

ALLIANCE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY & UNIVERSITY

PEOPLE AS SOCIAL AND CULTURAL BEINGS CS501

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AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL CULTURAL ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION

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This paper represents a cultural analysis on my own cultural heritage. The paper will include my personal cultural make up, my family relations, the social hierarchy of my culture, and cultural analysis of my ecclesial background. In addition, there will be an integration segment in this paper.

THE COMPOSITION OF MY FAMILY OF ORIGIN

It all began on the sunny island of Jamaica west Indies (in the Caribbean). I grew up in an extended family. My maternal great grandmother, was the matriarch of the family. Reportedly, my parents became separated while I was an infant; and I was then brought to the home of my great grandmother to care for me. She was a godly woman, who taught me about the fear of the Lord, taught me scriptures, and explained them to me. Reportedly, when I came to be cared for by my great grandmother, she was widowed many years before.

I grew up seeing my great grandmother living a single life with all these cousins to care for including their mothers. She leased a large area of land, had rooms built, and rented them, she also raised pigs, chickens, and fowls, and that was how she took care of the family. By the time I reached the age of understanding my environment, my grandmother was very old in her eighties. However, she never complained about raising a family without any earthly help. She deceased in my late teen-age years. One of my great grandmother's sons would (as far as I can remember as a child, would send her money on a monthly basis, to care for herself, however, she had to let it stretch for all these children, and their mothers.

At ten years old, the government wanted the land, so they worked out a deal with my great grandmother, by finding government houses for our family, and all the tenants. After my grandmother's death, I left home a couple years later, at nineteen years old. After high school, I went to a catholic priest, who lived in the community, and who provided me with tutoring in physics, and who lived in the community, and served as a missionary from the Society of Jesuits in Canada. I told him that I would like to attend a very prestigious business college/finishing school, He was a physics teacher in one of the most prestigious boys high school in my country. Father Schecher agreed to pay the tuition for my training; this was a one year calendar course. In my first semester at Duff's Business College, I was granted an academic scholarship. This was quite fantastic for me, because for the rest of my program, I was tuition, and books free. I graduated on a Thursday, and immigrated to Canada the Saturday of the same week to further my studies in Business Administration with a concentration in Accounting/Finance.

CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF MY ECCLESIAL BACKGROUND

I was dedicated (christened) in the Methodist church, attended the Anglican Church in my junior years, and I accepted The Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour, before my teenaged years in a Brethren church. When I immigrated, I began attending a pentecostal church, I became a member for several years. I am an evangelist, a missionary, and an ordained pastor. I was ordained in a pentecostal church.

In my Jamaican culture, the baby dedicated back to the Lord (the concept of 1st Samuel 1:27-28.¹

SOCIAL HIERARCHY OF MY CULTURE. (THE HAMAICAN CULTURE)

¹ See 1st. Samuel 1:2728

The Jamaican culture is mixed, and the primary ethnic groups are caucasians and blacks so the colour of the skin has done people believing that because they might have a lighter color, than another group, that they have “arrived somewhat.”

The primary religion in Jamaica, is the Christian Faith. There are many other Christian denominations in Jamaica; such as the brethren, the pentecostal, the Anglican, the methodist, the Moravian, the baptist and several others.

In relations to any cultural or ethnic prejudice, this is found among whites and blacks, and basically, the colour of one’s pigmentation. For example, it is a common saying among my people (Ja’can.), to make remarks such as she or he has “good hair,” (when describing a person who is mixed and is mixed with other ethnicity such as caucasian, spanish, or indian and is light in their pigmentation. In regards to describing the black skinned person, the usual remark is, “she is black, but pretty.”

First of all, slavery was introduced to Jamaica, by Spain, and Great Britain dominated Spain. We were released from the dominance of the British, In August 1962 (we became independent from the rule of The British).

INTEGRATION# ONE - THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE

As for me, regarding my cultural background, and theories that I have learned in the course, is Michael Rynkiewich’s concept of culture, “that culture is learned and shared.”²

Because of this learned, and shared experiences that is generated in my culture of one’s pigmentation, then, it has become a class issue among the people; and unfortunately, some people have internalized this concept, and and have demonstrated behaviours of ethnic prejudice regarding themselves, and others.

² Pg.19 See Michael Rynkiewich, Soul, Self, And Society, 2011

Integration #TWO - NARRATIVES ON HOW THESE THEORIES MY SOCIAL AND CULTURAL MAKE UP

Although this above mentioned concept could be considered among most of the people in my culture as the norm, there are some people who did not, and have not bought into, nor buy into this concept. For example, I am of a dark skinned female, and I have never internalized this concept of feeling less than anyone, neither, have I ever felt better than anyone. All through my life I have lived this way, and I have treated others in a way of respect as well. I am thankful to God that at no time in my life that I have ever felt inferiority nor superiority regarding the color of my skin, or because of my social status that I may have acquired because of my world of academia. I Dr. Stanley John points out in his first lecture in this course about ethnocentrism in culture, cultural prejudice, and that the Gospel is cultural. He further states “that the Gospel affirms culture, it affirms challenges culture, and that it redeems culture.”³

³ See Dr. Stanley lecture, lesson #1 Culture & meaning on 01/13/2023

