

**DIVERSITY IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION:
UNDERSTANDING & APPLYING THE GOSPEL AS
TEACHERS**



THE FIRST ACADEMY
A CHRIST-CENTERED, COLLEGE PREPARATORY SCHOOL



Workshop I: Racial Awareness in Christian Education

I. GETTING TO KNOW YOU

II. BIBLICAL & THEOLOGICAL STARTING POINT: God's Mission and the Nations

A. Old Testament

1. Creation.

Genesis 1:26a

²⁶ Then God said, "**Let Us make** man (humanity) in Our image, according to Our likeness.

a. Two Hebrew words used for "us."

- 1) The first potential for "us" bespeaks an "isolated unit"
- 2) The second potential for "us" portrays a "complex unity."

b. The significance of a complex unity.

2. Fall.

3. Commission.

Genesis 12:1-3

12 Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves."

B. New Testament

Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."

III. NEW LIFE IN CHRIST: Ephesians 2

A. New Life Individually

Ephesians 2:1-10

1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins 2 in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler who exercises authority over the lower heavens,] the spirit now working in the disobedient. 3 We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love that He had for us, 5 made us alive with the Messiah even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace! 6 Together with Christ Jesus He also raised us up and seated us in the heavens, 7 so that in the coming ages He might display the immeasurable riches of His grace through His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift— 9 not from works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are His creation, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them.

B. New Life Communally

Ephesians 2: 13-17

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus, you who were far away have been brought near by the blood of the Messiah. ¹⁴ For He is our peace, who made both groups one and tore down the dividing wall of hostility. In His flesh, ¹⁵ He made of no effect the law consisting of commands and expressed in regulations, so that He might create in Himself one new man from the two, resulting in peace. ¹⁶ He did this so that He might reconcile both to God in one body through the cross and put the hostility to death by it. ¹⁷ When the Messiah came, He proclaimed the good news of peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.

IV. THE CHURCH AS A PREVIEW OF THE KINGDOM

Revelation 7:9 & 10

⁹ After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

V. CONSEQUENCES OF THE STATUS QUO

A. Forfeit the testimony of the Gospel

B. Create blind spots in our intellectual and spiritual development

- (1) Limits our ability to grow in our faith
- (2) Limits our ability to learn appropriately
- (3) Hampers our pursuit of God's mission

VI. ESCAPING THE RUTS OF THE STATUS QUO

A. Understand Ourselves Biblically: The Potential for a Blind Spot

1. 1 Corinthians 13

1 Corinthians 13:11 & 12

¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child // When I became a man, I gave up childish ways // ¹² For now we see in a mirror dimly // but then face to face // Now I know in part // then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

2. Explanation of Paul's Illustrations

a. Seeing like a Child

b. Through a glass Dimly

3. Implications for Diversity

a. Knowing in Part

b. Limitations to Knowing in Full.

Our lenses are dimmed by our lived experiences that illumine our sight to some things and blind us to others. For example, every person is from:

- * A specific socioeconomic status
- * A particular geographic location
- * Has a specific upbringing
- * Is a product of specific time period
- * A particular racial background

c. Blind Spots do not equal sin

B. Understanding our Lenses: The Making of a Blind Spot

1. The Social Construction of a Blind Spot: Social setting instantiates blind spots

- a. Birds of a feather flock together
- b. A homogeneous existence results in Polarization

2. *"More is caught than taught"*

1. *Where do our assumptions about race or racism from?*

- a. Experience of our People/Personal Experience
- b. Social Media

2. Understanding your Stereotypes. Two ways to stereotype

- a. Subconsciously
- b. Consciously

VII. BLIND SPOTS SHAPE OUR READING AND APPLICATION OF SCRIPTURE

A. Reading Scripture with those similar to us limits our ability to fully understand Scripture

B. Jonathan Edwards: An Illustration of Culturally Captive Bible Application

Workshop II: Facilitating a Cross Cultural Learning Community

I. BE EMBOLDENED BY LOVE

II. UNDERSTANDING RACISM: Individual and Systemic/Structural

A. Individual Racism

Individualists understand racism as something that is overt and is done by one individual to another. As a result, racism and discrimination are matters of thinking, mental categorization, attitude, and discourse.

B. Structural Racism Defined

For structuralists, racism is much more difficult to define and diagnose because it is not expressed in discrete actions or words. While structuralists affirm that thoughts, attitudes, and words are important, they contend that racism is the means by which the systems, organizations, and enterprises grant privilege and power to some and disadvantage others. The structuralist notion of racism rests upon the idea that humans are affected by the social structures in which they live.

Genesis 2:15

¹⁵ *The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and keep it.*

1. Creation as Intentionally Unfinished

a. Fashion Material Creation

b. fashion Immaterial Creation

C. Structuralist/Individualist Juxtaposition

A Case Study

Black and Latino youth tend not to do as well academically as majority group members.

1. **The individualist perspective** often attributes the underperformance of black and Latino youth to individual factors like being undisciplined or lazy.

2. **The structuralist perspective** argues that the difference has nothing to do with a student's innate abilities, they insist that black and Latino schools are inferior to white schools because public education is primarily funded through property taxes.

a. Exploring the Division (Especially among Evangelicals)

3. A Common Solution: Colorblindness

Proponents of colorblindness believe that racial reconciliation will occur once we ignore race and forget the discrimination of the past.

- Weaknesses Individually

- Weaknesses Systemically

III. OVERCOMING SYSTEMIC BIAS IN THE CLASSROOM

A. Common Inclusion of Minority Voices in the Classroom

1. The antitype
2. Race or gender issues only
3. During a “heritage month” (i.e. February: Black History Month)

B. Normalizing Minority Voices

1. Classroom Instruction

- a. Include minority voices beyond issues of race and gender.
- b. Include minority voices in a constructive manner that helps achieve your curricular goals.

2. Assignments/Course Requirements

- a. Papers and Projects

- b. Immersion Experiences

3. Add a new “Student Learning Outcome”

C. The classroom as a “safe space”

- a. Say it
- b. Pray for difficult contemporary issues
- c. Demonstrate that you are prayerfully working thorough the issues

D. Where do I start, my academic training didn’t prepare me for this?

E. Faculty Hires

TAKE-AWAY EXERCISE

I. MINORITY INCLUSION IN THE CURRICULUM

Where and when do minority voices appear in my lesson plans?

What does the manner of their inclusion communicate?

II. INCLUSION STRATEGY

What subjects/topics can I most easily incorporate new voices/perspectives?

Ways to Incorporate Other Voices

- Integrate different perspectives on an event
- Integrate different perspectives on literature
- Integrate a forgotten figure
- To apply course content in new contexts (especially in STEM)

IV. DEVELOPING ACTION STEPS

What resources can I consult to move forward?

Do you have any colleagues that might be of help to you?