see in a trial. Usually the accusations, if they are true, must be clear according to the truth and context of the deeds committed. The accusation and judgment here are permeated by a constant confusion

²⁸Flavius Josephus, *Antiquitates* 15.11.5 §417; Id., *Jewish Wars* 5.5.2 §193-194; J. H. Iliffe, "The Thanatos Inscription from Herod's Temple," *QDAP* no.6 (1936): 1-3; Bruce, *Acts*, 409; Bock, *Acts*, 651.

²⁹Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Wars* 6.1.26; Bruce, *Acts*, 409.

³⁰ The verb νομίζω usually is translated in active voice as to suppose, to think, to presume or to assume. Cf. James Moulton and George Milligan, "νομίζω," in *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 428.

³¹ The verb συγχέω implies the following semantic connotations: to pour together, to confuse, to create consternation, to confound, to trouble, to stir up. Cf. Moulton and Milligan, "σύγχυσις, συγχέω," 595; BAGD, "συγχέω," 775.

that promotes violence towards the victim as it is demonstrated by the precise use of the verbal tense in active imperfect (συνέχεον).³²

The steady confusion, fueled by the hate of the accusers, produces the physical violence against the victim. The condemnation is manifested physically as an immediate reaction. This means that the physical action is a direct result of a mental condemnation that already took place conjointly with the accusation. The expression of ἐπέβαλον ἐπὶ αὐτὸν τὰς χεῖρας (Act 21:27) can be literally translated as “they threw (their) hands upon him,” an expression that indicates the immediate reaction that is accompanied by force, which makes sense if the people are emotionally aroused or shaken (ἐκινήθη Acts 21:30)³³ by the assumptions being made. The same emotional participation is demonstrated at the end of Paul’s defense speech when the Jewish audience reacted in rage after the kerygmatic proclamation of Paul and the inclusion of the gentiles (*goyim*) in the divine plan of salvation of Yhwh. The rage seen here is based on the charges of religion and race. The reactive cry of the furious crowd states: “take this from the earth because he is not fit to live (Αἶρε ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς τὸν τοιοῦτον· οὐ γὰρ καθῆκεν αὐτὸν ζῆν. Acts 22:22).

A strong statement such as this does not give space for a change of mind. Here I would like to underline the condemnation that implies the “elimination of life.” In other words, everyone who proclaims a different message or thinks in a different way, does not have a chance to be accepted by this community and as a consequence the person or victim, in this case Paul, needs to be eliminated. It is as if the victim is some type of disease that needs to be eradicated just because of his inclusion of others who are not from the same race as the accusers, but are equally important in the plan of salvation of Yhwh. The use of the verb καθῆκω in imperfect tense (καθῆκεν in Acts 22:22) indicates that while the victim is still alive that person continues to be unworthy of living or existing in the eyes of the accusers, i.e., Paul ought not to live.³⁴ Such a scandalous attitude demonstrates the pattern of hate and discrimination that is associated with a culture of death.

³² Blass-Debrunner, nn. 325.327.

³³ The verb ἐκινήθη is in indicative aorist passive, presenting the 3rd person singular of the verb κινέω. The passive can be translated as to be moved, to excite, to create a riot or disturbance, to throw into commotion. Cf. BAGD, “κινέω,” 432.

³⁴ The verb καθῆκεν is the indicative imperfect active in the 3rd person singular of the verb καθῆκω. Among the diverse meanings of this verb, the semantic connotation implied in Acts 22:22 is “to become, to be fit, to be proper or fitting.” Cf. BAGD, “καθῆκω,” 389; Bock, *Acts*, 663. For the verbal modality see Blass-Debrunner, nn. 325.327.

The behavior of the Jewish crowd is described by the Lukan author through Greek verbs in imperfect tense. This verbal modality reveals a constant and permanent hostile attitude of the anonymous crowd towards the victim and analogically these attitudes reflect the constant attitude of racism and racial profiling that have been permeating the American culture since the time of the framers. The discriminatory mindset of racism and profiling has become a part of the social DNA of many in modern America, and the "American anonymous crowd" preserves and reflects similar assumptions, judgments, and condemnations towards the "other" who is ethnically different. In direct opposition to this behavioral pattern, the Lukan message of Christianity embodied in Paul denotes that God's plan of salvation includes the unique multifaceted and dissimilar dimensions of each person, applying a divine design that does not require membership into a specific ethnicity.

1.2.2. Assumption, Judgment, and Condemnation by the Roman authority

Bruce qualifies the intervention of the Roman authority as a rescuing act in favor of Paul.³⁵ I respectfully disagree with his opinion on this qualification. It is obvious that the soldiers who stayed at the Antonia fortress timely intervened in the midst of the violent riot but their intention was not to save Paul, the victim. Their primary goal was to put an end to the violence that attempted to destroy their control of the situation. The narrator explicitly indicates that the violent Jews stopped beating Paul in the moment they saw the Roman soldiers (Acts 21:32). The plural indication of centurions (ἑκατοντάρχας Acts 21:32) reveals the presence of at least two centurions with an approximate presence of two hundred soldiers under their command.³⁶ The fast intervention of the soldiers is due to the closeness of the location which is connected to the Temple's outer court through two sets of stairs.³⁷ The determined and fast intervention of a large contingent of soldiers is a good deterrent for the Jews, reminding them that the ultimate human power is still under the Roman authority. Therefore the stopping of the physical aggression towards Paul was motivated by their fear of the ruling power of the time.

³⁵ Bruce, *Acts*, 410-411.

³⁶ Bock, *Acts*, 652.

³⁷ Important detail concerning the location and the characteristics of the Antonia Fortress are given by Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Wars* 5.238-245.

The crucial moment for the aforementioned behavioral pattern is Acts 21:33, when the narrator informs the reader that the Roman tribune (ὁ χιλιάρχος) gave the order to hold Paul (ἐπελάβετο) and to detain him with two chains (δεθῆναι ἀλύσει δυσι). If it is a crowd beating a person, from all the violence executed, the one who is taken into custody and put in chains is precisely the victim. Why? The answer to that may fall into an everlasting cycle of hypothetical elucidations. But objectively, an attentive reader may ask, why didn't the soldiers arrest the other violent people who were stirring up the problems. The actions of the Roman representatives disclose that they assumed the culpability of the victim. Their "assumption" presupposes a judgment and condemnation even before any investigation was done.

It is significant the emphatic expressions that characterize Paul's incarceration in Acts 21:33. The author uses two verbs to indicate the "excessive use of power" to a person who is beaten by a crowd. The first action is performed by the tribune (ὁ χιλιάρχος) who took hold of Paul with hostile intention or manners, semantic levels implied in the verb ἐπελάβετο.³⁸ To this action was added the order to bind the prisoner with two chains (δεθῆναι ἀλύσει δυσι). The most striking note of this behavior is that it is applied to the only person in the episode that was not aggressive. The abusive and arbitrary use of power was common among the Roman soldiers, who did not care much about due process in the cases that involved non-Roman citizens.

It is significant to highlight the excessive use of power in both cases: the Jews and the Romans, making the latter distinctive in the sense that the Roman authority represents the maximum law in the territory, guaranteeing the assurance of peace and harmony.

The assumption of a crime that implied a judgment and condemnation became explicit when Paul spoke in Greek to the Roman soldier and he answered to Paul: "Are you not the Egyptian (ὁ Αἰγύπτιος) who started the recent revolt and led those four thousand cut-throats out into the desert?" (Acts 21:38 NJB). This jumping to conclusions is the essential attitude of profiling that implies judgment and condemnation of an innocent person. The Greek formulation of the question is crucial for this interpretation. The Roman soldier asks: οὐκ ἄρα σὺ εἶ ὁ Αἰγύπτιος ... (Acts 21:38), starting his question with the

³⁸ The verb ἐπελάβετο is the indicative aorist of the middle voice in 3rd person singular of the verb ἐπιλαμβάνω or ἐπιλαμβάνομαι that can be translated as to take, to lay hold of, to take possession of, to overtake, to attain to, or to seize upon anything with hands. Cf. BAGD, "ἐπιλαμβάνομαι," 295.

adverb οὐκ that expects a positive answer, especially if οὐκ is combined with the inferential particle ἄρα.³⁹ The arresting was being made on the “assumption” that Paul was the Egyptian rebel, who was an enemy of the Roman authority and who abandoned four thousand men in the desert while he ran away to save his own skin.⁴⁰ The violence of the crowd and probably the physical aspect of Paul, even though these indicators are not mentioned in the text, were part of the criteria used by the Roman authority to arrest a person.

After granting the right of speech, Paul addressed the Jewish crowd in Aramaic, but his *apologia* ended in a violent reaction of the crowd, which consequently reinforced the behavioral pattern of the Roman authority. The commander and the Roman soldiers could not understand Paul’s speech because of the language barrier, but because of the reaction of the crowd, they continued to exercise their power by sending Paul to the barracks with a brutal process of interrogation that implied physical flogging (Acts 22:24). The same pattern of abusive power is manifested in an increasing degree.

The commander ordered μάστιξιν ἀνετάζεσθαι αὐτὸν (Act 22:24) which is a thorough examination or interrogatory by using μάστιξ, namely, a whip, lash, or scourge which implies physical aggression and torture. The μάστιξιν or *flagrum* consisted of a wooden handle with leather strips to which are tied pieces of metal and bones.⁴¹ This practice of beating was commonly applied to noncitizens or slaves and such brutality was quite normal among the Roman soldiers. They would not presume that a person portraying Paul’s characteristics, namely, Aramaic speaker with a physical appearance easily confused with an Egyptian or a non-Roman could be in fact a Roman citizen from birth. Perhaps this could be avoided if the Roman tribune could understand Paul’s defense speech, but the language and cultural barriers help the reader to better understand the unnecessary conflicts born out of division, cultural ignorance and the non-acceptance of other cultures.

The moment of the anagnorisis⁴² comes in Acts 22:25 when Paul reveals to the Tribune his Roman citizenship which legally exempted him from the brutality of the flagellation according to the Valerian and

³⁹Blass-Debrunner § 440.2; Bock, *Acts*, 657.

⁴⁰ Josephus describes the particulars of the rebellion led by the Egyptian mentioned in Acts 21:38. Cf. Flavius Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.13.5 § 261-263; Id. *Antiquitates* 20.8.6 §169-172. See also Bock, *Acts*, 657; Bruce, *Acts*, 412; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 700.

⁴¹BAGD, “μάστιξ,” 495.

⁴² Ska, *Our Fathers Have Told Us*, 27-28.

Porcian laws.⁴³ The Roman citizenship is the only argument in the narrative that guarantees a basic right to a fair trial and to the physical integrity of his person. The legal status of Paul becomes the only protection against the abuse of authority since the Roman representatives are equally subjected under the *lex romana*. The important and significant “respect of the Roman law” on these matters is well attested by Cicero. The Roman orator describes as a crime the fact that a Roman citizen could be tied up with rods or put in chains, qualifying this act as an abomination. He labels as wickedness any sort of flogging applied to a Roman citizen, and he further calls parricide that act of killing a Roman citizen.⁴⁴ The following verses and episodes will be determined by the rights implied in Paul’s Roman citizenship, especially his future trip to Rome, since any Roman citizen has the right to appeal to Caesar (*provocatio* in Acts 25:11).⁴⁵

1.2.3. Hermeneutical behavioral pattern

As a précis it is important to present the behavioral pattern expressed in nine semantic communicative lines that surfaces after the brief semantic and narrative analysis of the pericope according to the behavioral patterns expressed in the Jewish and Roman social settings.

- a) Cause: it is rooted in the odium, hate, or anger of the accusers motivated by the diversity of race and religion, e.g., Paul’s teachings to the gentiles (Acts 20:18-20; 21:27-29).
- b) Ethnicity and race: the rejection of another who belongs to a different ethnoracial background of the accusers (Acts 21:28; 22:21-22).
- c) Assumption (*voμίζω*): it is presupposition or conjecture that a person is guilty of a crime without the facts or validation of the true events (Acts 21:27-29.33-38; 22:22-25).
- d) Judgment and Condemnation: it is the jumping to conclusions when a person in power or authority mentally performs a judgment that simultaneously implies the condemnation of a person as a criminal

⁴³ Bruce, *Acts*, 421; Andrew Lintott, *The Constitution of the Roman Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 37-38; John Lentz, *Luke’s Portrait of Paul* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 120.

⁴⁴ “Facinus est vincere civem Romanum, scelus verberare, prope parricidium necar.” Cicero, In Verrem II.5.170. In the *Latin Library*: <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/cicero/verres.2.5.shtml>.

⁴⁵ Bruce, *Acts*, 452-453; James S. Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era: Exploring the Background of Early Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic Press, 1999), 169-170.

without corroborating the factual truth, namely, without an investigation or a fair trial (Acts 21:27-29.33-38; 22:22-25).

e) Violence: it is the physical consequence of the inner judgment and condemnation that is rooted in hate or anger. The physical aggression becomes the privileged instrument to eliminate the diversity since it becomes the threat of the status quo of the accusers or the one in power. The ultimate purpose of the violence in the Jewish setting is "death," while the purpose of the violence in the Roman setting is physical flagellation or torture (Acts 21:28-32; 22:22-25).

f) Incarceration: it is the most obvious treatment exercised by those in power or in the position of authority. Incarceration becomes the basic removal of liberty of a person who is suspected or accused of a crime. In the Roman setting, incarceration is the part of the common exercise of power and is a result of a profiling mindset combined with the assumptions of a crime without a reasonable investigation of the facts (see Acts 21:33-39; 22:22-29).

g) Profiling: it is the usage of some characteristics as the determining factor and indicator of an offense or criminal behavior (Acts 21:27.29.38).

h) Law and Citizenship become the only assurance and security manifested in the Roman setting that can preserve the basic rights and physical integrity of the accused person. The Jewish setting in the pericope wants the annihilation of the accused person on the basis of presuppositions. Hence the Roman law becomes the hermeneutical tool of justice for those who fall under it, independently of race and religion (Acts 22:25-29).

i) The victim, Paul, becomes the "stereotype" (τύπος) or representative figure of those who are abused and criminalized based on the assumptions, judgments, and condemnations associated with race and religion. The victim who suffers, according to the Lukan portrait,⁴⁶ becomes the cultural bridge and the hybrid existential paradigm between the different linguistic and religious barriers existing between the Roman and the Jewish settings.⁴⁷ The hate produced by the

⁴⁶ Paul House proposes the theme of suffering as one main theological purpose of Acts. Paul is the hero of the story who, through the suffering inflicted in the name of Jesus and the Gospel, continues to spread the Christian message. Suffering becomes an instrument of Christian propagation. See Paul House, "Suffering and the Purpose of Acts," *JETS* no. 33/ (1990): 319-326.

⁴⁷Wan, "Does Diaspora Identity Imply Some Sort of Universality?," 126-127.

movements of integration and harmony becomes the root of the behavioral pattern that criminalize Paul in the Jewish settings, while the profiling mindset of the Roman soldiers becomes the assumption of crime and condemnation without factual examination through the context of the Roman setting.

The semantic notions of hate, anger, assumption, judgment, and condemnation take place in the inner personal realm of the accusers or agents. This means that these actions are psychological and spiritual dealings that belong to the subjective sphere of a person. I will use the expression *forum internum* to indicate this inner or private sphere of a person's conscience in which takes place the aforementioned semantic notions.⁴⁸

The notions of violence, incarceration, profiling, law, citizenship, and the resulting victim, indicate the "objective effects" of the inner susceptibilities of a person who is acting as an accuser or agent of authority, coming from a place of having a privileged position of power. These "objective effects" of the inner dispositions take place in an objective factual realm of human relationships and behaviors that may be called *forum externum*.⁴⁹

These nine notions are semantic communicative lines that describe a general pattern that serves to construe the reality of the Black and Brown communities in the United States. However it is essential to justify the applications of such semantic lines to the concrete reality of the Black and Brown groups in the United States, in order to avoid the risk of interpreting the American reality by ways of subjective and arbitrary typological lines of interpretation.⁵⁰ Hence it is essential to determine the scientific ground that gives validity to this hermeneutical application, judgment and consideration from within our modern American context. Following this methodological path, I utilize the basic

⁴⁸Gerald O'Collins and Edward Farrugia, eds., "Forum Internum," in *A Concise Dictionary of Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 2013), 115-116. See also see also CIC 74, 130, 144, 1074, 1081-182.

⁴⁹James Keenan, *A History of Catholic Moral Theology in the Twentieth Century: From Confessing Sins to Liberating Conscience* (New York: Continuum, 2010), 20-21.

⁵⁰ I use the notion of typology as the most common methodological interpretation of Scripture when it is applied to a concrete reality. This means that the biblical text becomes the τύπος or notion that finds a reflection or correlation in the reality. I do not deny this sense of Scripture that has been present since ancient times under the allegorical and tropological dimension. The purpose of my paper is to convey the scientific justification of this ancient practice by using the notions of Cognitive Semantics and practical Theology.

notions established in the fields of cognitive semantics and practical theology.

The field of cognitive semantics developed the basic symbolic function of language (oral or written) as the vehicle that expresses, encodes, and associates thoughts and experiences obtained for the physical world. Language is essentially a symbolic tool of cognition and expression that is already filtered by the personal human experience that uses conventional symbols that imply multiple references of interpretation and understanding.⁵¹ Therefore, the events described in Acts 21:27–22:29 express the filtered experience of Paul through the eyes of the Lukan theology. Additionally, the biblical text embodies an experience of God in the transmission of his revelation in the history of salvation, becoming for the modern reader the *locus theologicus* in which it is possible to encounter patterns of behavior and notions of God's disclosure. Following the path of the cognitive linguistics, a metaphor is not only a literary concept or stylistic device, but a broad notion that is essential to the nature and function of language and communication itself. A metaphor is essentially an intellectual mapping that uses a source domain as its point of origin in order to apply the deduced notions to a new target domain.⁵² The biblical texts of Acts of the Apostles presents communicative lines that become metaphors which reverberate within both the behavioral pattern of the American society and the experiences of Black and Brown victims.

Consequently, the biblical text of Acts 21:27–22:29 becomes the "source domain" that produces the nine aforementioned semantic notions that can be implemented, correlated, and associated to the "target domain" of the Black and Brown communities. The correlation is done by assuming the ontological metaphor of the biblical notions that function as the basic domain setting that helps to construct a conceptual mapping that implies a projection onto the reality of the marginalized groups that can be identified as victims.⁵³ This kind of projection mapping requires a conceptual integration between the domains, and

⁵¹Vyvyan Evans and Melanie Green, *Cognitive Linguistics. An Introduction* (Edinburg, UK: Edinburg University Press, 2006), 6-7; Laura Janda, "Cognitive Linguistics in the year 2015", *Cognitive Semantics* 1 (2015): 134-135.

⁵²Janda, "Cognitive Linguistics in the year 2015," 140; George Lakoff, "Conceptual Metaphor. Contemporary Theory of Metaphor," in *Cognitive Linguistics: Basic Reading*. Edited by Dirk Geeraerts (Berlin - New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2006), 185-186.232-233.

⁵³"A projection mapping projects structure from one domain (source) onto another (target)." Evans and Green, *Cognitive Semantics*, 167. See also Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, "Conceptual Integration Networks," *Cognitive Science* no.22/2 (1998): 134-136.

such methodological notion of cognitive semantics is perfectly transferable to the hermeneutical application of the victimization and incarceration of Paul to the targeted and marginalized Black and Brown communities.

I would like to emphasize that this hermeneutical process is not exclusively mono-directional, since the target domain, namely, Black and Brown minorities can become the setting of reference from where it is possible to revisit (re-read) the biblical text through the filtered cognitive experience of the American reality. Therefore this practical reflection and hermeneutical approach see the Black and Brown communities as true *loci theologici* from where the effects and the action of God can be discerned. With this theology of the margins I attempt to integrate the *locus theolicus* of Scripture with the reality of our modern American praxis in order to see the living expressions of God through the experience of victimization and marginalization.

These affirmations assumed the theological elucidations of Melchor Cano in his book XI of *De locis theologicis* who examines the strength and value of authority of human history and its own eventualities as a demonstrative value to the theological reflection.⁵⁴ This means that the praxis of racial profiling against the Black and Brown communities in America offers strong argumentative theological elements to discern the presence of God among those who suffer. Therefore the history of the Black and Brown communities holds a theological significance in manners of the discernment of God through the “human signs” or “communicative lines” of the personal stories of the Black and Brown victims.⁵⁵

Practical theology should not be understood as something opposed or separated from Theoretical theology, but as the elucidation of the reality of God’s intervention in the concrete dimensions of human history.⁵⁶ This means that God continues to act and intervene through the ministry and actions of human beings in historical contexts of the

⁵⁴ Melchor Cano, *De Locis Theologicis*. Edited by Belda Plans (Madrid: BAC, 2006), XI, 559.567.

⁵⁵ Carlos Schickendantz, “Autoridad Teológica de los acontecimientos Históricos. Perplejidades sobre un lugar teológico,” *Revista Teología* no. 115 (2014): 160-161. Regarding the human history as locus theologicus and valuable manifestations of God see H. J. Sander, “Die singular geschichtshandeln Gottes: eine frage der pluralen Topologie der Zeichen der Zeit,” in *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum zweiten Vatikanischen konzil 5. Theologische Zusammenscha u und Perspektiven*. Edited by P. Hünermann (Freiburg: Herder, 2006), 134-135.

⁵⁶ Gerben Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory and Action Domains* (Grand Rapids: MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 49. 63-65.

Black and Brown communities. Practical theology is the understanding and reflection of the praxis of faith and the praxis of the modern society that many times contradicts the praxis of faith.⁵⁷ Therefore, practical theology becomes an essential instrument that perceives the human reality of a community (i.e., Black and Brown communities) as the *locus theologicus* in which one can perceive the actions and revelations of the Trinitarian God through the misfortunes and sufferings of its members. In this practical dimension, the Church becomes the exemplification of the communion of faith that should function as the mediator or channel of mediation in the quest for justice of the human dignity of the marginalized and criminalized communities. This line of thought finds a significant expression in the reflections of Walter Kasper when he affirms: "The starting point for theology is the faith of the Church; by definition, this faith has a relationship with the normative witness of Scripture, and it must be integrated into the contemporary process of Christian proclamation."⁵⁸

The practical theology through the Church and its praxis of faith becomes the "theology of action" that sees the social, racial, and political problems of a society as "communicative actions" that require an explanation from the point of view of the social sciences together with the principles of theology, e.g., biblical theology as it is the particular focus of this paper.⁵⁹

The theology of praxis becomes the critical reflection and explanation of the problems of profiling, incarceration, marginalization, and injustice that the Black and Brown communities have been suffering in our time in light of the biblical message of Christ and the tradition of the Church.⁶⁰ The purpose of using practical theology as a methodological ground of interpretation in this paper consists in the liberative praxis implied in the theological reflection of a situation of injustice and marginalization that contradicts the message of the

⁵⁷ Heitink, *Practical theology*, 6-7.

⁵⁸ Walter Kasper, *The Methods of Dogmatic Theology* (Shannon, Ireland: Ecclesia Press, 1969), 31. See also Daniel Pilario, "Locus Theologicus. Place, Theology and Globalization," *Bijdragen, International Journal for Philosophy and Theology* no. 63/1 (2002): 78-90.

⁵⁹ Ray Anderson, *The Shape of Practical Theology. Empowering Ministry with Theological Praxis* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2001), 24-26.

⁶⁰ "Practical theology is critical reflection on the actions of the church in light of the gospel and Christian tradition." Swinton, *From Bedlam to Shalom: Towards a Practical Theology of Human Nature, Interpersonal Relationships and Mental Health Care* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 7.

Gospel.⁶¹ Therefore this paper tries to portray a constructive theology using the arguments of the biblical exegesis and cognitive semantics as the means of critique and an ongoing reflection of the Black and Brown experiences which I consider to be valid *loci theologici* since they are sources for theological reflection.

2. The biblical paradigm of racial profiling manifested in the official exercise of power at the street level

If I want to demonstrate the validity of the semantic biblical lines of assumption, judgment, condemnation, violence, incarceration, profiling, law, citizenship, and the resulting victim, it is essential to define the practice of "racial profiling" in the United States in order to see if these nine semantic notions are imbedded in the behavioral pattern of the American society.

The first methodological clarification is to establish the distinction between "profiling" and "racial profiling." The term "profiling" refers to a common police practice of viewing and taking into consideration certain characteristics in order to determine a criminal behavior or a crime itself.⁶² This definition is characterized by the generalization of it because the act of profiling is supposed to be based on the particular characteristics of a specific crime or criminal behavior, and as such it implies a common sense application of this strategy to stop a felonious conduct. For example, a killer of young women has been profiled as being a male, 6,2" tall, blond with blue eyes. The police will search for such a killer among a certain population that portrays the aforesaid characteristics. The police or the authorities never will assume that "every" person who matches to those characteristics is "guilty" of the crime for the simple fact of being tall, blonde, and having blue eyes. According to this logic, it would be absurd for the authorities to behave in such manner.

If the police or the authorities of a country begin to "assume" (νομίζω) that every tall male, blond with blue eyes is a killer of young women, then the common sense of profiling applied to one unique particular crime is corrupted and distorted to the point that becomes an

⁶¹Pamela Cooper-White, "Suffering," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*. Edited Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (Oxford, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2012), 24.

⁶²Harriet Barovick, "DWB: Driving While Black: Incidents in New Jersey and Maryland Heat up the Issue of racial Profiling by State Highway Patrols," *Time* 5 June (1998): 35; James Cleary, *Racial Profiling Studies in Law Enforcement: Issues and Methodology*. Information Brief. Minnesota House of Representatives (St. Paul: MN: Research Department, 2000), 5.

"absolute paradigm" in which each person who portrays the aforementioned characteristics is instantly judged and condemned as guilty of such crime without factual evidence and due process, independently of the innocence and dignity of the person. It becomes then a fallacy of composition in which the characteristic of one single person is applied to every person who belongs to the same ethnorracial background.⁶³

When a practice of profiling is distorted to the point that it is based uniquely on the characteristic of race or ethnicity, then the racial stereotype becomes the absolute paradigm that embodies the feelings of "odium" for a criminal behavior that is applied arbitrarily to any person who belongs to that particular ethnicity, namely, Black and Brown persons. The motivation of hate then fuels the assumptions that simultaneously imply the judgment, condemnation, violent punishment, incarceration, and even death of the victims whose only crime is to have the skin color that is used as the absolute indicator and evidence for a crime. In other words, this is the essential definition of "racial profiling."

The authoritative exercise of power used by the police or the generalized mindset of the American society then applies the practice of racial profiling in an absolute manner. This means that a person can be stopped, questioned, arrested, searched, or even killed solely on the basis of the person's ethnicity. This kind of profiling is called the "narrow definition" or application of racial profiling.⁶⁴

A "broader definition" or application of the racial profiling continues to use race or ethnicity as the basic indicator of criminality but it can be combined with other circumstantial characteristics. Many times the excessive use of police force or brutality against Black and Brown persons is justified by making the emphasis in the secondary factors when in reality the "race" remains the absolute indicator that motivates the criminalization and victimization of the person. For example, this sort of profiling could occur when police stop a person based on race (African American or Hispanic), that converges with other indicators such as age (young), gender (male), dress (hooded sweatshirt and baggy pants), time of the day (late evening), geography (a bad or

⁶³ "The fallacy of composition consists in treating a distributed characteristic as if it were collective. It occurs when one makes the mistake of attributing to a group (or a whole) some characteristic that is true only of its individual members (or its parts), and then makes inferences based on that mistake." W. H. Halverson, *Concise Logic* (New York: Random House, 1984), 73.

⁶⁴ Cleary, *Racial Profiling*, 5.

wrong neighborhood), and the car's appearance (not in good condition or a very expensive car).⁶⁵

The racial profiling practiced in America is the vivid or pragmatic exercise of the semantic notions identified in Acts, in which the victim, Paul, becomes the stereotype embodied in the Black and Brown victims of today. The victimization is created and harbored not only by the local law enforcement agencies (e.g., police), political views or even the government (represented in the Roman and Jewish settings in Acts), but also by the general mindset of the people (Jewish setting in Acts) who judge and condemn, even though most of the time such inner condemnation does not materialize. In this line of thought the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) is right in stating that racial profiling is becoming a generalized mindset that stereotypes persons based on preconceived ideas about a person's character.⁶⁶

The most evident cases of racial profiling are manifested on the streets, especially in traffic violations or stops. The Black and Brown communities have long claimed that the police commonly use traffic infringement as a pretext to stop and investigate a criminal behavior. The profile of the Roman soldiers is clearly manifested in patterns that among African Americans are called "Driving while Black" (DWB). In this line of thought, the words of David Harris are appropriate to explain this increasing phenomenon that nowadays is unfortunately common:

"The stopping of Black drivers, just to see what officers can find, has become so common in some places that this practice has its own name: African Americans sometimes say they have been stopped for the offense of 'driving while Black'....I have heard this phrase often from clients I represented in Washington, D.C., and its surrounding Maryland counties; among many of them, it was the standard way of describing the common experience of constant stops and harassment of Blacks by police....Profiling is not the work of a few 'bad apples' but

⁶⁵Randall Kennedy, "Suspect Policy," *The New Republic* 13 September (1999): 30; Cleary, *Racial Profiling*, 6.

⁶⁶Ontario Human Rights Commission, *What is racial profiling?* Online source consulted on 2/11/2017: <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/paying-price-human-cost-racial-profiling/what-racial-profiling>

a widespread, everyday phenomenon that will require systemic reform."⁶⁷

The paradigm of assumption of criminality implies a judgment, condemnation and punishment that have materialized in the moment of the traffic stop. The application of the law against a criminal behavior is applied only on the basis of the color of the person. In other words, the simple fact of being Black (or Brown) is already a crime. The statement is logically absurd since it defies the common course of due process implied in the law in order to prevent evil or criminality. Many times the final result of this inner judgment and condemnation is outwardly manifested in the mistreatment of the victim (searches, inspections, etc.) and incarceration for any pretextual circumstance or evidence that is used as a corroboration of a virtual committed crime implied in the sole indicator of ethnicity.

The extension of the abuse of authority permeates other social settings that go beyond the traffic stops. The police detentions are more likely to happen in the Black neighborhoods than White areas that show equal criminal records. On an individual level, Black young persons are more likely to face multiple police encounters and detentions than otherwise identical identified criminal profiles of White persons. The result of these police encounters can imply searches and even aggressive treatment that are reminiscence of the behavioral pattern of the Roman soldiers with Paul. The report entitled "Black, Brown, and Targeted," published in October of 2014, is an excellent analysis of the aforementioned situation.⁶⁸ The report is the product of the studies of ACLU using the Boston Police Department files that recorded more than 200,000 police encounters with civilians between the years 2007 and 2010. The factual evidence of the files and the report demonstrates what the communities of color have been proclaiming for decades, that the Boston police have been targeting Black and Brown persons even

⁶⁷ David Harris, "Driving while Black and all other Traffic Offenses: The Supreme Court and Pretextual Traffic Stops," *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* vol. 87, no. 2 (1997): only source consulted 2/11/2017: http://law-journals-books.vlex.com/vid/driving-traffic-offenses-stops-53721338?_ga=1.123094664.2080033379.1486833957. See also Jim Cleary, *Racial Profiling*, 7.

⁶⁸ ACLU, *Black, Brown and Targeted*. A Report on Boston Police Department Street Encounters from 2007–2010 (Boston, Mass: ACLU Foundation of Massachusetts, 2014), 1-2; See also Carol Rose, "Black, Brown And Targeted: Racial Profiling In Boston," in *WBUR Cognoscenti*, published 10/10/2014. Online source consulted 2/11/2017: <http://www.wbur.org/cognoscenti/2014/10/10/boston-racial-profiling-aclu-finds-bias-stop-and-frisk-carol-rose>

when the victimized persons are innocent. The executive summary of the aforesaid report explicitly states:

“The preliminary findings make clear that the BPD has practiced racially discriminatory policing. This practice contradicts the principle of equal protection under the law, which is guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and Articles 1, 10, and 106 of the Massachusetts Constitution.”⁶⁹

In other words, the authority is consciously acting against the paradigm of the law which should correspond to the natural principle of human dignity and protection of the integrity of life. This is a crucial point that can be equally applied to the cases of “DWB” and makes an important distinction between the paradigms presented in Acts 22:25-29. In the Roman setting, even though with the common practice of abusive power manifested in their use of *flagellatio* or *verberatio*, incarceration by chains, tortures, and insults, there is a profound respect for the *lex romana*. The Roman commander fears⁷⁰ the committed actions against the victim in the moment that Paul revealed that he also is a Roman citizen. In this manner the Lukan account shows in the first narrative level the power of the “law” that implies the respect of the civil rights of everyone who is covered by the *civis romanus*.⁷¹ This implied that the victim had the same human and civil rights of those who were in power, i.e., the Roman commander.

Ironically the American society that proclaims to be part of the civilized world of the 21st century presents a behavioral pattern contrary to the legal principle of the “rule of law” very well respected by the Romans. Therefore, the abusive exercise of power based on the concurrent mindset of racial profiling continues to manifest its absurdity and the evil implied in the victimization of the Black and Brown communities today.

The story of Ivan Richiez exemplifies, as a communicative and hermeneutical experience, a good case of a Black Dominican American who was mistreated as a young man by a couple of White police officers. The abusive treatment deeply marked Ivan to the point that when he was robbed at gunpoint and injured in the summer of 2011; he never reported the crime to the police because he said to himself: “What would

⁶⁹ ACLU, *Black, Brown and Targeted*, 1.

⁷⁰ χιλίαρχος δὲ ἐφοβήθη ἐπιγινούς ὅτι Ῥωμαῖός ἐστιν Acts 22:29. See Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 712.

⁷¹Cicero, *In Verrem* II.5.170. I.

[the police] have done for me? I don't trust them after the way they have treated me and my people for so many years."⁷² The evil produced by racial profiling becomes an instrument of proliferation and continuation of evil and crime, a main moral issue that will be treated in the last sections of this study.

The same generalized mindset can be found not only in the typical cases of civilian encounters with the police and ensuing traffic stops, but also among common people against Black and Brown persons in shopping centers or stores. It is the "consumer racial profiling" that demonstrates the same generalized mindset that is becoming a common practice permeating almost every dimension of the American life. The "consumer racial profiling" is the assumption of corrupt characteristics projected onto the main trait of race, and used as the absolute evidence to make an inner judgment of condemnation. The difference of these kinds of cases is that instead of incarceration or death, the damage is in the mistreatment and marginalization of the victim who is seen as a criminal who wants to steal a product because "that kind of people" cannot get a credit card or do not have enough money to buy the products in the store.⁷³ The psychological and spiritual marks produced by racial profiling become a permanent stigma in the lives of the victims, who, like Ivan Richiez, began to lose faith in the goodness and acceptance of others and as consequence the agents of racial profiling become the seed of social and spiritual division and anti-harmony, cultivating a life setting that is essentially contrary to the Christian message. Therefore racial profiling produces profound psychological and spiritual violence among the targeted Black and Brown communities.⁷⁴

The summit of the racial profiling is manifested when this sort of practice ultimately produces the death of the victim. Such cases embody the Jewish setting manifested in Acts 22:22 which is the odium of the accusers wanting the death of the victim. During the year 2015 the police killed approximately 102 unarmed Black persons in the United States, but this number could be higher if one distrusts the official

⁷²ACLU, *Black, Brown and Targeted*, 3.

⁷³Jennifer Lee, *Civility in the City: Blacks, Jews, and Koreans in Urban America* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2002), 168-180; Catherine Dunn, "Shopping While Black: America's Retailers Know They Have A Racial Profiling Problem. Now What?" in *International Business Times*, published 12/15/15. Online source consulted on 2/11/2017: <http://www.ibtimes.com/shopping-while-black-americas-retailers-know-they-have-racial-profiling-problem-now-2222778>.

⁷⁴H. Butts, "The Black Mask of Humanity: Racial/ethnic Discrimination and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder," *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*, no. 30 (2002): 336-339

reports that classified as armed the victims who were assumed to be armed, as it was in the cases of Alex Nieto and Tamir Rice which will be further analyzed.

The statistics showed by the Mapping Police Violence Reports indicate that nearly one in three Black persons killed by police in 2015 were identified as unarmed. This means that 37% of unarmed persons killed by police were Black persons. This statistical information acquires a more intense meaning when the reader keeps in mind that 13.3% of the American population is African American.⁷⁵ This behavioral pattern remains a constant trait manifested in the statistical reports of police violence. For example in June of 2015, 32% of the victims killed by the police were unarmed Black persons, suggesting a total of 19 African Americans. In February of 2016, 41% of the victims killed by the police were unarmed Black persons; this means that 22 African Americans were killed in one month, namely, one Black person every 32 hours.⁷⁶

The statistical information has very concrete faces and names that embody the stereotypes of the victim. Among the countless examples, I would like to mention two which are astonishing for the grievous evil produced by the racial profiling in the American milieu.

The first is the case of Matthew Ajibade, a former Savannah College of Art and Design student, who died when he was 21 years old. While he was having a manic bipolar disorder episode, his girlfriend called 911 and the police report said that he was combative against the authority. A video later released showed that the police officer shocked Ajibade "four times" with a taser, while Ajibade's hands and feet were shackled which manifests a strong similarity to Paul's episode (see Acts 21:33). The officers put him in a restraining chair where he eventually died on 1/1/2015. A local coroner ruled the student's death as a homicide by blunt force trauma.

The second case is more shocking because of the victim's age: 12 years old. Tamir Rice was playing with a BB gun in a park, while "an anonymous caller" reported to police that a Black young male was pointing a gun to random people on the street. The anonymity of the denouncer who assumed the crime of the victim echoes the anonymity

⁷⁵Mapping Police Violence: online source consulted on 2/11/2017: <https://mappingpoliceviolence.org/unarmed/>. See also US Census Bureau, Quick Facts, in <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045216/00>

⁷⁶Mapping Police Violence: online source consulted on 2/11/2017: <https://mappingpoliceviolence.org/reports/>

of the Jewish crowd in the social setting of Acts. The caller, according to the recording of the 911 calls, stated twice that the gun was “probably fake.” The police officer arrived and shot Tamir within 10 feet of distance. Afterwards, the same officer arrested Tamir’s sister who ran to his aid. Tamir did not receive first aid until four minutes later from a different deputy who was nearby.

In the biblical episode of Acts, Paul, the victim, is not killed or submitted to further mistreatment due to the respect given to his Roman citizenship, but in our “modern times” the notions of “law” and “respect for the human life” of a fellow citizen have become a “relative or secondary circumstance” subjugated by the absolute “racial profiling” frame of mind. We cannot continue to behave according to the Jewish setting of Acts 22:22: αἶρε ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς τὸν τοιοῦτον, οὐ γὰρ καθῆκεν αὐτὸν ζῆν, namely, we are obliged to cultivate the basic Christian values of human dignity and protection of life expressed in the natural and civil law. We are called to stop the annihilation of somebody’s life just because that person is considered to be “bad” on the basis of ethnoracial indicators.

3. The biblical paradigm of racial profiling seen in matters of immigration and deportation of Hispanics

During the American presidential campaign, Donald Trump, who became the actual President of United States, said the following statement that deeply marked the Hispanic community residing in the “land of the free.” Mr. Trump said:

“When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best. They’re not sending you. They’re not sending you. They’re sending people that have lots of problems, and they’re bringing those problems with us. They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists. And some, I assume, are good people ...”⁷⁷

After this sort of comment CNN’s state of the union asked Mr. Trump to clarify his aforementioned statement, and as a result of this inquiry he replied saying: “... but you have people coming in and I’m not

⁷⁷ Carolina Moreno, “9 Outrageous things Donald Trump has said about Latinos,” in *The Huffington Post*. Published 8/31/2015 and updated 11/9/2016. Online source consulted on 2/11/2017: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/9-outrageous-things-donald-trump-has-said-about-latinos_us_55e483a1e4b0c818f618904b

just saying Mexicans, I'm talking about people that are from all over that are killers and rapists and they're coming into this country."⁷⁸

These unfortunate words are not a creation of Mr. Trump; he only capitalized and voiced out what "many" in United States think but do not dare to say as Mr. Trump did. The voice of the authority summarizes in a nutshell a generalized mindset of "racial profiling" that includes in the distorted understanding of Mexican immigrants "all the Hispanic or Latino/a immigrants" in this country. On the "assumption" of ethnicity, the Brown communities have been marginalized and victimized as criminals, rapists, drug dealers, and killers. The statistical information regarding the racial profiling of the Brown community is not very reliable because of the complex racial mix embodied in the Latino/a communities. This complexity is briefly stated and acknowledged in the ACLU's report entitled "Black, Brown and Targeted."

For example, according to ACLU's report the police racial profiling in Boston between 2007 and 2010 indicates that 63% of the street encounters were with Black persons, 21.8% with white persons, and 12.4% with Hispanics.⁷⁹ At a first glance, one can see that the Hispanic racial profiling in the street is not so alarming as is the case of the Black population. An important consideration must be made on the manner how the BPD filed their police-civilian encounters reports at the moment of identifying a Latino/a. Usually an officer at the moment of the report needs to classify the subject as being American Indian, Asian, Black, Hispanic, or White. The aforementioned case of Ivan Richiez is significant because even though he is a Hispanic (Dominican-American) he is classified as Black; in the same way there are cases in which Hispanic persons are classified as White. This ambiguity is produced by the stereotype classification of the filing and the lack of understanding of the complex ethnoracial mixture of the Hispanic communities where racial and ethnic categories are not mutually exclusive.⁸⁰ The complexity of the Latino/a reality makes it difficult to assess the general impact of the racial profiling and discrimination of the Brown community in the country.

The same pattern of racial profiling previously described in the Black communities is applied to the Brown communities. This means discrimination based on race and ethnicity, when the Hispanics are

⁷⁸ *Idem.*

⁷⁹ ACLU, *Black, Brown and Targeted*, 4.

⁸⁰ ACLU, *Black, Brown and Targeted*, 6.

driving, shopping, and generally just being on the streets. However added to this intricate Latino/a situation is the crucial element of "legal or illegal status" that is also fundamental in the Lukan paradigm of Paul in Acts 22:25-29; "Paul's Roman citizenship" was the only element that guaranteed Paul's dignity, saving him from further abusive mistreatment in spite of his incarceration. Such metaphorically communicative line is intrinsically connected to a documented or undocumented Latino/a immigrants.

The "immigration status" adds a layer of complexity to the reflection of the racial profiling in the Latino/a communities, because there is a large number of Hispanics who are American citizens, yet equally experience the same racial profiling while driving, shopping, working, or just being in a neighborhood. Additionally, there is a large number of Hispanics who do not possess a legal status or are undocumented in this country and live in a permanent state of emotional suffering and fear of being deported to a setting (i.e., a country) where their lives can be in serious danger. The fear of deportation generates a condition of life in which the "illegal immigrant" is ready to accept any kind of injustices and further marginalization in order to avoid any encounter with the civil authorities, i.e., police or immigration officers. The racial profiling in both cases of legal and illegal status inevitably produces evil consequences for the victims.⁸¹

In this section I would like to highlight one example of racial profiling against Hispanics which illustrates the evil effects of emotional or psychological violence accompanied by physical maltreatment. This typical illustration is boldly perceivable in what is now commonly termed as "Driving while Brown" (DWB). The ACLU's analysis of the racial profiling in Arizona shows a significant behavioral pattern of the police biased behavior during the years 2006-2007.⁸²

⁸¹ On May 7 of 2017, the Governor of Texas, Greg Abbot, signed a new Immigration Enforcement Law approved by the Texas Congress called SB-4, which goes into effect in September. The Texas Law allows state and local police or authorities to stop and ask for legal documents of residency to any person who is suspicious of being undocumented. This law also imposes monetary and criminal sanctions that may imply incarceration or detention. The consequences of the application of this law will be negative in matters of a social wellbeing. It could generate an unfounded social fear that conjointly contributes to the avoidance of denouncing other domestic and civil crimes for the fear of being deported when the victim is undocumented. See the official text of the law in <https://legiscan.com/TX/text/SB4/2017>.

⁸² ACLU, *Driving while Black and Brown. An Analysis of racial profiling in Arizona* (Phoenix, AZ: ACLU of Arizona, 2008).

The report indicates that along Interstate 8, an Arizona State Highway, Hispanics represent 47% of the total police stops and searches. On the same I-8, only 10% of African Americans were stopped and searched. The Arizona State's reason for classifying the searches by interstate or highways implies in itself a racial profiling assumed by the PD. "This analysis of search rates demonstrates that people stopped by DPS officers on Arizona interstate highways were treated differently based on their race and ethnicity during the study period."⁸³ The authorities know that I-8 is important for the immigrants who travel across the US borders, so anybody who "looks" Latino will be stopped and treated as an "illegal alien" for the simple fact of race and ethnicity. For the authorities the crime is already implied in the "looks" (race), so the treatment applied already comprises a judgment and condemnation of the person along with any other indicators of criminal activity that could be used as a pretextual condition for incarceration, detention, and deportation.⁸⁴ Independently of the legal status of the Brown driver, the inner judgment and condemnation implied in the profiling process deny the basic human dignity of the person since it assumes *a priori* a crime without due process and factual proof.

Citizenship or illegal status appears to be embodied in the "skin color" or the "looks" of a person. Therefore the "Mexicanness" of a person,⁸⁵ if we can use that term as an exemplification of the racial profiling applied to the entire Brown communities, becomes the evidence to operate on the subjective assumptions of criminal behavior (*forum externum et internum*). In other words, a Hispanic or a Brown person carries in his/her own skin the "figurative border" and criminalization of being outside of the law that justifies insults, questions, unnecessary stops, and searches.⁸⁶

4. Racial profiling and the dignity of a person

Following the methodological path of practical theology, the action of the members of a society become complex "communicative lines" through which is possible to establish a theological reflection of the reality. Combining this dimension with the semantic lines individualized in the biblical text of Acts, it is justified to use the case of Alejandro

⁸³ ACLU, *Driving while Black and Brown*, 6.

⁸⁴ ACLU, *Driving while Black and Brown*, 5-6.

⁸⁵ Mary Romero, "Racial Profiling and Immigration Law Enforcement: Rounding up of usual Suspects in the Latino Community," *Critical Sociology* no. 32, issue 2-3 (2006): 449

⁸⁶ Cf. Mary Romero, "Racial Profiling", 448-449.

“Alex” Nieto as a prototype victim of racial profiling in an environment of gentrification.⁸⁷

Alex Nieto was assassinated in the neighborhood where he had spent his whole life, an area that used to be predominantly Hispanic. Alex was not involved in a criminal life. On the contrary he never was arrested, did not have a police record, and was an active peaceful member of the community.⁸⁸ His neighborhood, like many areas in San Francisco and the big cities in America, has been progressively transformed through a process of gentrification that involves the settling of higher-income groups who are racially White. One of the key points of the Nieto’s death resides in the point that one day a group of White men saw Alex wearing a jacket with the colors of the San Francisco’s football team (red and gold) and a taser. Nieto was a security guard in a night club and he had been licensed to use the taser since 2007. However, his basic characteristics were enough for the White men to call 911 denouncing that a gang member⁸⁹ or a menacing intruder of “their neighborhood” was about to create problems.

The racial profiling, as part of a generalized mindset, is manifested in the anonymous callers, White men, who represent the anonymous Jewish crowd of Acts’ social setting. The behavioral pattern of the “anonymous crowd” reveals assumptions, judgments, and condemnations of an innocent person who is presented as an aggressor and criminal. In their *forum internum*, the callers have been moved by the fear and implicit hate of what is different, “the other,” assuming that

⁸⁷ Gentrification can be defines as “a physical, economic, social and cultural phenomenon. Gentrification commonly involves the invasion by middle-class or higher-income groups of previously working-class neighborhoods or multi-occupied ‘twilight areas’ and the replacement or displacement of many of the original inhabitants. It involves the physical renovation or re-habitation of what was frequently a highly deteriorated housing stock and its upgrading to meet the requirements of its new owners. In the process, housing in the areas affected, both renovated and un-renovated, undergoes a significant price appreciation. Such a process of neighborhood transition commonly involves a degree of tenure transformation from renting to owning.” Chris Hamnett, “Gentrification and Residential Location Theory: A Review and Assessment,” *Geography and the Urban Environment: Progress in Research and Applications* 6 (1984): 284.

⁸⁸ Alex Nieto is described as full-time scholarship student at CCSF, earning a criminal justice degree and applying for transfer to a 4 year college program, full-time security guard at El Toro nightclub, provider for his family, practicing Buddhist pacifist, prior intern at the Youth Guidance Center’s Probation Department, member of the Mission Peace Collaborative, campaign volunteer in federal and local elections (Tom Ammiano, Bill Clinton), volunteer at youth organizations (Coleman Advocates, HOMEY), and community event participant and organizer (Carnaval, poetry readings). Cf. “Who was Alex Nieto.” Online source consulted on 2/12/2017: <https://justice4alexnieto.org/alex-story/>

⁸⁹ In San Francisco there two predominant Latino gangs wearing distinctive colors: the Norteños wear red and the Sureños wear blue.

Alex, the victim, is a criminal on the basis of his looks. The assumption of the criminal behavior implies the judgment and condemnation that provokes the actions of calling 911 and denouncing a danger, which is manifested in the *forum externum* of the accusers.

The racial profiling reaches its summit in the assumptions and actions of the police officers who arrived a few minutes after the call. Four officers killed Alex Nieto by shooting more than 51 bullets at him, claiming that Nieto pointed the taser at them and they mistook its red laser light for the laser sights of a gun. Alex Nieto died on the evening of 21 March 2014 and 14 bullets were found inside his body. He was 28 years old. The brutality of the event makes very difficult to believe the stories of the officers which is based on self-defense.

I use the story of Alex Nieto as a bold example of the evil produced by racial profiling and its ultimate consequences: the death of an innocent person. The communicative lines of the reality support the thesis that theological and civilly, racial profiling is a mindset and practice that is in complete opposition to the values of human dignity.

Racial profiling violates all basic human rights by creating a highly personal, spiritual, and community cost that simultaneously becomes the root of so many other social problems in the community. Racial profiling contradicts the basic theological and civil American principle of equality: God created humankind and all human beings by nature are equal and free. The theological point of view of this implication is explicitly stated by the Pontifical Commission of Justice and Peace, exemplifying the equality of creation as part of a universal plan of salvation where all humanity is included:

“The message which she (the Church) has drawn from biblical Revelation strongly affirms the dignity of every person created in God's image, the unity of humankind in the Creator's plan, and the dynamics of the reconciliation worked by Christ the Redeemer who has broken down the dividing wall which kept opposing worlds apart in order to recapitulate all persons in him.”⁹⁰

This basic statement of “equality” implies that each person possesses naturally inalienable rights, namely all human beings are endowed equally with the right to enjoy legal rights, legal opportunities,

⁹⁰ Pontifical Commission of Justice and Peace, *The Church and Racism: Toward a More Fraternal Society* (Vatican: Vatican Press, 1988), n. 1.

and legal protection.⁹¹ These principles are imbedded in the spirit of the framers and in the Declaration of Independence where these truths of natural law and of nature's God are considered to be self evident and universal: *Jus naturale est quod apud homines eandem habet potentiam*.⁹² Therefore each person is "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."⁹³ The framers ratified that the function of the civil government or authority is to secure these self evident rights, becoming the basic foundation of the American law and the core values that should permeate the American way of living.⁹⁴ The tangible experiences of racial profiling previously described communicate that these basic principles of human dignity which are self evident inalienable rights, have become marginalized or annihilated by the progressive and generalized racial profiling at all levels of the American society. Regrettably, this sort of racial mentality has become an acceptable way of thinking in a justice system that should uphold these basic human rights and natural laws against societal fear-based reactions.

The statistics, reports, and collected social data give factual proof that our Magna Carta has lost its value, and if the spirit of our Declaration of Independence is lost, our entire political and social fabric has misplaced its foundation in the culture of death implied in the praxis of racial and ethnic segregation.⁹⁵ Thus we are living in a culture where the authority does not respect the basic values established in the United States Constitution and we are called through a dialogical and systematic reflection to present the distorted reality of the American society as the first step to go back to the original spirit of United States' Magna Carta that reflects the basic theological principle of humankind creation.

This violation of the core principles of the Declaration of Independence has its repercussions in the international community acquiring a global consequence on how the United States is perceived by the other nations. Racial profiling is a breach of international treaties, as it is established in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms

⁹¹ Kerry L. Morgan, *Unalienable Rights, Equality and the Free Exercise of Religion* (Lonang Institute: 2014), 5

⁹² Natural right is the one that has the same force among/for all mankind.

⁹³ Cato Institute, ed. *The Declaration of Independence* (Washington, DC: Cato Institute, 2002), 9.

⁹⁴ Kerry L. Morgan, *Unalienable Rights, Equality and the Free Exercise of Religion*, 4-5.

⁹⁵ Kerry L. Morgan, *Unalienable Rights, Equality and the Free Exercise of Religion*, 4-5, see note 7.

of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). It is significant to indicate that the United States signed the latter treaty in 1966 but did not ratify it until 1994.⁹⁶ Following the information reported by Dr. Faye Harison, the United States has been slow and ambiguous in its reports regarding the practice of racial profiling and ethnic discrimination. In other words, it is hard to see in the political intentions of the American government a serious commitment to identify, eliminate, or reduce the evolved mindset and practice of racial profiling and discrimination. As a result of this national attitude, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) critically and constructively suggested recommendations for a serious reform, adopting the end of racial profiling or a reduction of it.⁹⁷

Racial profiling is a troubling and serious problem that is progressively growing in the United States, in spite of the efforts of the American government in affirming that “we are living in a post-racial era.” The alienation of the Black and Brown communities that implies stereotypes projected upon race and ethnicity becomes the root of proliferation of aggression, violence, distrust, and division. This factual reality leads us to examine the moral principle of causality evident in the communicative lines of the Black and Brown experiences.

5. Evil produces evil: the consequences of racial profiling

The mindset and the actions rooted in racial profiling can be considered as intrinsically sinful actions that permeate the inner sphere of a person (*forum internum*) and the outward actions masked as concerns for security and exercise of authoritative power (*forum externum*). I use the theological terminology of “sin” following two specific documents of the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace of the Vatican: “The Church and Racism” (1988) and the “Contribution to World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance” (2001) and the principle of moral causality expressed by Thomas Aquinas as the catholic theological platform to justify the sinful nature of racial profiling.

In both pontifical documents of CJP, it is explicitly stated that racism or any kind of racist ideologies and behavior are rooted in the reality of sin. They are ways of thinking, behavioral patterns, and

⁹⁶ Faye Harison, *Racial Profiling, Security, and Human Rights* (Paper: University of Florida, 2013), 3. Online source consulted on 2/12/2017:

http://scholarship.law.ufl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1009&context=csrrr_events.⁹⁷

Faye Harison, *Racial Profiling, Security, and Human Rights*, 2-3.

actions that seriously disrupt the relationship between humankind and God. The manifestations of any kind of racism are deep-seated in the inner reality of "odium" for one's own brethren or fellow citizens and the human desire of "ethnic homogeneity" that defies the richness of the diversity willed by God, examples that find their respective *typoi* in the biblical episodes of Cain and Abel (Gn 4:1-16) and the Tower of Babel (Gn 11:1-9).⁹⁸

The theological justification of such statements can be based on the argumentations found in the *Summa Theologica* I, Q. 49, Art. 1. Thomas Aquinas proposed the elucidations of the basic query of "can good be the cause of evil?", meaning if a person is created by God, this person essentially must be good, but at the same time a good person can be the cause of evil for another person. Analyzing the aforementioned cases of racial profiling and discrimination, a good person (officers or people in general like the bystanders) can be the cause of evil consciously or unconsciously for another person (e.g., Alex Nieto) in the moment that a good person exercises racial profiling against another person based solely on the skin color or ethnoracial characteristics. If a person is a creation of God, then by his or her own nature is intrinsically good, but the human agent (i.e., a person) through the mal-formation of his or her conscience (*forum internum*) due to family, society, and education can become an agent of evil through invincible ignorance or by choice. Therefore a good person from birth potentially can be transformed into an instrumental cause of evil. In the particular cases of racial profiling and discrimination, a person's action is evil because it is caused by the defect or distortion of the instrumental agent (*forum externum et internum*).⁹⁹ Therefore a person has the potential of being equally an agent of good and evil in the pragmatic context of the communities, but within the American society continue to persist and augment the options for the potential and factual evil proceedings through the discriminatory attitudes and measures manifested in the racial profiling. The evil, e.g., racism, inculcated in a person inevitably produces a cycle of evil that perpetuates and increases progressively into the human society.

⁹⁸Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace, *Church and Racism*, n. 2; Id., *Contribution to World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance* (Vatican: Vatican Press, 2001), n. 4.

⁹⁹Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* I, Q. 49, Art. 1, objections 1-4 and their respective answers. See Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica* (Perryburg, Ohio: Benzinger Bros. Edition, 1947). Online source: <http://dhspriority.org/thomas/summa/>

The statistics regarding the number of Black males incarcerated are alarming and troublesome.¹⁰⁰ The US Census Bureau estimates that approximately 18,508,926 of the entire American population are Black males. The reports of the year 2013 are an illustration of this line of thought. US Census indicated that during 2013 there were a total of 745,000 Black males in prison, when in the same year 1,437,363 Black males were enrolled in college.¹⁰¹ One may say that there were more African Americans enrolled in College than those in prison. However, the cycle of proliferation of evil becomes more evident when one compares this statistical data with a country larger than United States. India, for example, has a population of approximately 1.2 billion people but according to its statistics, the country has approximately around 380,000 persons incarcerated which is approximately half of the entire Black males in the American prisons during the year 2013 which has been progressively increasing.¹⁰² I use the statistical information as an instrument to demonstrate the theological principal of the causality of evil that continues to produce evil situations that imply the racial discrimination manifested in the police and social inequity. The racial profiling as an expression of racist behavior is part of a culture of death and destruction that eventually will lead to the destruction of the society and country. Racial profiling is only a symptomatic element of the complex situation of the analysis of the multicultural American society. The statistical information of incarceration and criminal behavior show objective information that helps us to grow in a theological reflection on the praxis of injustice and the absurdity of racism. Such reflection conjointly forces us to be honest in front of the realities of prejudice and unfairness that needs to be stopped or eradicated.

Within this line of thought can be understood the aforementioned cases of Alex Nieto, Matthew Ajibade, Tamir Rice, and many other

¹⁰⁰ Marc Mauer and David Cole, "Five Myths about Incarceration," in *Washington Post*, 6/17/2011. Online source consulted on 2/21/2017: https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/five-myths-about-incarceration/2011/06/13/AGfiWvYH_story.html?utm_term=.76df02ac9f30. See also y Keith Rushing, "The Reasons Why So Many Black People Are in Prison Go Well Beyond Profiling," in *Huffington Post* 8/23/2011. Online source consulted on 2/21/2017: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/keith-rushing/the-reasons-why-so-many-b_b_883310.html

¹⁰¹ Jenée Desmond Harris, "The Myth That There Are More Black Men in Prison Than in College, Debunked in One Chart," in *Vox* (2015). Online source consulted on 2/15/2017: <http://www.vox.com/2015/2/12/8020959/black-men-prison-college>

¹⁰² Antonio Moore, "The Black Male Incarceration Problem Is Real and It's Catastrophic," in *The Huffington Post* (2015). Online source consulted on 2/15/2017: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/antonio-moore/black-mass-incarceration-statistics_b_6682564.html. See also <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2017.html>.

persons who have lost their lives because of the assumptions of criminality, mistreatment, and abusive application of force that ultimately resulted in the grievous evil that destroys an innocent life. The authorities in their reports wrongly claim the basic principle of self defense as a way to justify in one fragile statement their use of disproportioned force. These elements contradict the principle of double effect which justifies the balanced use of force on cases in which a life is being defended against an aggressor.¹⁰³

The double effect principle always has as its primary goal the preservation of a life as its ultimate good. In neither of the aforementioned cases, this principle can be rightly applied, since the victims were not committing a crime or taking the life of someone else. To make matters worse, the victims were unarmed. Additionally, in the cases of social profiling in which a life is annihilated, the object of the action is always intrinsically wrong or evil. One of the basic elements to make the double effect principle valid is exactly the opposite. The agent, i.e., police officer, has already made a condemnation and judgment under the assumption of the callers/complainers that the "victim" is evil and needs to be eliminated because the simple fact of being in a neighborhood is already a threat. A threat to what or to whom? A security guard finishing his dinner (Alex Nieto) or a kid playing in a park (Tamir Rice) is hardly a threat to the life of anonymous callers who have privileged lives.

This means that the foreseen possibility of stopping the "threat" does not justify the extreme use of force by the agent in front of an unarmed victim. Situations that lead to infer the foreseen possibility of excessive use of power that may take the life of the victim may already have existed in the consciousness (or unconsciousness) of the agent. It is hard to make this statement, but the moral judgment of this kind of act implies that the agent knows the magnitude and the amount of power that may or may not be used in a particular situation. Therefore it is difficult to judge and have certain evidence on the *forum internum personae* which leaves space to make moral deductions on the factual deeds and their resulting consequences. One may ask about those cases of unarmed Black and Brown persons the following queries: What good effect resulted from this kind of evil action? Was it really necessary for

¹⁰³ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1995), n. 1732, 1955; see also nn. 1731-38, 1749-61, 1954-86.

that kind of action or means of force?¹⁰⁴ The obvious negative answers to these basic questions allow the reader to see the unjustifiable actions and their respective results as morally evil.

Historically the racial behavior is based on the fallacy of the biologically determined superiority of the race of one group contrasted with others. The experience of military colonization and slavery are verifications of this sinful behavior or mindset that even today, in the "post-racial era" of the United States continues to manifest in multiple forms, especially in racial profiling. The paradox resides in the fact that we are living in a society where the political and police authority together with a privileged group emphatically persist in the negation of the existence of ethnic violence and incarceration of the so called inferior minorities, that are overtly identified with "crime, low values, drugs, violence, and any sort of criminal behavior," avoiding in this manner the "explicit" use of race by substituting the ethnoracial indicator with the negative characteristics connected to it. In this manner the negative qualifications of character become synonymous with ethnicity. This rhetorical strategy exemplifies a profound praxis of racial profiling manifested in multiple forms without saying "you are Black or Brown."

The paradox of the modern American society can be explained on the basis of the increasingly transformation of the face of America, to the point that "we" are a multicultural society united under the umbrella of living together in one country. The richness of the diversity then becomes a threat and an apparent loss of identity for a certain group. Therefore in the moment that the diversity grows, the perceived threat

¹⁰⁴ The principle of double effect implies the following conditions: a) the intended act must be good in itself or indifferent in itself, i. e., morally neutral, b) the good effect of the act is directly intended by the one who carries out the act, c) the bad effect resulted from the act may be foreseen by the agent but must be unintended, d) the good effect, e.g., saving the life of somebody else, must not be brought by using morally evil means, e) the good effect must be of equal or greater proportion to any evil effect which would result, f) acts that have morally negative effects are permissible only when truly necessary, i.e., when there are no other means by which the good may be obtained. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* II-II, Q. 64, Art. 7; James Keenan, "The Function of the Principle of Double Effect," *Theological Studies* no. 54 (1993): 300-307; Peter Knauer, "La détermination du bien et du mal moral par le principe de double effet," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* no. 87 (1965): 356-76. Id., "Das rechtverstandene Prinzip von der Doppelwirkung als Grundnorm jeder Gewissensentscheidung," *Theologie und Glaube* no. 57 (1967): 107-33; Id., "The Hermeneutic Function of the Principle of Double-Effect," in Readings in Moral Theology 1: *Moral Norms and Catholic Tradition*. Edited by Charles Curran and Richard McCormick (New York: Paulist Press, 1979) 1-39.

of the status quo of certain groups also grows, and proportionally does the increase of inequalities and racial discrimination.¹⁰⁵

Racial profiling has become a generalized mindset and praxis that is permeating every single dimension of the personal and social life of United States. The increasing practice of racial profiling obliterates the affirmations that America is living in a post-racial era. It is quite the opposite. When law enforcement, political authorities, and representatives of order and security target Black and Brown persons, humiliating them through often detentions, interrogations, and searches without any evidence of criminal activity become evident that America continues to keep the mindset of racial discrimination that existed before the civil rights movement; a mindset that is very well typified in "The Clansman" of T. Dixon and the "The Birth of the Nation" of D. W. Griffith.

I would like to circle back to the notion of the fallacy that remains at the core of the racial profiling. The modern American leaders, i.e., politicians and police forces combine the *argumentum ad hominem* with the "metonymy of the effect" to present the false arguments of the evil embodied in the Black and Brown communities as a general truth. The "metonymy of the effect" is a rhetoric device in which the "effect-result" substitutes the cause or the person (agent) who acts as the instrumental cause.¹⁰⁶ Therefore, one Black person or one Hispanic commits a crime, the rhetoric device allows one to identify the effect with the cause, i. e., the person who just happens to be Black or Brown. Consequently, "crime" becomes the mental or rhetorical substitution of the Black or Brown person, notions that become the "stereotype" for everybody who fits these ethnicities or races without committing any crime. Such generalization becomes the *argumentum ad hominen* in the moment that it is used to highlight "only" the defects of the behavior or character of any Black and Brown person with the purpose of putting them down and tarnishing their suitability in society, completely disregarding the truth or factual evidence.¹⁰⁷

These fallacies, from the point of view of the logical analysis implied in the rhetorical devices, are based on the false principle

¹⁰⁵ Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace, *Conference against Racism*, n. 3; Id., *Church and Racism*, n. 8.

¹⁰⁶ Ethelbert William Bullinger, *Figures of Speech used in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, rept. 1968), 560-561.

¹⁰⁷ Douglas Walton, *Informal Logic: A Pragmatic Approach* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 2008), 190; Madsen Pirie, *How to Win Every Argument: The Use and Abuse of Logic* (London, UK - New York: Continuum, 2006), 88-90.

"arguing from the specific or particular to the general," i. e., a fallacy of composition.¹⁰⁸ A syllogism of this fallacy makes more evident the invalidity of the argument, e.g., A is part of B; A has X characteristic; therefore B has X characteristic. That is a distinctive indicator of character or behavior of one single person that subsequently is applied to the whole, a projection that is an error and a misjudgment. We never hear our politicians saying that all White persons are criminal because one or a few White men committed a crime. The outrageousness of the absurdity of this kind of fallacy is that we hear these kinds of statements and still see the praxis of them within the Black and Brown communities. The rhetorical use of the fallacy is praxis of the proliferation of evil, since it makes a false statement to be believed as truth, substituting the reality for a created illusion that destroys or rejects the *imago Dei* in the Black and Brown communities.

6. Racial profiling and the Lukan notion of Christianity: the Lukan theology through the ministry of Paul in Acts

Following the previous line of thought it is possible to conclude that the racial profiling with all its implications and pragmatic manifestations of evil is essentially against the Christian message of the Gospel and the behavioral pattern of Paul manifested in the Lukan narrative of the Acts of the Apostle. In other words, racial profiling is anti-Christian. In the same way as racial profiling goes against the values of the revealed law, it also goes against the basic human principles and values manifested in the core promises and statements expressed in the United States' Constitution and Declaration of Independence.

Paul in the biblical episodes of Acts 21:27-40a and 22:23-29 and in the entire narrative of Acts becomes the prototype of the Christian heroic life who needs to strive and proclaim the Christian message in a hostile social setting that ultimately wants to annihilate him. Paul, in the studied pericope, embodies the role of the victim who is subjugated by hostile treatments motivated by odium on the basis of ethnicity and religion. According to the Lukan paradigm it is possible to propose three basic notions implied in the Christian behavior of Paul that can be helpful as the counter mindset to eliminate the culture of death of the racial profiling: multiculturalism, integration, and forgiveness.

¹⁰⁸Halverson, *Concise Logic*, 73; Pirie, *How to Win Every Argument*, 31-33; James E. Gough and Mano Daniel, "The Fallacy of Composition." In *Argument Cultures: Proceedings of OSSA 09*. Edited by J. Ritola (Windsor, ON: OSSA, 2009), 1-3.

a) *Multiculturalism* indicates the existence of multiple ethnicities with their respective multi religious forms and practices that coexist in one jurisdiction or country. The role of Paul especially summarizes the multicultural affluence of Jewish, Greek, Roman, and Christian cultures. Being immersed in the multicultural and ethnic world he became a good catalyzer between cultural and linguistic barriers in order to spread the Christian message that does not deny the richness of the diversity; quite the contrary. Through a multifaceted social setting, Paul was able to create communities of faith acknowledging the diversity of charismas as true manifestations of the unique divine source in the Trinitarian God.¹⁰⁹ Paradoxically a similar social setting is manifested in the American society and the Church. They are the result of many different members that become one single social body of persons who reflect the *imago Dei* through the richness of the diversity and multicultural uniqueness.¹¹⁰

b) *Integration*: the notion of multiculturalism implies the idea of coexistence and tolerance, but this is not enough if we want to present a Christian proposal. The Lukan paradigm manifested in Paul indicates that the multifaceted Christian communities possess a bond that goes beyond tolerance. It implies the acceptance that leads to the integration of the "other" who is different without losing the richness of one's uniqueness. It is important to clarify that when I use the term "integration," I am not indicating "conformity" to a hegemonic system in which the otherness is lost.¹¹¹ Paul represents the basic combination of integration of ethnoracial dimensions without eliminating the richness of each one (see Gal 3:28).¹¹² The ethnoracial and cultural integration should be read as an egalitarian relationship of cultures, in which none has more power over the other. Keeping in mind the somatic metaphor of 1Cor 12:12-31, the ideal integration is not an asymmetric relationship in which subordinationism of many predominates. In the complex reality of the uniqueness of each person and culture, the single parts are equally essential for the well-functioning of the body, namely, the Church and the Society in their respective multicolor spectrum of individuals.

¹⁰⁹ 1Cor 12:1-12.

¹¹⁰ 1Cor 12:12-26.

¹¹¹ This line of thought is supported by Fernando Segovia, "Melting and Dreaming in America: Visions and Re-visions," in *A Dream Unfinished: Theological reflections on America from the Margins*. Edited by Eleazar Fernández and Fernando F. Segovia (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2001), 231-245; Buell and Hodge, "The Politics of Interpretation," 237-238.

¹¹² Hayes, "To Be the Bridge: Voices from the Margins," 57. 60-64; Wan, "Does Diaspora Identity Imply Some Sort of Universality?," 126-127; Buell and Hodge, "The Politics of Interpretation," 248-249.

The richness of the Black and Brown communities has been for a long time marginalized and underestimated through history. These ethnicities with all their respective dimensions have been treated as an appendix of the American culture; in other words, they are tolerated, when in reality the Black and Brown ethnicities have integrally and essentially been shaping and transforming the history of the United States since its foundation. Their ethnical integration is a matter of justice and a truth that is a part of the rich diversity of this country that goes beyond just the British and White European influences. Paul in his own speech (Acts 21:39-40) does not deny his Jewish heritage. However, it is essential to understand that Paul also does not deny his Roman citizenship, because it is an essential dimension of his personhood right from birth (Acts 22:25-29). It is crucial to understand this challenging dimension of integration that helps us to see each other not as a threat but as members of a social family where all its members have equal human and civil rights.¹¹³

c) *Forgiveness*: the aforementioned cycle of evil permeating racist practices needs to end with a sincere mindset of pardon. Forgiveness becomes the most powerful tool to destroy the hate that remains at the root of racism. The path of reconciliation is always the hardest praxis that requires a dialogical dimension that involves the accuser or perpetrator and the victim. Forgiveness is one of the ultimate Christian prescriptions exemplified in the absolute manner in the person of Christ (see Lk 23:34). Paul, in the studied pericope, never condemns his accusers or seeks revenge against them. His silence expresses the will of not participating in a cycle of violence and evil where he is the victim. The perversity of the cycle of evil is that the suffering inflicted in the victim may transform the victim into a potential instrumental cause of evil for somebody else, because the inflicted suffering finds its outcome in hate. Following this line of thought, John Paul II rightly affirms:

“... hope that political leaders and peoples, especially those involved in tragic conflicts, fuelled by hatred and the memory of often ancient wounds, will be guided by the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation exemplified by the Church and will make every effort to resolve their differences through open and honest dialogue.”¹¹⁴

¹¹³Buell and Hodge, “The Politics of Interpretation,” 235-236.238-239.

¹¹⁴ John Paul II, “Address to the participants in the International Symposium on the Inquisition” (31 October 1998), 5, in *L'Osservatore Romano English edition*, 11 November (1998), 3.

The notions of multiculturalism and integration find a point of fusion in the ultimate act of reconciliation through forgiveness. Any process of peace that destroys the cycle of evil needs to start with the acceptance and forgiveness of the mistakes in the *forum conscientiae* (voice of the conscience) rooted in each person.¹¹⁵ Therefore, any harm and emotional suffering produced by racial profiling or any racist praxis must be stopped from the root. This requires a radical transformation of the generalized mindset of racism that has endured for centuries in the United States. We cannot continue to be "prisoners of the past" but assume a more accurate re-reading of each other's history accepting and acknowledging the richness of each other and then "we" as a nation can avoid hasty and racial judgments in order to acquire a better acceptance and integration of others.¹¹⁶

From the point of view of practical theology, it is essential to identify the role of the Church, as a community of faith, in the midst of the practices of the American society. This role implies also a process of purification of the Church herself; this means, the Church who should denounce the injustices of racial discrimination needs to liberate herself from attitudes and behaviors that manifest a racial profiling at all levels of the hierarchy and pastoral life. In this way the Church can exercise more effectively her prophetic role of mediation in order to "destroy" the cycle of evil embodied in the racial discriminatory attitude and behavior. In order to achieve the task of ending racial profiling or behavior, the Church must insist in the spiritual disposition of pardon which implies a process that involves the faith in God as the essential element that leads to a transformational reconciliation which concurrently requires a process of healing from a personal to a social level.¹¹⁷ Alongside this spiritual process, the good will of the leaders of the American society must be also an indispensable component to eliminate the racial profiling and discrimination together with the help of the educational system¹¹⁸ and the mass media.¹¹⁹

In order to conclude this elucidation which only reflects a single aspect of the true complex reality, the words of John Paul II, on the occasion of his visit to South Africa in 1995, are pertinent to the present reflection. He stated: "solidarity is the only path forward, out of the

¹¹⁵John Paul II, *Message for World Day of Peace 1997*, n. 1.

¹¹⁶Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace, *Conference against Racism*, nn. 8-9.

¹¹⁷Ibid., nn. 10-12.

¹¹⁸Ibid., nn.13-15.17

¹¹⁹Ibid., n. 16

complete moral bankruptcy of racial prejudice and ethnic animosity..."¹²⁰ According to this theological path, our theological reflections could be humble contributions for this needed process of solidarity and acceptance.

¹²⁰ John Paul II, *Homily at Germiston Racecourse*, Johannesburg [17 September 1995], n. 4, in *Insegnamenti* XVIII, 2 (1995), 581; Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace, *Conference against Racism*, n. 22.

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