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**The Appalling Meekness of God:
a U.S. Black Post-colonial Doctrine of Divine Omnipotence**

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A. Human Suffering and Divine Omnipotence

In the finale for the second season of the West Wing, in the episode entitled, “Two Cathedrals,” there is a classic example of modern questions pertaining to the area of theodicy from pop culture. In this instance, it is television President Jed Bartlett, who after the funeral of a family friend and staffer, Ms. Landingham, requests his Chief of Staff and Secret Service agents that he be left alone in the cathedral where the funeral was held alone. In Bartlett’s speech, he quotes Graham Greene, “You can’t conceive nor can I the appalling strangeness of the mercy God.” Bartlett, as a devout Catholic, suggests that Greene was brown-nosing (to put it gently), refers to

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God as a “feckless thug,” and ends his speech with these words in Latin: “Cruciatus in crucem eas in crucem” meaning “to hell with your punishments and to hell with you.”² Today, there are theologians who want Christians to re-think Christian theology as theodicy, whether it is from the suffering God orthodoxy of Jürgen Moltmann and other relational theists or the non-theistic humanist traditions. The prominence of human suffering leads many to ask questions such as, “Is God a white racist?,” or “Is God incompetent and weak?” or “where is this evidence that God has saved us from sin and death?”

In the 21st century, it must not be assumed that theology is done by a lone, objective individual who argues for universals. The context where we come from partially determines we converse about God, and ultimately how we worship God. For example, I am a U.S. American black male Christian whose preferred reflections concerning the divine come from my faith tradition as well as post-colonial theory, a sub-sect of Continental Philosophy. Towards this end, this paper will be used as an introduction to postcolonial theory, and subsequently, postcolonial theological approaches to the teaching of the classic doctrine of divine omnipotence. The question that I wish to engage: “The necessity of “hope” as it pertains to mankind in the midst of suffering (Continental Philosophy) and the implications of our Hope being an omnipotent God who promises to be with us always.” This question involves several tasks: first, I plan to explain my methodology as well as terms from postcolonial theory that I will use in this work. Secondly, I wish to propose a possible anti-imperial vision concerning to the nature of sin and evil, and how the Triune God, our Creator and Liberator overcomes the rebellious powers and principalities of this world through Yeshua the Messiah’s Victorious life, death, and resurrection.

B. What is Postcolonial Theory?

There are some scholars who are under the impression that postcolonialism is an entirely anti-Western civilization project,

² Clip “Two Cathedrals speech”:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FScv89J6rro> worked as of 6/22/11.

spurred on by angry scholars of color from the Third World.³ This characterization is largely uninformed, for even in one of postcolonialism's primary texts, Edward Said's *Orientalism*, argues against such East/West binary modes of thinking. Rather than starting from a systematized comprehension of general truths, postcolonial theorist being with an overriding concern for the moral implications of human behavior. Postcolonialism, as I understand it, is a predisposition in which one chooses to continue to imagine and re-imagine beyond human domination; in Christian terms, a world without sin. It is not simply describing what imperial structures exist of the interaction between the colonized and the imperialist; postcolonialism is about applying a hermeneutic of suspicion to all truth claims, media and literary representations, as well as political policy efforts in order to bring to light histories of racism, sexism, xenophobia, class exploitation, and homophobia. "It is concerned with developing the driving ideas of a political practice morally committed to transforming the conditions of exploitation and poverty in which large sections of the world's population live out their daily lives."⁴ Postcolonial theorists and theologians, therefore, have praxis as their ultimate concern.

Postcolonial thinkers work with several concepts in their critical engagement with religious and cultural phenomena. Many approaches to culture assume absolute, unchanging traditions which remain irreconcilable with customs from other civilizations. It is taken for granted that this approach to culture depends on a narrative of a singular process by which habits become the norm with a singular meaning. In contrast, the postcolonial notion of the Third Space represents a set of discursive conditions in which "the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity"; this concept therefore renders untenable the notion of a system of thought being "purely" Hebraic, Greek, Eastern, Western, white, Black, Oriental, or

³ From henceforth, Third World will be referred to as the Two-Thirds World, emphasizing population rather than political power and development. Exhibit A: <http://politicsofthecrossresurrected.blogspot.com/2010/09/understanding-mind-of-obama.html>

⁴ Robert J.C. Young, *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 6.

Occidental.⁵ Bhabha's concepts of cultural hybridity and the Third Space find part of their origin from Frantz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*. In the chapter entitled, "On National Culture," Fanon underscores the role of the colonized intellectual⁶ in the ever fluctuating movements of cultural arts where there are fundamental transformations occurring.⁷ One example of cultural hybridity would be the discussions that we have concerning Christmas, how it was once a Winter Solstice that was transformed into a Christian holiday with a celebratory tree from Germany, and a saint from Turkey who became a national symbol in the United States thanks to Coca-Cola. Hence, postcolonial scholars talk about culture in terms of routes rather than roots as a way to disrupt binary ways of thinking that very logic upon which sexist, classist, and racist orders depend upon.

Hybridization is crucial to what postcolonials call diaspora communities, or people groups that possess a collective loyalty to a past history, a language, customs, religions, and homeland with a migratory background.⁸ Biblically, the apostle Paul reminds us that the New Creation is the one true home for believers (Philippians 3:20 NIV), and St. Peter refers to God's chosen as a diasporic people (1st Peter 1:1, 2:11 NIV).⁹ Postcolonial theologian Joerg Rieger suggests that perhaps it is the colonized Other, who live out the most hybrid of existences, who embody "the greatest diversity of experiences" as

⁵ Homi Bhabha. "Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences." Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. (London: Routledge, 1995), 208.

⁶ The Fanonian vision of the colonized poet/creator/intellectual is the person whose existence oscillates between that of the cultures of the elites and the colonized. As a member of a colonized people group, she was initially educated by the colonial regime in order to affirm the empire's cultural supremacy. After disaffecting from this form of self-hatred, the colonial creator rejects the outsider relationship she has with her people by trying to write a recovery of the values of the past. In the midst of political upheaval, she re-imagines and re-interprets the images and traditions passed down through history. Frantz Fanon. *The Wretched of the Earth*. (New York, NY: Grove Press, 2004), 155-163.

⁷ *Ibid*, page 163.

⁸ John McLeod. *Beginning Postcolonialism*. (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 2000), 207.

⁹ All Scripture references come from the NIV 1984. *Holy Bible*, NIV. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1984.

well as own an awareness of the “broader horizon” that should be given greater consideration as authorities.¹⁰ In other words, the oppressed become our preeminent teachers rather than just simply the recipients of our goodwill.¹¹

What would hybridity mean for a discussion on an attribute of God, such as divine omnipotence? Christians have their knowledge of God’s words and deeds passed down from the diasporic people we call the Israelites and Judeans; in fact, the both the Old and New Testaments were recorded during eras of religious persons in exile, and in the context of Babylonian, Persian, and Roman empires. Given the ancient Hebrews’ historical location, the Ancient Near East, it would be inaccurate to claim that there is any concept or practice that is authentically Hebraic. A postcolonial conversation concerning God’s power must resist the temptation to use “No-True Scotsman” fallacious arguments. One such example of this would be the use of polemical rhetoric against all Greek philosophy, as if somehow Graeco-Roman and Judean cultures did not mutually interact; what are we to say, that the Hellenistic Jews were somehow “less Jewish” than their forebears? A possible paradigm for the postcolonial approach can be found in the work of biblical scholar Walter Brueggemann. The special election bestowed upon the descendants of Abraham should be understood as they relate to the general truths of Ancient Near Eastern henotheistic religions. This common theology included the notion of one High God, “powerful, just, and merciful,” who is active in the universe, who is closely associated to a specific community and geographic location, and who sends human agents to represent and speak on God’s behalf.¹² The divine perfections, then, should be limited to whatever Israel and Judah ascribes to the One True God.

¹⁰ Joerg Rieger, *Christ and Empire: From Paul to Postcolonial Times* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 223.

¹¹ A concrete example of hybridity working in the 21st century church could be the Incarnational Model of urban ministry. For an Incarnation perspective, see this article at Missional Spirituality: <http://missionalspirituality.com/?p=254> (last viewed 6/22/11) as well as theo-blogger Drew G.I. Hart’s post: <http://drewgihart.com/2010/02/23/what-is-missional/> (last accessed 6/22/11).

¹² Walter Brueggemann. *An Unsettling God: The Heart of the Hebrew Bible*. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 3.

C. The Fall to Empire

Hybridity is not just about Christianity becoming enculturated in everything that society has to offer. In one way, Paul does call the church to be all things to all people (1st Corinthians 9:22 NIV), but in another, Scripture instructs us to be Holy as YHWH, the Holy One of Israel is Holy (Leviticus 19:2 NIV). This calls for wisdom and discernment. Humanity is forbidden from relating to God anyway it sees fit (the purpose of the Fourth Commandment); God comes to humanity for the purpose of living in a covenant. It is only in being cognizant of YHWH's praxis within creation that communities are allowed to enter into covenant with God. Karen Baker-Fletcher notes, that as true myths ("accounts of macrocosmic events told in microcosmic story form") the saga of Genesis 1-3 is about human beings becoming consumed with the desire for knowledge in an ambitious effort to achieve divinity by their own work.¹³ Consistent with Christian tradition, Baker-Fletcher tells the story of the Fall as if it all happens in Chapter 3.

While I agree that Genesis 1-3 constitute the first slip-up towards a fall, I believe a more adequate account of human brokenness, in light of multi-narrative nature of the canon which was formed under the auspices of Jewish diasporic existence, is to be found from Genesis 1 through 11:8 (right before the genealogy of Abram). After Adam and Eve are banished from God's sanctuary, Eden, their sons are involved in a tragic murder incident, for which Cain is sent into exile. Humanity later becomes so unrighteous that God floods the known worlds, and then God enters into an eternal covenant with all of creation, promising never to destroy the world as God did in those days (Genesis 9:11 NIV).¹⁴ This blessing of a cursed earth is a sign of God displaying humility, an attribute that reveals itself in the Bible regularly. Unfortunately, humankind refused to participate in God's power of self-giving, and instead built up for itself a tower to reach the heavens; such a construction project was quite easy with everyone speaking the same language and all (Genesis 11:1, 6). YHWH, in God's wisdom, saved human beings from centralized, authoritarian

¹³ Karen Baker-Fletcher, *Dancing With God: The Trinity from a Womanist Perspective* (St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 2006), 76-77.

¹⁴ Brueggemann, page 154.

tyranny and hegemonic social structures by “confusing” all the languages of the world (11:9, NIV).

Hegemony, another postcolonial tenet, is personified in texts such as Cornel West’s interpretation of Antonio Grasci’s *Prison Notes*. “Class struggle, is not simply the battle between capitalists and the proletariat, owners and producers in the work situation. It also takes the form of cultural and religious conflict over which attitudes, values, and beliefs will dominate the thought and behavior of people.”¹⁵ I must note that arguments in favor of particular interpretations of divine omnipotence have at times been used to perpetuate oppression. Fallen humanity perceives of power as having success economically and militarily, often grounded in visions of a divinity who works through hierarchy and coercion. This happens because God’s power has been defined in abstract, totalitarian, and imperial beliefs.¹⁶ Many U.S. Americans may claim that because we have the strongest military in the world as well as the largest defense budget, America is the greatest nation in human history. The omnipotence of God is but the anthropomorphic mirror reflection of the omnipotence of the empire. What if we started to measure the greatness of a republic by how humble it was and how it treated its unborn, its elderly citizens, as well as the poor? This is why revelation is so crucial to resisting hegemony so that we may truly know how God exercises God’s power in the specific histories that God has so chosen to be involved in.

Sin happens on an interpersonal level. Because God is a relational God, and exercises divine power in relation to Israel and Judah, humanity being made in the image of God also employs potentialities throughout communities. Power should be seen through a poststructuralist lens, one that seeks to avoid discussions of a singular vital target in which we may revolt against. Likewise, sin is not passed on biologically, but it is inherited through networks of relationships between broken persons. German Contextual¹⁷

¹⁵ Cornel West, *Prophesy Deliverance: afro-american revolutionary Christianity* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1982), 118-119.

¹⁶ Joerg Rieger, *Christ and Empire: From Paul to Postcolonial Times* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 249.

¹⁷ The reason why I use German Contextual theologian in reference to Barth, (and I would add Brunner and Bonhoeffer as well) is to avoid the use of the term [Footnote continued on next page ...]

theologian Karl Barth rightly understood sin as “power—sovereign power.”¹⁸ Barth continues, “sin is the disturbing of the relationship with God which is defined by death.”¹⁹ Sin is an invisible, impersonal power and it is made visible by death. Human wickedness reigns on the interior of humankind’s heart but it is made manifest in death-dealing principalities crafted by our own hands. The most adequate term for our situation today is that of postcolonial empire. Out of sight is the idea that countries have to rule colonies by direct political power; what is in now is the influence of the dollar, or “soft power” such as Production Sharing Agreements that the U.S. has with the Iraqi oil industry, tolerance in the name of multiculturalism, and multilateral foreign policies as there were during the Clinton administration.²⁰ Postcolonial theologians would concur with Elizabeth A. Johnson, C.S.J., that the sins of “sexism, racism, classism, imperialism, militarism, humanocentrism” are all interconnected and so the purpose of our inquiry is not to find a one-size-fit all answer, but “an entire shift of worldview away from patterns of dominance toward mutually enhancing relationships.”²¹

D. God’s Power and the Risen Savior

Continuing with a poststructuralist approach to human agency as part of a postcolonial definition of sin, the self must not be seen as autonomous, but rather as something in which power discourses are spoken through.²² Missing from the poststructuralist narrative is any sense of the divine as a subject involved in these discourses. Enter again, Walter Brueggemann. In similar fashion to poststructuralists, Brueggemann rejects human autonomy: “the Old Testament has no interest in articulating an autonomous or universal notion of humanness. [...] its articulation of what it means to be human is

“Neo-Orthodox” which has come to be used in a polemical manner. A close reading of Barth’s *The Epistle to the Romans* would inform any critical thinking scholar that he was attempting to recover the evangelical spirit of Martin Luther.

¹⁸ Karl Barth. *The Epistle to the Romans*, 6th edition. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1972), 167.

¹⁹ Barth, page 168

²⁰ Rieger, page 272-273

²¹ Elizabeth A. Johnson. *She Who Is: The Mystery of Gld in Feminist Theological Discourse*. (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1995), 28.

²² McLeod, page 192.

characteristically situated in its own Yawhistic covenantal, interactionist mode of reality, so that humanness is always Yahwistic humanness, or we may say, Jewish humanness."²³ The exegetical findings of Brueggemann and the philosophical insights of poststructuralists lead us to the same conclusion: God and humanity are essentially covenantal. Thus, God's implementation of God's own potency cannot be anything outside of a covenantal relationship.

After the Fall to Empire, in which YHWH saves humankind from the forces of oppressive hegemony and centralized political structures, God chose to change the way in which YHWH pursued a relationship with human beings with the calling of Abram. Abram was instructed by God to leave his home, effectively changing his and his family's lifestyle from a comfortable lifestyle existence to a risky nomadic existence. God's mandate comes with a promise, a unique mode of divine communication in which God limits Godself by making God's and humanity's destiny intertwined (Genesis 12:1-3 NIV). God's power takes place on a number of planes and in a variety of spaces. Theologians must not restrict the discussion of God's power to a singular definition since God has many ways of proving God's sovereignty. In the story of Abram who becomes Abraham, we see that God's power comes from the future, harmonizing equally with God's perfect faithfulness. To correspond with YHWH's promissory power, the human person in biblical terms has free will bestowed upon her; the purpose of her libertarian freedom is not for her own self-sufficiency but for the purpose of obedience in living a life of faithfulness as the proper response to YHWH.²⁴

In the subsequent divine activities to fulfill God's own promises, YHWH chooses Moses to lead God's people out of Egypt. Moses encounters YHWH's spokesperson at a burning bush, who introduced God as "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"(Exodus 3:6). God, driven by compassionate love for God's people who were suffering at the hands of Pharaoh and his enslavers, identified with the lowly of society (Exodus 3:7,9) in choosing to be present with Moses and Aaron in the presence of their oppressors. The divine name, YHWH, can be understood in the Hebrew as I am

²³ Brueggemann, page 57.

²⁴ Brueggemann, page 61-65.

Who I am, or I will Be Who I will be, or I will be Present. Just as no one knows where the wind will blow nor can anyone see the wind, so does no one determine where YHWH will be except for God *in se*. YHWH chooses covenantal meekness by being present with the least of these in the world. YHWH's servant Moses cannot help but be transfigured by God's presence and conformed into YHWH's covenantally meek image; this is why Scripture records Moses as the most humble person on the planet (Numbers 12:3 NIV).

In postcolonial empire, it is the multinational corporations, the producers, organized labor, and the political actors who support the first three that find favor with the world. YHWH of covenantal meekness elects the humiliated subaltern people groups of society to save both the elite and the lowly. The subalterns are the mostly ignored classes who are excluded from the postcolonial imperial elite, and whose discourses have been largely ignored.²⁵ Elizabeth A. Johnson explains its best, "Sophia-God is in solidarity with those who suffer as a mystery of empowerment. With moral indignation, concern for broken creation, and a sympathy calling for justice, the power of God's compassionate love enters the pain of the world to transform it from within."²⁶ YHWH's free self-humiliation by siding with the poor and downtrodden leads to doxological responses such as the 82nd Psalter as well as Chris Tomlin who sings "Everlasting God," for God is the "defender of the weak, who comforts those in need." Covenantal righteousness, which differentiates itself from social justice because it has its beginning and ending with God, must consist in justice for the subaltern classes of society and the eradication of the practices and institutions that sustain their oppressed condition.

A third way that God's power is shown is through YHWH's creativity *ex nihilo*. Prior to God creating the universe, many Jewish interpreters understand that the Torah (the Wisdom of God in Proverbs 9) served as a blueprint for the order of the world. YHWH's wisdom, power, and love are never recognized as attributes that can be dissected from the One True God's identity. It is in God's risky and creative engagement with Nothingness that all of life is generated, shaped, and animated. Russian Christian thinker Nicolas Berdayaev

²⁵ McLeod, page 109

²⁶ Johnson, page 170.

provides an account for the existence of evil in the world and freedom by arguing that humanity is a creation of being (God) and non-being, and that it is from non-being that our independence comes from.²⁷ It is necessary, then, to view divine liberation (God redeeming human bodies) as the process by which God the Creator and Ground of all Being cooperates with uncreated freedom. Karen Baker-Fletcher provides a saying from African American religious traditions, that God made a way out of no way, as they say in, in that God has the power to renew life from the worst of situations.²⁸

The colonial situation presents human beings with a set of conditions under the power of Nothingness. Postcolonial empire rejects the covenantal Being of God by replacing YHWH with the absolute, independent Subjectivity who is involved in oppressive truth regimes where the subaltern are caught in a trap, struggling to achieve that same Subjectivity. Frantz Fanon began his *The Wretched of the Earth* by proclaiming, “Decolonization is truly the creation of new men. But such a creation cannot be attributed to a supernatural power: The ‘thing’ colonized becomes a man through the process of liberation.”²⁹ If one suggests that colonization is a bodily experience whereby oppression is internalized, so too must one assert that the decolonization process is filtered only through corporal means. Fanon describes the state of affairs that his fellow Algerians found themselves in, as colonized persons waking up to a new reality: “The colonized subject discovers reality and transforms it through his praxis, his deployment of violence and his agenda for liberation.”³⁰ Violence is viewed as the only option for the oppressed who have only ever known a fixed idea of the self, and therefore humanity in a struggle for the survival of the fittest.

A postcolonial theistic interpretation of Fanon’s decolonization formula may enable one to see from Scripture that YHWH makes it a habit of raising up human bodies from Nothingness in order to create a new humanity. An investigation into the book of Judges, where

²⁷Nicolas Berdyaev. *The Destiny of Man* (New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, 1960), 23-26.

²⁸ Karen Baker-Fletcher, *Dancing With God: The Trinity from a Womanist Perspective* (St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 2006), 71-72.

²⁹ Fanon, page 2

³⁰ Fanon, page 21.

persons like Gideon are chosen from the margins of society to liberate Israel from oppressors or the visions in Ezekiel, who is elevated by the Spirit of YHWH, and is transported to serve as a witness to the breathe of YHWH which gives life to dry bones (Judges 6 & Ezekiel 37 NIV). For this reason, contemporary theologians rightly identify YHWH as Liberator.

It is this freeing and almighty divinity, the YHWH of the First Testament, who Christians confess to be the father of our Lord Christ Jesus. All Christians everywhere are burdened with the overwhelming task of sharing the Gospel with the world. The term gospel comes from the Greek word *euangelion*, which meant simply good news, but not just any good news like your neighbor winning the lottery or being asked out on a date. In the historical context of the apostles, the gospels were announcements that a spokesperson for the Roman emperor would give after a victory in battle. It could be said that the Gospel is God's Victory Speech, about YHWH's triumph in the world through the Resurrection of the Messiah. According to Karl Barth, "The Gospel of the "Resurrection is the—power of God, His *virtus* (Vulgate), the disclosing and apprehending of His meaning, His effective pre-eminence over all gods. [...] Being completely different, it is the KRISIS of all power, that by which all power is measured, and by which it is pronounced to be both something and—nothing, nothing and—something. It is that which sets all these powers in motion and fashions their eternal rest."³¹ Barth persuasively argues that general concepts of god are invalid; only the God of Resurrection found in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible should be recognized as the One True God. Resurrection is first and foremost YHWH liberating God's Son's corpse from the depths of Sheol, and then relatedly, God affirming the human body as the vehicle in which God's redeeming power is revealed (1st Corinthians 3:16-17 NIV).

Not too far behind the Resurrection is the Cross, for both constitute the supreme salvific event for humanity and creation. The way of the Cross in Jesus' ministry, that included calls to repentance, moments of vulnerability, as well as dialogues with his opponents should reshape our colonizing notions of divine omnipotence as

³¹ Barth, page 35-36.

“unqualified success” as John Sanders contends. Calls to repentance mean that God is choosing to live in covenant conditionally with God’s people; repentance calls for a two mutual acts of self-humiliation. It does not trouble God Almighty to practice meekness; in fact, the truth of the Parable of the Lost Sheep is heaven expresses joy whenever even one sinner comes to repentance (Luke 15:7 NIV). Because Jesus as the Word and Wisdom of God, can be rejected by human beings, God’s power exhibited at Golgatha must be judged as a persuasive, loving power over and against coercive, imperial power. The Power of the Word of the Cross means that “the almighty God wins our hearts through the weakness of the cross and the power of the resurrection. God has made us to love, and love does not force its own way on the beloved (1 Cor 13:5).”³²

Lastly a postcolonial doctrine of YHWH’s almightiness could also begin a conversation pertaining the Incarnation of the Word. The mystery of the Incarnation can operate as an effective weapon against the powerful narratives of hegemonic discourses. The category of hybrid identities as it relates to the two natures (divinity and humanity) of Christ may “pose the ultimate challenge to the empire’s aspiration to clear-cut definitions and essences on which its power rests.”³³ A specific example for the hybrid subversiveness of Wisdom Incarnate comes to us from Elizabeth A. Johnson’s feminist Trinitarian theology, “Anamensis of Jesus, the Wisdom of god connects God once and for all to concrete embodiment, to the world, to suffering and delight, to compassion and liberation, in a way that can never be broken. Longstanding dichotomies are here in brought into mutual coinherence: creator and creature, transcendence and immanence, spirit and body, all splits which have fed into patriarchal obsession with power-over.”³⁴ Johnson is not calling an elimination of difference between men and women; what she is striving for is a theological anthropology where there is an appreciation of “one human nature celebrated in an interdependence of multiple differences” which includes race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, age,

³² John Sanders. *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 193.

³³ Rieger, page 99.

³⁴ Johnson, page 169.

generation, physical disability, class as well as other “essential aspects of concrete historical existence.”³⁵ The power of the Incarnation of the Word is a signpost that points towards a solidarity with the subaltern populations of the world, whereby human beings are emboldened to fellowship with the Other all the while continuing to inhabit multiple spaces.

Conclusion

The church’s tradition of teaching the stories of God’s power must be passed on from generation to generation. Postcolonial theologians cannot afford to avoid involving themselves in a mutual dialogue on divine omnipotence between the Academy and the Church. The Church’s role is necessary to remind scholars of the story of how the Resurrection of Christ overcomes the Fall to Empire. Postcolonial religious scholars could benefit the Church by remaining the critical voices within the institutional Body of Christ, particularly when it is comes time to confront Christians who fail to differentiate the omnipotence of postcolonial empire and the power of YHWH of Hosts. A postcolonial doctrine of divine omnipotence provides the Church with a variety of starting points (Incarnation, Cross, and Resurrection) that could enable the Church to share the power of God’s Victory Speech in an appropriate fashion for the 21st century.

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³⁵ Johnson, page 155.

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