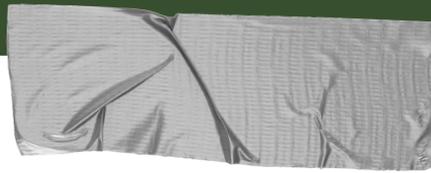

Dysfunctional Theology Brought to the "New" World.

A reflection on Chapter 5 of "Unsettling Truths" by Mark Charles
& Soong-Chan Rah

What is exceptionalism?

In order for us to grasp what will be spoken about in regards to this chapter, it is important for us to take note of what exceptionalism is.

- According to Merriam-Webster, **exceptionalism is the condition of being different than the norm.**
- Simply put, you are set apart and completely different from everything and everyone else. You are seen as "better than" others.



Chapter Five

The fifth chapter of unsettling truths discusses the dysfunctional theology that people supported and excused themselves with in order to carry out a harsh genocide against the Native Americans when they first got here. It goes through the origins & how it became adapted by the Puritans & the Pilgrims and how they used it as a backing for their actions.

The Promised Land

Rah & Charles begins the chapter by saying that "the Narrative of the American exceptionalism finds an early expression in the colonial history of North America."

In the 1600s, a puritan Pastor named John Winthrop gave a sermon called "A Modell of Christian Charity," which was based in Micah 6:8, to seek justice, love mercy and to walk humbly with God. In this message, he was calling for the people on this ship that was bound for Massachusetts Bay Colony to delight in each other, however in the second part of his talk, he "sought to motivate the colonists towards a divine destiny." He encouraged them to become a city upon a hill, as the people in Massachusetts would be all eyes on them. Rah and Charles makes it clear that "Winthrop...proclaimed the colonists to be those who had been endowed with a special, spiritual favor by God..." and to them, that favor was to evangelize. However, that favor was to complete get rid of the Native Americans that were occupying their "promised land."

At the end of his message, he finishes with Deuteronomy 30, which is when God showed to Moses the obstacles the hazards & the promises that awaited for them in the promised land, but rather of saying that they will pass the Jordan to possess it, Winthrop instead said vast sea.

This message by Winthrop was what made the Puritans believe that "they were on the shores of their promised land & was about to take possession of it." It was here where we begin to see the superiority complex already on the move within the Europeans.

Exceptionalism Theology & Its Origins

Not only is the Doctrine of Discovery & Exceptionalism what crafted & aided the Anglo-Saxon people to conquer over the Native Americans, but it also laid the foundation of the political and social scene for the US. However, in order for us to understand the exceptionalism theology, it is important for us to know the origins of the Anglo-Saxon identity.

Kelly Brown Douglas in her book "Stand Your Ground," she writes "In Germania Tacitus provides a meticulous portrait...of the Germanic tribes...'a distinct unmixed race...with fiery blue eyes, red hair, huge frames.' Tacitus commended these Germans for their bravery and strong moral character." Although this make up was not quite found yet within the Anglo-Saxon, it was foreshadowed and it made its way to England. Rah & Charles says that "this narrative of European superiority and the correlation to the physical features of Europeans coupled with the proclamations of the Doctrine of Discovery would result in the self-perception of exceptionalism for the European body and mind."

The Anglo-Saxon identity and the doctrine that they were being taught made the Puritans believe that they were the only ones with pure faith and that would uphold the purity of Anglo-Saxon family line and religion, because at that time in England, the Pilgrims and the Puritans did not go far enough to get rid of the Catholic and Norman traditions. . So for this reason why, they set sail across the Atlantic Ocean to transport what they believed in order to build a truly religious nation.

What is left?

Now, America is left with a deep sense of pride because of the theology that was brought across that "vast sea," and that was visibly seen in the 2016 Election, as it became ingrained in our language that America needed to be great again, while another said claimed that they already were great.

This has even brought a heavy influence in the church in America as they see themselves as the main missions movement for the modern and global church in the world. Rah & Charles finishes off the chapter by saying "while the growth of the church continues in the non-Western world in unexpected regions like China, India, Central America, and sub-Sahara Africa, the white American church will reject immigrants and refugees from these regions as not reflecting the Christian values of the west."

We are now left having to dig out the empiricalistic theology in order for us to dig out the correct truths of the Bible, and the church in America has turned into a missions field for us to re-evangelize with the true gospel.
