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Final Paper

During the last year of being a student at Alliance University I have learn many things regarding race in America that I did not know before the year 2022. From taking Racial Reconciliation class to going to the Sankofa Journey and following the steps taken by Dr Martin Luther King Jr and those who fought for the Civil Right Movements to now taking Our America class. It has been a journey of learning new terms such as Doctrine of Discovery, Model Minority, Manifest Destiny, Perpetual Foreigner and among others. I also have learned about the key moments in history and laws that in one way or another supported racism and benefited those in power. Moreover, I have learned about the role that Christianity has played in both supporting racism and in the fight against it. It has been a learning journey where I have been able to experience different feelings such as: sadness, anger, frustration, disappointment, joy, happiness, and at last by looking at the past and see how things have changed it gives me hope for the future of not only this nation but all of humanity. A hope that we will be able to move past racism, colorism and move towards racial reconciliation and closeness to God.

Growing up in the Dominican Republic I did not know anything about the history of America with racism or slavery. We were taught that Christopher Columbus discovers America and saw as some type of hero for our society because he was able to bring new things to a group of people that were not educated and were stuck unable to move forward. After I moved to the United States, I did not learn anything new about the discoveries of America in high school.

Expect that now there was more emphasis on slavery during the “discovery” of America. However, it was not until last year that I learned about the ugly part of slavery and what latter became segregation and the history of racism imbedded in United States. One of the key terms that I learned while taking the Racial Reconciliation class was the Doctrine of Discovery. In his book “Unsettling Truths” Mark Charles defines the Doctrine of Discovery the following way “The Doctrine of Discovery is a set of legal principles that governed the European colonizing powers, particularly regarding the administration of indigenous land.” (Charles & Song, 15). This Doctrine promoted that the land inhabited by Indigenous people could be taken away by the Europeans. Moreover, the worst part about this is that it was promoted by those who called themselves Christians because those who were not Christians were seeing as less than people. The Pope Alexander VI who at the time of the Europeans landing in America issued a papal bull in support of the invasion of the Americas by the Europeans. He stated, “that in our times especially the Catholic faith and the Christian religion be exalted and be everywhere increased and spread, that the health of souls be cared for and that *barbarous* nations be overthrown and brought to the faith itself.” (Charles & Song, 19) This doctrine came as a result of bad theology and greed of those in power because as Mark Charles stated, “you cannot discover land already inhabited.” (Charles & Song, 14).

Another key term that I learned during the past year was “Model Minority”. This is defined as the idea that Asian Americans or Asian descendants are superior that other immigrants that are in the United States. This belief assumes that Asian Americans have to have the higher paying jobs among those that are immigrants or descendants of immigrants. Learning about this made me realize that society teaches us certain things by behavior only. I said this because implicitly I have been guilty of thinking that Asian Americans are smarter than Latinos and the

other minorities group. I also learned that during the year 1882 there was an immigration act that prohibited Chinese immigrants to come to work to the United States. This ban lasted for 10 years. I found this significant because when looking at how society has made us look at those coming from Asia, especially those from China, the society has made them seem like they are the enemies of the rest of the minority groups because they have the better jobs and are the “model minority”. This create distant between Asian Americans and those from other minorities taking away the opportunity for these groups to unity and fight against injustice because all of the minority groups have been oppressed at one point in history as I learned with the Exclusion Act of 1882.

Slavery and Racism have been the subjects I have learned the most. From the beginning of slavery in 1882 all the way to mass incarceration. This has been one of the saddest things I have learn. Much of my learning came in class. However, the things that impacted me the most came throughout visiting the different museums. One of the museums I visited during the last year was the National Center for Civil and Human Rights. In this museum one of the deepest experiences, I had was to sit down in a chair with my hands on top a counter and listening to how black people were treated during the time of segregation. Sitting there and having to hear and feel the kicking of the chairs and tables around was something that definitely changed me and helped me understand how black people were treated because one thing is to learn something, and another is to experience something. Even though that experience was not real, tears came out my eyes because I for that moment put myself in their shoes and was able to feel what for many years those during the segregation era felt. While taking this class I also had the opportunity to visit the African American Burial Ground Memorial. There I learned how a big portion of Manhattan has been built in top of where many Africans Americans were buried. This has been

sad to learn because when you look at the history it's all the same. The mistreatment of Africans and we see that there was not care for them and they just saw them as machinery. It takes a lot of dehumanization to build a city where thousands of thousands of people were buried. The worst part is that all of this would not never come to light if it was not because they wanted to build more buildings.

While learning about the history of this nation and seeing the abuse of power, the dehumanization of people, especially Africans it made wonder where the church was in all of this. I have learned that the church was complicit in many if not all of this mistreatment and abuse of power. However, I do not believe that religion in itself is bad because even though those who proclaimed to be Christians were the same ones who owned slaves and support slavery and segregation. When looking at the Civil Rights Movement we see that the church was in the middle of it supporting and fighting for equal rights. The problem has not been religion, especially Christianity. The problem has been greedy people who have proclaim to be Christians while their actions reflected everything but Jesus. The church has been given the ministry of reconciliation. Christ died so we [all of humanity] could be reconcile with God and it is our job to reconcile people not only with God but also with each other. The Bible teaches us that "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28 NIV) I would add to this Bible verse that there is neither black or white, Latino or Asian and that we are all one in Christ. I see a generation that would stand up for what is right and keep fighting against racism because it is still an issue even if we do not want to accept it. I see a church that would go to the places it needs to go in order to bring reconciliation to this world. At the end of the day, we as Christian live for the kingdom of God and one part of the Kingdom of God that often times people tend to ignore is that on that day

every nation will bow down before him. I always like to say that God has deposited something of Him in all of us and in our different cultures. He did that for a reason and I would say that is because when we are united and we do not see each other as a treat we are able to experience God in all of His glory and splendor.