



**Study guide for  
RACISM & THE IMAGE OF GOD**

## Introductory comments

This is a cultural and morally complex issue.

A few words on method:

We will reflect on this issue from two different methods of ethical reflection to see the issue as holistically as possible. Many don't realize but there are various methods of doing ethical reflection within the Christian faith. Two are primarily used today; Biblical ethics and Theological ethics. Each are helpful and valid ways of doing Christian ethics. What distinguishes the two are the different starting points used for ethical reflection. (1) Biblical ethics starts with the biblical text. It seeks to find relevant material on a particular ethical subject from within the text of scripture. So it looks for various OT case studies, examples and legislation as well as NT teachings on an issue. Next it collects, collates the data, and then formulates an ethical position. All the while following proper hermeneutics such as, viewing particular text from within the narrative flow and eschatological shape of scriptures. (2) Theological ethics starts with orthodox Christian doctrine. This method views doctrine as the main point and authoritative teaching of the Bible. It assumes that core tenets of Christian theology (doctrine) form a Christian's worldview<sup>1</sup> and value system.<sup>2</sup> Proponents of the method point out that some contemporary ethical issues are not directly discussed in the text but doctrine is authoritatively discussed. It follows that since doctrine shapes worldview and worldview frames the way we see all things. Theological ethics helps us see all things in a Christian way through a scriptural lens. Thus, theological ethics helps Christians see ethical issues through the particular value system and worldview of Christianity informing a distinctly Christian ethical position on the issue.

The two methods will function as headings under which content will be located.

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<sup>1</sup> Christian worldview is way of seeing in the world in Christian categories. Worldview is a philosophical term describing the basic assumption all people have about reality, beliefs that makes sense of their world and how they ought to live in it.

<sup>2</sup> a value system is a way of drawing distinctions and making judgments, on the level of consciences. In view here is a Christian value system, informed by what Christian Theology describes as important.

# Theological Ethical reflections on Race

RACE. Approaches to the concept of race may be divided into three broad types: 1. analytical; 2. folk; and 3. social.

1. In the analytical or scientific sense, race is defined by reference to genetic factors. Human groups are characterized by underlying genetic patterns, which produce genetic profiles of individuals and populations not necessarily related to physiological differences. According to the folk or everyday concept, however, race is defined principally by physical features (e.g. colour, body size, hair, nasal form, lip form, etc.), which demarcate races from one another. A variation on this is the ascription to groups of cultural characteristics (e.g. music, hairstyle, food, family customs, etc.).

2. 'Folk' doctrines of race originated in their present form in the 19th century. The rise of modern biology and zoology produced taxonomies in the animal and plant kingdoms to differentiate between species and their related subgroups. By a process of transfer, similar attempts were made to classify human beings according to physical and biological criteria – hence the rise of a quasi-scientific understanding of race which recognized a single human species but proceeded to subdivide it taxonomically. The common categories in use today, i.e. Mongoloid, Negroid and Caucasian, derive from this approach. Darwinian evolutionary theory added further impetus by reinforcing the notion that biology supported the idea of a hierarchy of human types arranged according to successive stages of evolutionary advancement. Whilst physiologically useful for simple identificatory purposes, such taxonomies amount to little more than sweeping generalizations. Borderline cases have to be categorized by an ever-increasingly complex system of subdivisions until the overall approach becomes severely undermined. Moreover, as modern genetics has shown, the basic underlying human genotype suggests that the differences are less striking than the similarities. Nevertheless, physiological taxonomies have been used to construct a rigid doctrine of racial difference leading to notions of superiority. Assumptions within such a doctrine include: a. that variations in the physical appearance of peoples indicate distinctive racial types of a fixed and permanent kind; b. that these types develop markedly different cultures determined by biological differences; c. that history demonstrates the superiority of European races, especially in terms of intelligence; and d. that friction between nations or racial groups is natural and inevitable since it springs from biological sources. It is not hard to see how these assumptions have been used to support philosophical and political theories of racial segregation and superiority. Nazism is the clearest 20th-century example, though the doctrine of apartheid reflects similar beliefs.

3. A third approach sees race as a socially constructed concept. According to this, 'science cannot give support to the idea that social characteristics and cultural forms are biologically programmed either in detail or in broad general sweep'; consequently, 'the sociologist can safely leave biology aside and concentrate on how race is socially constructed' (J. Richardson and J. Lambert, *The Sociology of Race*, p.14). Such a view holds that concepts of race are produced by societies who choose to attribute social meanings to physical and cultural variables. These meanings are not inherent within the variables themselves but are imposed upon them. As with all social phenomena, they are determined by wider forces such as history, ideology, class, power structures and religion. The social construction of race concepts is thus rooted in the nature of the society which produces them. This stands in stark contrast to the analytical and folk approaches, which seek to establish some kind of scientifically objective basis for racial differentiation.

## Theology

Neither Scripture nor Christian theology knows anything of a hierarchy of races in the sense defined above. The weight of both is in the direction of unity (though not uniformity) and solidarity of individuals and groupings. A number of theological themes make this clear.

**1. The image of God in creation.** Although commentators have been historically divided as to the precise meaning of the *imago Dei*, Gn. 1:26-27 speaks of it as having been bestowed upon all humanity as created beings after God's likeness. Even the Fall does not obliterate it (Gn. 9:6), though it does mar it. Moreover, humanity is created for solidarity in that Adam and Eve are made for mutual complementarity. They thus symbolize the human race. Together they are given the command to subdue the earth and to rule creation. Together they are given the image of God. Significantly the only human differentiation recognized in creation is based on gender, and even here it is differentiation which arises out of fundamental unity and involves interdependence, not animosity.

**2. Solidarity in sin.** The unity of the human race in creation is mirrored by its unity in sin. This is signified not only by the picture of Adam and Eve expelled from the garden but also by the apostle Paul's teaching in the opening chapters of Romans. According to Ernst Käsemann (1906- ), Rom. 1 expresses Paul's version of the Fall, making it clear that the whole of humankind is contaminated by sin. This is made explicit in the famous words of Rom. 3:23, 'all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God'. The unity of the human race is portrayed, therefore, even in its sinfulness and need of salvation.

**3. A universal kingdom.** 'The Christian faith claims that it is a faith for all nations, a universal faith witnessing to a universal Kingdom' (Kenneth Leech, *Struggle in Babylon*, p. 196). Both the OT and NT are emphatic that God is Lord of all the nations.

**a. Old Testament.** The purpose of Israel's salvation was to witness to the universal power and love of God. The community of Israel was called to act as a paradigm community foreshadowing the coming kingdom of Yahweh (see Kingdom of God over all the world: 'It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth' (Is. 49:6). The election of Israel was thus not for ethnocentric purposes but for universal redemption. Its worship was envisaged as becoming the worship of the nations, not out of racial imperialism but so that others will see the glory of God and be drawn: 'I ... am about to come and gather all nations and tongues, and they will come and see my glory' (Is. 66:18). Israel's calling to servanthood (Is. 53) is consequently viewed as the opposite to racial superiority. The grace of God is given to his covenant people not according to their race or any other quality, but solely out of divine love. In turn they are to mediate this to the world.

**b. New Testament.** When we turn to the NT we see the principle of universality radicalized in Christ. In the Gospels, he speaks out against racial particularism by attacking antiSamaritan views (Lk. 9:54-55) and holding up the Samaritan as a model (Lk. 10:33). Moreover, his promise to the disciples immediately prior to the ascension emphasized that the Holy Spirit would come upon them not for their sake alone but so that the gospel might be spread among the nations (Acts 1:8). The experience of the early church revealed the existence of both racially superior assumptions among the Jewish Christians and the theological responses developed by the apostles to counter such assumptions. Of decisive theological and ecclesiological significance is Peter's vision in Acts 10:9ff. Through this it became clear that Gentiles were to be brought within the saving purpose of God, thereby revealing the universality of the gospel. In Peter's words: 'I now realise how true it is that God does not show favouritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right' (Acts 10:34-35). Likewise, the pouring out of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) showed that the power of God was for all. The symbolism of Babel reversed should not be overlooked.

In his epistles, Paul makes it clear that salvation in Christ is independent of all racial, gender or social divisions, and stands over and against them. Believers are justified solely on the basis of God's grace through faith. Having become members of Christ's body they are united and unified in him: 'You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Gal. 3:26-28). As this passage emphasizes, the essential solidarity of believers is symbolized in baptism. Just as baptism signifies the washing away of sin

and the incorporation of believers into Christ, so it symbolizes their oneness in him. All who are baptized are thus one. A similar line of argument can be found in Colossians. In the opening chapter, Paul grounds the unity of the church in the cosmic lordship of Christ: 'By him all things were created ... He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of ... the church' (Col. 1:16-18). The logic of this is that Christ's unifying of creation through his death finds its paradigmatic expression in the church and thus signifies the unifying purpose of God for the whole world. Consequently, in him 'there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all and is in all' (Col. 3:11). The letter to the Ephesians extends the Christological argument by giving a theological basis for the unity, not simply of the church, but of humanity and the entire created order. God's purpose is 'to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ' (Eph. 1:10). Attempts, therefore, to construct a doctrine of racial hierarchy or superiority fly in the face of NT teaching. The universality of the kingdom expressed in the OT is fulfilled in Christ. Believers possess a fundamental equality before God and one another which is an ontological equality: it is rooted in their new being in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). Moreover, as the firstfruits of the kingdom, the church ontologically expresses the will of God for the whole of humanity in Christ. Racial equality, therefore, whilst beginning with the church, is God's will for the world and finds its grounding in his lordship over it.

**4. The incarnation and Trinity.** In his incarnation, Jesus Christ embodied humanity in all its facets. In the incarnate Christ, all racial groupings find expression. He is the principle of solidarity-in-unity personified. For this reason, it is illegitimate to speak of humanity as composed of different races in an ontological sense. Phenomenologically, it may appear so, but underlying the appearances is the fact that, in terms of being, the human race possesses an essential oneness made explicit in the incarnate Christ. From a trinitarian standpoint, moreover, the idea of diversity and differentiation within unity is fundamental. The relationship between the Persons of the Godhead offers a further paradigm which expresses ontological unity. Speaking of the Trinity, Leonardo Boff (1938- ) has commented: 'The essential characteristic of each Person is to be for the others, through the others, with the others and in the others. They do not exist in themselves, for themselves: the 'in themselves' is 'for the others' (Trinity and Society, pp. 127-128). Consequently, the Trinity offers a model for human relationships which is distinctly antiracist: 'The Trinity can be seen as the model for any just, egalitarian (while respecting differences) social organisation' (ibid., p. 11). This is not to say (any more than in the paradigm of the incarnation) that the translation of this principle into programmatic or policy terms is straightforward. Rather, the purpose of both the incarnation and Trinity is to supply ontological models and theological insights into the structural values which should govern relationships between human groupings and individuals. They are not utopian programs.

Conclusions Four conclusions can be drawn.

1. Ideas of racial superiority and racial hierarchy run counter to biblical and theological teaching on the unity and solidarity of humanity.
2. Phenomenological differences between groupings are not ontologically grounded.
3. Models of humanity derived from the doctrines of God, Christ and the Trinity, whilst allowing for diversity, emphasize essential unity.
4. Race is thereby relativized.<sup>3</sup>

New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology

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<sup>3</sup> "Race," New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology, Eds David J. Atkinson, David F. Field, Arthur Holmes, Oliver O'Donovan, (Downers Grove, IVP academic, 1995) 811-813

# Biblical ethical reflection on Racism

## Racism

### *Introductory terms and concepts*<sup>4</sup>

Racism, the most destructive form of prejudice, dehumanizes those who are different. Some of the most violent expressions of racist violence have been perpetrated against blacks in South Africa and in the United States and elsewhere in the African diaspora, and against Jews in Nazi Germany. Racism is based on a biological notion of race, wherein there is an assumption that real or imagined physical, mental, and moral characteristics are transmitted genetically and are therefore permanent. Racism assumes the hierarchical ordering and rejection of other races and the ideas, customs, and practices associated with them. Studies in the United States show that racial attitudes toward blacks are more negative than attitudes toward Hispanics, Asians, legal and undocumented immigrants, and whites. They also reveal that minorities sometimes internalize the same biases as majority groups, thus having prowhite or antiminority bias even with respect to their own group (a phenomenon called “internalized racism”).

“Institutional racism” restricts the choices, rights, mobility, and access of other racial groups to needed social and material resources. Systemic racism considers the way that material, attitudes, emotions, habits, and practices are embedded in social institutions, including power imbalances, the accumulation of intergenerational wealth, and the long-term maintenance of major socioeconomic deficits for other races. Given the decline of explicitly demeaning language and symbols, “aversive racism” occurs when a subject feels or expresses discomfort, uneasiness, disgust, or fear in the presence of blacks or other racialized minorities or in discussing race issues. “Symbolic racism” blends antiblack feeling and traditional American moral values in a way that results in support for the racial status quo. Symbolic racism assumes that blacks and others violate the values of self-reliance, work ethic, obedience, and discipline and expresses resentment for “special favors” (e.g., affirmative action) and rejection of the idea that there is continuing discrimination in society. Proponents of this view maintain that by operating out of symbolic racism, privileged people are able to maintain prejudicial stereotypes that normalize their own cultural values and oppose social policies aimed at improving the status of underprivileged groups without having to feel as if they are racists. Opponents insist that this concept is unfair, that such traditional values constitute empirical goods that are inherently beneficial for society.

### *What does the Bible say. Survey of relevant texts*

The Bible does have examples of nationalism and ethnocentrism that may be equivalent to racism, but there are other theological currents that forcefully counter it. The second creation account in Gen. 2:4–24 emphasizes the equality of all people, and Gen. 1:27 denies racial superiority, since all are created in God's image, a conclusion that flies in the face of racial separation and homogeneous congregations. Although neither story specifically mentions race, some deduce a Middle Eastern ethnicity for the first humans from the setting in Mesopotamia, though modern genetics places the first humans in sub-Saharan Africa. The so-called curse of Ham (Gen. 9:18–27) is an example of a text that has been interpreted through a racist lens, used often in antebellum defenses of slavery and white supremacy. In the story, Ham, Noah's son, sees his father's genitals as Noah lies in a drunken stupor. When he wakes, Noah does not curse Ham, but curses Canaan, Ham's son, to slavery. Racist interpretations extended this curse to all of the black peoples listed in the adjacent Table of Nations in Gen. 10, despite the lack of connections between these peoples and the Canaanites. The text is actually a curse against Canaanites

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<sup>4</sup> In the appendix I have added a glossary of terms to better articulate some of the sociological terms the author uses in this first section.

as Israel's perennial enemies, and while it may be true that the curse on Canaan is racist and legitimizes slavery of Canaanites, it is also true that there has never been a full-scale enslavement of Canaanites. Indeed, many hold that historically Israel emerged as a nation from within Canaan.

The historical writings in the OT have tendencies toward both the exclusion and inclusion of outsiders in Israel. Some maintain that the Deuteronomistic History espouses a concern for religious purity from a relatively late date in Israel's history, but other traditions counter the anti-Canaanite theme, as does a consideration of the ethnic formation and composition of Israel. To begin with, there is no more exclusivistic practice than the *herem*, the complete ethnic cleansing and annihilation commanded in Deut. 7:2. Although we cannot excuse or justify a practice that is so offensive to modern sensibilities, it is still important to note that the *herem* was not unique to Israel in the ancient Near East. In Scripture, the *herem* has a theological basis: destruction was not mandated for all enemies, only those who would lead the Israelites to worship of other gods (Deut. 20:10–18). Indeed, Scripture also sanctions death for Israelite cities that abandon God (Deut. 13:12–18). Many think that by the time the Deuteronomistic History was written, the different Canaanite peoples mentioned in the history had long since disappeared. Indeed, independent of controversies about dating these historical texts, even the “conquest” narrative in Joshua reflects the presence of numerous Canaanites still living in the land: Gibeonites (chaps. 9–10), Geshurites and Maacathites (13:13), Anakim (14:12), Jebusites (15:63), and Canaanites (16:10; 17:12; cf. Judg. 1).

Against this exclusivist tendency, we can note that Deuteronomy makes special provisions for “resident aliens” along with widows and orphans in a concern for social justice (Deut. 24:17–22; 24:28–29). Resident aliens (*gārîm*) have the same rights as citizens (16:9–12; 24:14–15) and may participate in the Passover when circumcised (Exod. 12:48), though foreigners who have not assimilated religiously (*nokrîm*) are excluded. The blended Israel that celebrates Passover perhaps represents a partial fulfillment of the promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:3). Old Testament narratives about the formation and composition of Israel also counter the exclusivist tendency. The “mixed crowd” of Israelites that emerged from Egypt included Egyptians and other ethnic peoples (Exod. 12:38). Moreover, it is difficult to differentiate Israelites from Canaanites, especially considering the instances of foreigners who become joined to Israel in the narratives, such as Rahab (Josh. 2:10–14) and the Gibeonites (Josh. 9:3–27). Also, many individuals in David's kingdom were non-Israelites, such as Uriah the Hittite (2 Sam. 23:29); David's bodyguards, the Cherethites and Phelethites (2 Sam. 15:13–18); the Cushite messenger in 2 Sam. 18:19–33; and Orna, a Jebusite from whom David purchased the land for the temple (2 Sam. 24; 1 Chr. 21).

Biblical passages about marriage in the OT also reflect both inclusive and exclusive tendencies. On the one hand, among the patriarchs, Judah and Simeon marry Canaanites, while Joseph marries an Egyptian. Numbers 12 provides an implicit sanction of intermarriage when it condemns Miriam and Aaron in their opposition to Moses' marriage to a Cushite (i.e., Ethiopian). Some surmise that the opposition was principally in reaction to the wife's skin color, since Miriam is afflicted with leprosy, a whitening skin disease, as a punishment (Num. 12:10–16), though others speculate that a power struggle was at issue. On the other hand, in order to prevent idolatry, Israel was forbidden from marrying Canaanites (Exod. 34:15–16; Deut. 7:1–4; Josh. 23:12; cf. Deut. 21:10–14). In addition, Ezra-Nehemiah expands the prohibition in Deut. 7 against marrying Canaanites by prohibiting marriage to any non-Israelites (Ezra 9–10; Neh. 13:25; cf. Mal. 2:10–16).

Many have taken note of the universalism in Isa. 2:2–4 (cf. Pss. 67; 86:9–10; 117:1–2; Isa. 19:19–25; 45:14; 49:6; 66:18–24; Mic. 4:1–3). Even more compelling, however, is the idealized image of shalom in Isa. 11:1–9, where creatures who are naturally predator and prey live in peace, an image that showcases the horizontal dimension of shalom as opposed to an almost exclusive focus on the vertical. Interpretations of references to Cushites in the prophetic literature have sometimes reflected racial bias. Earlier interpreters of Amos 9:7 see an unfavorable comparison between Israel and Cush; now interpreters see Cush as an example of a powerful nation that will ultimately belong to God. Jeremiah

13:23 does not reflect negatively on the skin color of Cushites, but rather only maintains that Israel's sin has become an unchangeable part of its nature.

In the Gospels and Acts, most attention is focused on LukeActs, with its six Samaritan episodes (Luke 9:51–56; 10:25–37; 17:11–19; Acts 1:8; 8:4–25; 15:3), a concentration that is significant, given the traditional animosity between Israelites and Samaritans. Luke's focus on Jesus' ministry to outsiders and the mission to gentiles in Acts begins in Luke 2:31–32, where Simeon alludes to the universalism in Isa. 49, continues in Luke 3:23–4:30, wherein the genealogy emphasizes Jesus as a representative of all humanity, and is boldly proclaimed in Luke 4:18–19 with a quotation of Isa. 61. The parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37) explicitly counters racism and ethnic prejudice, since the hero is a Samaritan who helps an injured man in contrast with the religious leaders who bypass him. Jesus shows that loving one's neighbor transcends racial and cultural boundaries, and the episode challenges hatred and stereotypes of the “other,” illustrating that faithfulness to Jesus means taking action. Many interpret Pentecost in Acts 2 as a reversal of the Tower of Babel episode in Gen. 11:1–9, which explains the origins of languages and cultures as a consequence of sin, though others caution against this. The ambiguity may be seen in the fact that Peter's appeal to Joel 2:31 (“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved”) occurs in a speech addressed to “men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem.” Other episodes in Acts point to the diversity of the early church: the apostles resolve the conflict over the feeding of the Hellenistic Jewish widows by adding Hellenistic leaders to oversee the activity (Acts 6:1–6); the Ethiopian eunuch is regarded as the first gentile convert among a people who live at the farthest reaches of the known world (Acts 8:26–39); through the conversion of Cornelius, a Roman centurion, Peter learns that God shows no partiality (Acts 10:34–35); and the presence of Simeon called Niger (Acts 13:1) suggests that the church at Antioch had multicultural members and leadership from the beginning (cf. Acts 11:19–20). In the Fourth Gospel, Jesus ignores gender, ethnic, and social boundaries in his encounter with a female Samaritan sinner (John 4:1–42). More strikingly, John 10:16 places great weight on the importance of the formation of a unified community that includes “other sheep that do not belong to this fold” in the context of the discourse on the good shepherd. Indeed, John 17:20–23 discusses the goal of Jesus' mission as unity between God, Jesus, and his followers.

In the Pauline Epistles, Gal. 3:28 is the centerpiece of reflection on racism in the biblical materials (cf. Col. 3:1–11), which teaches that access to God is no longer through ethnic identity or adherence to law. The verse stresses unity in Christ beyond racial, gender, and socioeconomic stratification, not the obliteration of differences. Paul addresses the issue of diversity within unity in 1 Cor. 12:12–30, where the “body of Christ” metaphor illustrates the interdependence among the individual members of the body, a dynamic that may be applied to modern racial relations as well. Ephesians 2:11–22, possibly even more commonly cited than Gal. 3:28, develops Paul's theology of race relations in Christ, attaching enormous significance to human fellowship in the work of Christ. While Eph. 2:11–12 is written from a Jewish perspective of “superiority over gentiles,” Eph. 2:14–15 depicts Jesus as the peace-maker who ends hostility and brings shalom in the new humanity. Here we see human relationships as the purpose of Christ's incarnation and death; Jews and Greeks are united in order that the new humanity may then be presented to God for reconciliation.<sup>5</sup>

Love L Sechrest,  
Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics

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<sup>5</sup> ‘Racism,’ Love L Sechrest, Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics ed. Joel B. Green (Grand Rapids, Baker, 2011) 656- 657

## Ethnic Identity,

### Ethnicity

Ethnicity is a relatively recent concept and focus of studies in the social sciences, first appearing in the Oxford English Dictionary Supplement in 1972. The term ethnicity comes from the Greek word *ethnos*, commonly translated as “nation” or “people” in the NT. Ethnicity has been defined in a variety of ways by scholars, but the key elements are (1) reference to common ancestors (fictive or metaphoric kinship), (2) a sense of distinctiveness (what makes “us” different from “them”), and (3) the idea that ethnicity and ethnic identity are relevant only when two or more ethnic groups are involved in the same social system (Eriksen; Hicks). Since ethnic identity has to do with individuals' perceptions of being a “people,” the belief in common kinship is foundational to that identity. What makes a group distinctive from others can be drawn from a wide range of symbolic elements that may include, but is not limited to, what one wears, eats, believes, and/or the language one speaks.

### Constructing Ethnicity

A class of students drawn from many of the different ethnic groups throughout China might say that what made their group distinctive was religion (many of them might be Muslim), clothing (some might wear distinctive outfits related to their group), language, and food (one group might be different because they do not eat dog). For the Basque people in northern Spain and southern France, their distinct language, Euskara, is a key symbol to their identity. This is seen in their traditional self-identifying term, Euskaldun, which means “speaker of Euskara,” and the name of their homeland, Euskal Herria, which means “the land where Euskara is spoken.” These symbolic elements, then, are used to create and often maintain the boundary between “us” and “them” (Barth).

One reason why ethnicity escaped the scrutiny of scholars for so long is that, according to the then-dominant modernization theory, these pre-industrial allegiances should have given way to the integrative forces of modern society and broader national or class identities (van den Berghe; da Silva). In other words, traditional group loyalties to family, tribe, and clan would be replaced by interest-based loyalties to class, party, or state. However, the very processes of modernization— for example, urbanization, industrialization, education, improved communication technologies, including transportation— often had the opposite effect; increased contact through improved communication systems and urbanization led to a greater sense of distinctiveness and mobilization along ethnic lines than in the period prior to modernization (Connor). Two seminal works published in 1963 challenged the modernizationist assumptions and had a great influence on the development of the study of ethnicity and ethnic identity. The anthropologist Clifford Geertz, surveying conflicts in the newly independent states of Asia and Africa, proposed that the problems were largely caused by competing allegiances between ethnic groups and the state, or more precisely, between what he termed “primordial sentiments” and civil politics. Many of these new states were inherently unstable because individuals tended to be loyal to their primordial groups (e.g., family, clan, ethnic group) rather than to the state government. Based on what we continue to see in some of these states today, Geertz was not only insightful but also rather prophetic. But lest we think that ethnic identities and conflicts are something relegated to the new states in Africa and Asia, the second influential publication of that year focused on these issues in the United States, specifically New York City. Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, authors of *Beyond the Melting Pot*, empirically challenged the assimilationist assumption of that most cherished metaphor of ethnicity in the United States. Summing up the main idea behind Israel Zangwill's 1908 play *The Melting Pot*, the authors state, “The point about the melting pot is that it did not happen” (Glazer and Moynihan 290). These two works were influential in ushering in an era of heightened interest and scholarship on ethnicity and ethnic identity that has persisted to this day. The field, however, has continued to develop over the years, with ethnic identity now being studied within the context of broader movements, particularly globalization and transnationalism. There are many aspects to globalization, but certainly a key one has to do with the increased migration of people from less productive to more productive areas. In one sense, this is not new (studies conducted by the Manchester School of anthropology in the 1940s and 1950s focused on the social transformations taking place as the result of migration and urbanization in Africa), but what is new is the extent of this migration, particularly from certain parts of the world. In

addition, beginning in the 1990s, anthropologists and other social scientists began studying the contexts that migrants came from, their adaptive strategies in the host country, and their continued ties with “home” (i.e., transnationalism). Globalization and transnationalism have called into question the idea of nicely bounded cultural (ethnic) groups and have replaced this with an emphasis on hybridity and creolization—the mixing of cultures and identities (Vertovec). As a result, although ethnic identity remains an important area of research and scholarship, it is understood to be much more complex and contingent than was previously thought.

### Ethnicity, Scripture, and the Church

Nationalism, understood as an ideological movement, certainly is a modern phenomenon, but ethnicity and ethnic identity are found in antiquity (Smith). We read in the OT of groups such as the Canaanites, Cushites, Hittites, and Egyptians, to name but a few. We witness the ethnogenesis (creation) of a people, the Israelites, through Abraham, and we see God's jealousy for his people. In the NT we encounter a more complex multicultural context than often is assumed. We tend to think of the world at that time as divided between two or three groups: Jews, Greeks, and perhaps barbarians. However, when we look at the day of Pentecost alone, we find no fewer than thirteen languages referenced, which is a good indicator of distinct cultures and identities. Issues pertaining to ethnicity and the church are found in the book of Acts as well as in many of Paul's letters. For example, Acts 15 tells of the Jerusalem council, in which the leaders of the church came together to decide if gentiles had to adopt Jewish customs once they became Christ followers. In other words, was the church going to be bound by the culture of one ethnic group (i.e., the Jews), or was it adaptable to other cultures and identities as well? The leadership decided on the latter, based largely on the testimony of how God had been working in powerful ways among the gentiles. From that time onward, Christians and the church have had to grapple with what Andrew Walls calls a paradox: “The very universality of the Gospel, the fact that it is for everyone, leads to a variety of perceptions and applications of it” (Walls 46). Unfortunately, the church has had a difficult time with this paradox, often erring in one of two ways: either baptizing its nationalism with Christianity, thereby confusing its ethnic/national identity and culture with the gospel, or totally rejecting any identity other than “Christian,” which turns out to be just another version of cultural chauvinism, since, as Walls intimates, what being a Christian looks like will vary according to the cultural context. People are never “just Christians”; they are Christians from particular cultures and with particular identities. Maintaining the tension between the universal nature of the gospel and its particular cultural and identificational manifestations (i.e., unity in diversity) has been, and continues to be, a major challenge for the church.<sup>6</sup>

#### Notes from Dawson

The gospel embraces Ethnicity. The Gospel is meant to be displayed through particular cultural expressions yet only to the degree those expressions are free of idolatry. God's desire for the nations is a desire for the creative expression of worship they bring to the table as one aspect of humanity.

Ethnic Identity is important but not as important as one's Christian identity. One's race and culture can become an idol if it is viewed as more central to a individual's self conception (how people sees themselves, both as a person and someone's primary group identification).

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<sup>6</sup> ‘Ethnic identity’, Steven Ybarrola, Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics ed. Joel B. Green (Grand Rapids, Baker. 2011) 280-282

# Theological Reflection on the Image of God

## IMAGE OF GOD.

This important doctrine, relating as it does to the creation,\* Fall\* and re-creation of humanity touches almost every aspect of Christian doctrine, both systematic and practical. It has important implications for a Christian approach to many disciplines, notably philosophy, psychology, social studies, ethics and law. The biblical revelation was given in the context of a religious world. Rulers such as the Egyptian Pharaohs and later the Roman emperors were regarded as divine. The Greeks and Romans depicted their gods in human form (see Acts 14:11-13), as of course many peoples have done. Scripture rejects all such ideas along with their associated idolatry. There is only one God, and he is not to be represented by any visible form. He has, however, made human beings in his image.

1. The Old Testament Gn. 1:26-27 uses 'image' and 'likeness' in reference to man's unique endowment by God. 'Likeness' stands alone in Gn. 5:1 (but see v. 3), and 'image' alone in Gn. 9:6. They are virtual synonyms, with the first slightly more concrete than the second. They certainly seem to occur together in Gn. 1:26-27 for emphasis, not for distinction. What then, for Genesis, is the divine image? Is it physical, psychological, spiritual, or some combination of these? Scripture teaches God's spirituality, so the image must at least be inward. Yet a human being is a unity, and it is the physical body which is the means through which the image within finds outward expression. Some writers relate it simply to man's God-given, 'God-like' dominion over creation, so that it designates a function rather than essential being. Here we detect modern theological nervousness about moving beyond functional to ontological considerations, due to widespread but highly questionable philosophical presuppositions. Certainly dominion is a function but in it a God-given nature reveals itself. Some say that the creation of humanity as male and female expresses the divine image in some way, either in a community of persons (the Trinity) or in terms of masculine and feminine qualities in God. The Genesis statement is, however, more likely to be an addition to than an explanation of the words about the divine image.

2. The New Testament Despite the Fall, the NT writers clearly accept the divine image as an abiding reality (1 Cor. 11:7; Jas. 3:9). Heb. 2, however, recognizes that the fullness of dominion celebrated in Ps. 8 lacks as yet practical realization, so implying some disturbance through sin. The main NT emphasis, however, is on the image as restored in Christ, and this itself presupposes its impairment.

In Col. 1:15-17, Christ the creator is called 'the image of the invisible God'. The same thought, differently expressed, occurs in Heb. 1:1-3. He is also God's image as the prototype of redeemed humanity (Phil. 3:21; Col. 3:10-11). He can therefore be called 'the last Adam' or 'the second man' (1 Cor. 15:45, 47; cf. Rom. 5:12-21; Acts 17:26, 31). Moreover, redeemed humanity would seem to be remade in Christ in God's image in a corporate, as well as an individual, sense (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18 with its stress on 'all' [pantes]). The reference to Christ as 'being in very nature God' (Phil. 2:6) has been applied by scholars either to his divine nature or to the divine image in the perfect Man. The issue is not all-important, for, as we have seen, elsewhere Paul uses 'image' in connection both with his deity and his humanity.

3. The history of the doctrine Tertullian,\* probably influenced by his preChristian Stoicism, distinguished the image and likeness as man's physical and spiritual nature respectively, but the Fathers and schoolmen usually differentiated them by as-signing reason to the image and original righteousness to the likeness. The Reformers, however, rejected any distinction between the two terms. The image, Calvin\* taught, was greatly defaced but not totally eradicated by the Fall, although original righteousness was lost. Liberalism's\* weak doctrine of sin led to the idea that the image is man's universal capacity for God. Barth's\* reaction against liberalism caused him at first to deny any retention of the divine image by fallen man. Evangelical theologians have normally held to a view much like Calvin's, i.e. the image, though defaced, is not obliterated.

4. Contemporary issues Modern philosophy, preoccupied since Kant with epistemology, needed but lacked the notion of the divine image in man as a secure basis for knowledge, especially knowledge of God. Schools of psychology and systems of psychiatry vary in many ways, but rarely recognize a divine dimension to life. For Christian ethics, the infinite value of each person rests on the divine image. This then must be an important consideration in any Christian outlook on issues of life and death, like war,\* capital punishment,\* abortion\* and euthanasia,\* and also on foetus experimentation (see Embryology\*) and genetic engineering.\* It has obvious relevance too to issues of personality violation, such as torture,\* brainwashing,\* rape\* and child abuse,\* as well as to racism and sexism. Clearly then belief in the divine image will influence Christians in their approach to changes in legislation relating to such matters. God's goal for his church and so for every Christian is maturity in Christ (Eph. 4:13) and so conformity to his image (Rom. 8:28-29; 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 3:18). This should affect our whole perspective on the Christian life, the main goal of which should not be happiness or self-realization but holiness, likeness to Christ. This will also determine at every point the nature of the pastoral task, for, despite all our differences in background, temperament and vocation,\* the Holy Spirit works to this end in every Christian's life.<sup>7</sup>

New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology

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<sup>7</sup> Image of God, in New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology, Eds David J. Atkinson, David F. Field, Arthur Holmes, Oliver O'Donovan, (Downers Grove, IVP academic, 1995) 535-536

# Biblical Ethical reflection on Image of God

## The Image of God

Central to most Christian theological ethics is the idea that humans are made in the image of God (Lat. *imago Dei*). The idea first occurs in the Bible in Gen. 1:26–28, where God creates humanity (both male and female) in his “image” and “likeness” (parallel terms) and grants them the task of subduing the earth and ruling over the animals. The idea of creation in God's image is not, however, widespread in Scripture, found explicitly in only four other texts (Gen. 5:1–3; 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:7; Jas. 3:9). Most biblical occurrences of the *imago Dei* refer to Christ as the image par excellence or to the salvific renewal of the image in the church.

## The Image of God and the Cultural Mandate

Although the idea that humans are created in God's image is rare in the OT, its meaning is clarified by other creation texts that portray the original human purpose. The *imago Dei* crystallizes the functional or missional view of humanity found in texts such as Gen. 2 and Ps. 8.

In Gen. 2 God plants a garden in Eden and places the first human there with the task of tilling and keeping the garden (2:15). Agriculture therefore is the first communal, cultural project of humanity. Since it is the Creator who first planted the garden, it could be said that God initiated the first cultural project, thus setting a pattern for humans, created in the divine image, to follow. Whereas Gen. 2 focuses on agriculture, Ps. 8 highlights animal husbandry as the basic human vocation. Humans are crowned with royal honor and granted rule over the works of God's hands, including various realms of animal life (Ps. 8:5–8). Here the domestication of animals is regarded as a task of such dignity and privilege that through it humans manifest their position of being “a little lower than God” (Ps. 8:5), an expression that begins to move in the direction of God's image/ likeness.

Genesis 1:26–28 combines these two themes: humans are created to subdue the earth (similar to tending the garden in Gen. 2) and to rule over the animal kingdom (as in Ps. 8). And they are to accomplish these tasks as God's representatives or delegates on earth, entrusted with a share in his rule, which is the upshot of being made in God's image (Gen. 1:26–27). In the ancient Near East the king was thought to be the living image of the gods on earth, representing the gods' will and purpose through his administration of society and culture. In Gen. 1 the entire human race is appointed to this privileged role. The human task of exercising communal power in the world, initially applied to agriculture and the domestication of animals, results in the transformation of the earthly environment into a complex sociocultural world. Thus, Gen. 4 reports the building of the first city (4:17) and mentions the beginnings of cultural practices and inventions, such as nomadic livestock herding, musical instruments, and metal tools (4:20–22). This transformation of the world (the so-called cultural mandate) accomplished by God's human image on earth is a holy task, a sacred calling, in which humanity reflects the Creator's own lordship over the cosmos.

Just as God constructed the cosmos (heaven and earth) by wisdom, understanding, and knowledge (Prov. 3:19–20), so humans require this very same triad of qualities when they build a house (Prov. 24:3–4). This makes sense of the portrayal of Bezalel, who is put in charge of constructing the tabernacle. Bezalel is filled with God's Spirit (the same Spirit who attended creation in Gen. 1:2) and also with wisdom, understanding, and knowledge (Exod. 31:2–5; 35:30–35)—the same qualities that God exhibited when he made the world. The human embodiment of good artisanship in earthly construction projects thus recapitulates God's own building of the cosmos, which was also a developmental project, transforming an original unformed and unfilled mass (Gen. 1:2) into a complex world, over six days.

## The Image of God and the Mediation of Divine Presence

The assumed parallel in the Bezalel account between the creation of the world and tabernacle construction (as macrocosmos and microcosmos) suggests the background picture of the created order as a temple, a sacred realm over which God rules. This picture is explicit in Ps. 148, which calls on a

variety of heavenly and earthly creatures (148:1–4, 7–12) to praise their creator (148:5–7, 13–14), as if together they constituted a host of creaturely worshipers in the cosmic sanctuary. According to Isa. 66, heaven is Yahweh's throne, and the earth is his footstool (66:1a). Thus, the text questions why anyone would build an earthly “house” for God (referring to postexilic rebuilding of the temple), since God has already created the cosmos (66:1b–2). Why construct sacred space—a place to worship God—when all space is already sacred?

In the cosmic sanctuary of creation humans are the authorized “image” of God. Just as the physical cult statue or image in an ancient Near Eastern temple was meant to mediate the deity's presence to the worshipers, so humans are the divinely designated embodied mediators of the Creator's presence from heaven (where Yahweh is enthroned) to earth, thus completing the destiny of the cosmic temple, so that God might fully indwell the earthly realm, much as the glory of Yahweh filled the tabernacle when it was completed (Exod. 40:34–35). Although the Spirit of God was, indeed, hovering over creation at the beginning (Gen. 1:2), as if God was getting ready to breathe his presence into the world, when the Creator rests on the seventh day (Gen. 2:1–3), the world is not yet filled with God's glory. The issue is not human sin, at least not yet. The key point is that the mediation of God's presence on earth is precisely the historical vocation of humanity as the *imago Dei*, a vocation that has only just been assigned (and not yet carried out) in Gen. 1.

#### Human Violence and the Image of God

The incursion of sin tragically compromises the human calling to image God. From the primal disobedience in the garden (Gen. 3) through the first murder (Gen. 4), humans misuse their power to image God and so shut off earth from God's full presence. Indeed, human violence (which is fundamentally the misuse of the power of *imago Dei*) escalates, until the earth becomes filled with violence (Gen. 6:11) rather than with the presence of God. This violence leads to the flood (Gen. 6:13), which is a restorative operation meant to cleanse the earth.

The incursion of sin into God's good creation does not, however, obliterate the *imago Dei*. God's creation of both male and female in his “likeness” is reiterated (Gen. 5:1–2), and this image/likeness is passed on to future generations (Gen. 5:3). After the flood, God reaffirms the creation of humans in his “image,” and this affirmation grounds the sanctity of human life (Gen. 9:6). The postfall persistence of the *imago Dei* is assumed also in Jas. 3:9, which, like Gen. 9:6, undergirds a specific ethical implication, challenging those who would bless God yet curse a person made in the divine “likeness.” This NT text echoes the OT wisdom tradition that people somehow represent their maker, so that oppression or kindness shown to the poor and needy are equivalent to insult or honor shown to God (Prov. 14:31; 17:5; cf. 22:2). A similar idea lies behind Jesus' claim in the parable of the sheep and the goats (Matt. 25:31–46) that whatever works of love a person performs to “one of the least of these” is done to him (Matt. 25:40).

#### The Image of God and the Ethical Use of Power

The ethical significance of the *imago Dei* cannot be limited, however, to the injunction to honor God by respecting his image on earth. Persons made in God's image are not simply the recipients of ethical action; they are also called to act, imaging God's own use of creative power.

According to the creation account that forms the immediate context for the *imago Dei*, God creates without vanquishing any primordial forces of chaos (in contrast to ancient Near Eastern creation myths such as *Enuma Elish*), since to do so would enshrine violence as original and normative. Instead, God painstakingly develops the initial, unformed watery mass (Gen. 1:2) into a complex, well-constructed world. Not only is each stage of this creative process portrayed as “good” (Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25); when creation is complete, it is “very good” (Gen. 1:31). The human use of power in God's image is also to be nonviolent and developmental.

In ancient Near Eastern religious practice sacrifices were understood as providing food for the gods and were thought necessary to guarantee fertility of crops and flocks on earth. However, the God of Genesis

freely blesses animals and humans with perpetual fertility (Gen. 1:22, 28) and grants food to both for their sustenance (Gen. 1:29–30). Most significantly, the biblical Creator does not hoard power as sovereign ruler of the cosmos but instead gladly assigns humanity a share in ruling the earth as his representatives (Gen. 1:26–28). God's own generous exercise of power for the benefit of creatures thus provides the most important model for the human exercise of power.

There are implications here for environmental stewardship, grounded first of all in the fundamental kinship that humans share with all other creatures (we do not transcend creation) and in the fact that all existence is a gift from the generous Creator. That humans have only a delegated, derivative authority in the world, and that the Creator's own use of power is the normative model for dominion further suggest that human rule over the earth and the nonhuman creatures is to be characterized by generosity and care.

However, we cannot stop with environmental stewardship, narrowly conceived. While the picture of the human vocation in Gen. 1:26–28 certainly grounds care for the earth, the Bible intends something much broader by its association of the *imago Dei* with the exercise of cultural, developmental power. In the biblical worldview, all cultural activities and social institutions arise from interaction with the earth. Thus, so-called creation care should not be treated as an ethical agenda separate from attending to the social structures that we develop, including governments, economic systems, technological innovations, forms of communication, and the urban and suburban landscapes in which we live and work. Such a separation may well result in the absence of critical ethical reflection on the defining human calling to develop culture and our contemporary need to work for its healing in a broken world.

Ethical reflection on human culture must take into account the fact that no human being is granted dominion over another at creation. The process of cultural development is meant to flow from a cooperative sharing in dominion. This provides a normative basis to critique interhuman injustice or the misuse of power over others, both in individual cases and in systemic social formations. More specifically, since both male and female are made in God's image with a joint mandate to rule (Gen. 1:27–28), this calls into question the inequities of patriarchy and sexism that arise in history. And since the *imago Dei* is prior to any ethnic, racial, or national divisions (see Gen. 10), this critiques ethnocentrism, racism, and any form of national superiority. That God's intent from the beginning is for a cooperative world of *shalom*, generosity, and blessing is evident most fundamentally from the Creator's generous mode of exercising power at creation, which ought to function as an ethical paradigm or model for gracious and loving interhuman action.

#### The Renewal of the Image and the Flooding of Earth with God's Presence

Since human sin/violence has impeded and distorted (but not obliterated) the calling to be God's image on earth, God has intervened in history to set things right, initially through the election of Abraham and his descendants as a “royal priesthood” (Exod. 19:6), that they might mediate blessing to all families and nations (Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14). Israel's vocation vis-à-vis the nations therefore is analogous to the human calling as *imago Dei* vis-à-vis the earth. Indeed, the redemption of Israel constitutes the beginning of God's renewal of the image, a process that would ultimately spread to the entire human race. Likewise, the tabernacle is God's initial move to dwell on earth among a people who are being redeemed. But one day, “the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Hab. 2:14 [cf. Isa. 11:9]).

After a long and complex history of redemption, God's saving action culminates in the coming of Jesus, the paradigm *imago Dei* (2 Cor. 4:4–6; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3), God with us (Matt. 1:22–23), the one who completely manifested God's character and presence in the full range of his earthly, human life (John 14:9). As the second Adam, Jesus fulfilled through his obedience (even unto death) what the first Adam compromised by disobedience (Rom. 5:12–19).

And the risen Jesus, vindicated through resurrection, has become the head of the church, an international community of Jew and gentile reconciled to each other and to God and indwelt by God's

Spirit. The church is thus the “new humanity” (a much better translation than “new self”), renewed in the image of God (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:9–10; cf. 2 Cor. 3:18) and called to live up to the stature of Christ, whose perfect imaging becomes the model for the life of the redeemed (Phil. 2:5–11; Eph. 4:7–16, 22–24; 5:1; Col. 3:5–17). Indeed, one day the church will be conformed to the full likeness of Christ, which will include the resurrection of the body (1 Cor. 15:49; 1 John 3:2).

Whereas the church is God's temple (1 Cor. 3:16–17; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21) indwelt by the Holy Spirit as a foretaste of that promised future, the day will come when “all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord” (Num. 14:21) and “God will be all in all” (1 Cor. 15:28). Thus, at the end of the book of Revelation, when the curse is removed from the earth (a reversal of Gen. 3:17), God's dwelling can no longer be confined to heaven; rather, God's throne will be permanently established on a renewed earth (Rev. 21:3; 22:3), and those ransomed by Christ from all tribes and nations will reign as God's priests forever (Rev. 5:9–10; 22:5). This climactic fulfillment of the cultural mandate and the *imago Dei* is portrayed through the figure of the new Jerusalem, which is both holy city and redeemed people, representing the renewal of communal urban culture, a righteous, embodied polis.

In the present, as the church lives “between the times,” those being renewed in the *imago Dei* are called to instantiate an embodied culture or social reality alternative to the violent and deathly formations and practices that dominate the world. By this conformity to Christ—the paradigm image of God—the church manifests God's rule and participates in God's mission to flood the world with the divine presence. In its concrete communal life the church as the body of Christ is called to witness to the promised future of a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.<sup>8</sup>

R. Middleton,  
Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics

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<sup>8</sup> “Image of God”, J. Richard Middleton Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics ed. Joel B. Green (Grand Rapids, Baker. 2011) 394-397

# Concerns and Considerations From Pastoral Theology

## 8 Principles of gospel equality

These are helpful principles for reframing the way people see and act in community. If placed on repeat from the leadership, They can combat cultural distortions and slowly reframe the way the church culture views other people.

1. All under one creator existing as one race, the human race, with different ethnicities. The human race reflects the Triune nature of God. We are one race with a diversity of expressions. Both our oneness as humanity and our diverse expression are valuable.
2. All from the same parents. Whether you start with Adam and Noah, the human race is a single species in scientific terms. We are one family. The human family and we share a common existential experience, the experience of being human.
3. All are Equally love by God. John 3:16
4. All have an equal problem before God - Sin is universal, the universal affliction of sin's corruption of humanity (the sin nature) and the punishment all are under due to sin.
5. All have equal access to God through faith in Jesus. There is but one way of salvation, no special way for one group or back door for another.
6. All are equally able to worship - God desires the worship of all ethnicities every human expression finds its ultimate purpose in the worship of God. Different cultural expressions of worship are not different types of worship. The cultural product we call music is like vehicle we create for our worship to inhabit. Humanity either worship God or something else. Christain's share in a common Worship for we have a common object of worship, God.
7. All Christians are calls to follow the golden rule. As a grateful response to the gospel we follow Jesus teachings, one important rule for the social life of the Christian is the Golden rule. No one wants to be discriminated against likewise no one wants to be the object of racist hate. Treat others like you would wanna be treated is a principle of empathy the opposite of predigest. The golden rule should be the Christian posture towards all people, in the church and outside.
8. God calls Christain to love each other as Christ has loved us, this means love by definition is to be open to the other, the different, the stranger, the unlovable. If we are sinners and Jesus is our spotless savior. If He loved us when we were his enemies. We are called to love all equally. We can't be selective with love. We can't fake love by allowing chatty misdirection and painted smiles to masquerade as Christ-like openness. Nor can we let indifference be disguised friendly acquaintance. If we do we have a problem. Among brothers and sisters of the faith, selective love is no love at all.

## **Dealing with prejudice personally and in our people**

Those who look at others through the lens of prejudice have a mental blind spot that prevents them from seeing others accurately. Prejudiced people dive into a ditch that serves as a psychological fence, keeping them from seeing the God-given value in other relationships and what is a ditch but a grave with the ends knocked out! Such people confine themselves to their own “backyard” of bigotry.

### **What Is Prejudice?**

“Prejudice is an attitude, judgment, or feeling about a person, either positive or negative, that emerges from stereotypic beliefs held about the group to which the person belongs. Stereotypes drive prejudice because they involve generalizations that are factually incorrect in that people from out-groups do not uniformly possess the same characteristics.”

Practically speaking Prejudice is a preconceived opinion, usually unfavorable, formed without sufficient knowledge or just grounds. The word prejudice comes from the Latin word *praejudicium*, which means to “prejudge” (*prae*, “before”; *judicium*, “judgment”). From this an irrational attitude forms based on those overgeneralized belief that is directed toward an individual, group, or race.’

### **What are the categories of prejudice?**

Prejudice is makes by us-them thinking.

We tend to characterize people on the basis of the differences we observe— differences that place them in certain categories or groups. These characterizations tend to produce unfounded, negative attitudes toward others based on things like: gender, marital status, race, ethnicity/culture, appearance, disability, income, occupation, group membership, nationality, region, religion, level of education, perceived intelligence, personal habits, social class

The core characteristics of this sinful attitude are hinted at in James 2:9, “If you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.” Prejudice and Favoritism are like two sides of the same coin. Favoritism is the positive bias and prejudice is the negative bias.

People hold prejudices because of the cultural stereotypes attributed to the group rather than because of any personal individual experience with the group in question.

### **What Is the Root of prejudice?**

The primary problem with prejudice is that it goes against everything Jesus stands for, died for, and calls us to live for. Prejudice may rise from an experience or the way one was raised but such experiences develop into wrong beliefs about people and the world. The root of prejudice is wrong beliefs about a group reinforce by a prideful disposition towards such beliefs. Thats why racist people often seems so certain and matter of fact about their ideas of a particular group.

Wrong Belief:

“Some people are created better than others, and I don’t want to be it that way , it just is that way.”

“Nature is unequal I can help it that I I was born superior.”

“Some people just can’t be \_\_\_\_\_ because well they are \_\_\_\_\_”

Those who are prejudiced have a prideful mental slant. Although they see their position as right, they are wrong. Proverbs 26:12 gives this pointed warning: “*Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.*” If you struggle with prejudice, pray to see others through God's eyes so you will not be prideful or haughty. Proverbs 30:13 cautions against “*those whose eyes are ever so haughty, whose glances are so disdainful.*”

## How do we accept others without selling out?

Christain morality believes in moral absolutes. In our modern contacts this maze makes excepting people as they are difficult for most people assume acceptance is without obligation.

“Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God” (Rom 15:7).

How do you begin accepting others who are different from you? Simple, perform a Gospel examination: Examine your heart, Examine your thoughts, Examine your motives. Then begin the slow process of Shifting your thinking towards a gospel mindset. While seeking to replace behaviors that are laking with what is needed through a process of habituation. This is how we change our perception yet we don't do this on our own in it God working in us by the Holy Spirit. Here are 7 shifts every Christian should aim at as part of growing in Christ.

THE SLOW SHIFT OF PERSPECTION		
Don't judge the heart of another (Mat 7:1).		Pray for others and Ask God to search your heart (Ps 139:23-24).
Don't judge by outward appearances (1 Sam16:7).		See and seek to meet the needs of others (Phil 2:4).
Don't assume you cant change your attitudes (2 Cor 5:17).		Assume responsibility for changing your thinking (Rom 12:2).
Don't use derogatory names or terms (Tit 3:1-2).		Ask God to season your speech with His love (Eph 4:29).
Don't discriminate just because its culturally accepted and assumed (Pro 14:12).		Treat others the way you want to be treated (Mat 7:12).
Don't laugh at, mock or disparage the differences in others (Pro 11:12).		Learn to value the differences for their crated value and functional necessity ie. Differences make a difference. (Mal 2:10, 1 Cor 12).
Don't react when others are prejudiced against you (1 Pet 3:8-9).		Be prepared to suffer the painful effects of prejudice for the cause of Christ (Mat 5:11-12).

### **Expressing Equality in the Every Day**

What would happen if you saw yourself from God's perspective? Outside of Christ, you would be ashamed and wouldn't want to have even a hint of prejudice. Then you would want your heart to be "godly" you would insist on changing because

1. Express to others God's perspective on the equality of all people. (Gal 3:28). Ask God to express His love equally to others through you. Reach out with compassion to others. Seek empathy and understanding with others.
2. Quite the tendency to stereotype any person different from yourself (James 2:1). Stop yourself when you realize you're being judgmental. Be willing to set aside your preconceived notions. Learn to appreciate and enjoy cultural differences.
3. Understand the God-given worth of all human beings created in God's image. (Gen 1:27) View every person as being created in God's image. Seek to internalize the intrinsic value of others.
4. Acknowledge your need for the gospel. We need forgiveness and need to forgive others. (Col 3:13). Acceptance of God's grace enables you to give grace to others. Acceptance of God's forgiveness enables you to give forgiveness to others.
5. Learn that prejudice is a result of irrational, emotional irrational stereotypes not rational reasoning. (1 John 2:9,11). Be willing to admit you may not know all the facts. Study Scripture to develop discernment between good and evil.
6. Invest in others by having a servant's heart towards everyone (Mark 10:45). Get involved in helping people you would not normally help. Get to know someone well who is the object of your prejudice.
7. Turn from judging others to self-examination in the gospel (Mat 7:4). Pray for God to reveal your blind spots. When tempted to judge others, remember you're a sinner, remind yourself but by the grace of God Go I, that is, you would be likely worse than those you judge if not for God's grace in your life.
8. Yield in obedience to Christ living within you by His spirit (2 Pet 1:3-4). With Christ in you, you can choose to respond to everyone with His love. With Christ in you, you can choose to live a godly life.

And to my shame the points do spell E-Q-U-A-L-I-T-Y

# Definitions, Clarifications and Categories

## Five Interpretations of White Racial Attitudes in a Post-civil right age:

Scholars differ in their interpretation and analysis of whites' racial attitudes in the post-civil rights era. Their explanations can be grouped into five categories: (1) racial optimism, (2) racial pesoptimism, (3) symbolic racism, (4) group position and (5) color-blind racism.

**Racial optimists**, such as Seymour Lipset and Paul Sniderman, believe whites have, in fact, become more racially tolerant, and that their objections to programs such as affirmative action are not racially motivated. Although the views of these scholars are no longer dominant in academia, they are popular among the masses because they resonate with whites' racial common sense.

**Racial pesoptimists**, best represented by the work of Howard Schuman and his colleagues, believe that the change in whites' racial attitudes is best understood as a combination of progress and resistance. Although scholars in this tradition acknowledge the resistance of whites to racial change, they are still wedded to the old perspective elaborated by Gunnar Myrdal in his *An American Dilemma* (1944). Myrdal put forward the idea that whites will overcome their prejudice as soon as they reconcile the facts and realize that discrimination has no place in a truly democratic society.

**Symbolic racism** scholars, such as David Sears and Donald Kinder, argue instead that whites are still prejudiced, but in a new way that combines a moralistic dis-course with anti-black affect. For example, these scholars interpret whites' opposition to programs such as affirmative action as a symbolic expression of their prejudice.

Social structuralist scholars advocating the idea of **group position**, such as Lawrence Bobo and James Kluegel, believe whites' prejudice is a way to defend white privilege. The defense of group status is done nowadays, according to Bobo, through a "laissez-faire racism" that blames minorities for their inability to improve their economic and social standing.

The last, "explanation of whites' apparently paradoxical attitudes that has gained support is that developed by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva. He argues that whites' racial views in the post-civil rights era represent a new racial ideology: color-blind racism. Unlike Jim Crow racism, color-blind racism articulates whites' defense of the racial order in a subtle, apparently nonracial way. It provides tools to talk about race without appearing to be "racist" — a very important matter, given that the normative climate that has crystallized in the United States since the 1960s disavows the open expression of racial views."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Michelle Christian, *Color-blind Racism. Encyclopedia of race and racism.* ed. J. H. Moore, Vol 3 (London, Macmillan. 2008) 348-349

## Clarifications and Definitions

### **Stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination.**

Racism, as it is found in individuals, has three components: stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination.

(1) **Stereotypes** are beliefs about the characteristics possessed by members of a group. They embody the cognitive component of racism and exist at both the cultural and individual levels. At the cultural level, stereotypes are beliefs that members of one culture or group hold about the characteristics of another culture or group. At the individual level, stereotypes reflect an individual's beliefs about the characteristics found in a group. Individuals engage in stereotyping when they designate certain characteristics as especially prevalent in certain groups, or when they base their impression of a person on the characteristics believed to be associated with that person's group identity. Stereotypes can be positive or negative. For example the cultural stereotype of blacks in America includes positive (e.g., athletic) and negative (e.g., hostile) characteristics. The accuracy of stereotypes can also vary, but they are most often viewed as overgeneralizations. For example, even though whites may correctly believe that more blacks than whites play professional basketball, they may over generalize this belief by overestimating the number of blacks who play basketball.

(2) **Prejudice** is the emotional component of racism. It is a negative attitude that is directed at a group and its members... When prejudice and stereotypes change, they do not necessarily change together. Favorable intergroup contact reduces prejudice more than it changes stereotyping. Conversely, stereotyping can be reduced by informing people that their peers do not endorse stereotypes, but this does not always simultaneously reduce prejudice.<sup>10</sup>

In short, Prejudice is an attitude, judgment, or feeling about a person, either positive or negative, that emerges from stereotypic beliefs held about the group to which the person belongs. Stereotypes drive prejudice because they involve generalizations that are often factually incorrect or exaggerated.

(3) **Discrimination** is the behavioral manifestation of prejudice, involves responding to a person on the basis of the person's group membership, not the individual facts about the person. Thus, stereotypes lead to the discriminatory behavior that manifests prejudice.

So, prejudice is a matter of the heart (lack of love and empathy). Stereotypes are a matter of wrong beliefs (lack of facts and experience). This is consistent with research that found modern racial stereotypes often develops through socialization and its processes occur without conscious awareness.<sup>11</sup> Individuals with stereotypical beliefs may genuinely oppose racism and believe they are not racist.<sup>12</sup> Such stereotypes more often replicate themselves through socialization not by indoctrination so people can hold Stereotypes without knowing it.

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<sup>10</sup> Eric W. Mania, James M. Jones, Samuel L. Gaertner, "The social psychology of racism" *Encyclopedia of race and racism*. ed. J. H. Moore, Vol 3 (London, Macmillan. 2008) 75-76

<sup>11</sup> Whitley, Bernard E.; Kite, Mary E. *The Psychology of Prejudice and Discrimination*. (Belmont: Thomson-Wadsworth. 2010). 232

<sup>12</sup> David A Harrison, David A. Kravitz, David M Mayer, Lisa M. Leslie,; Dalit Lev-Arey, "Understanding attitudes toward affirmative action programs in employment: Summary and meta-analysis of 35 years of research". *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Issue 91 Vol. 5. 2006: 1013–36.

## **Racism**

Racism, the most destructive form of prejudice, dehumanizes those who are different... Racism is based on a biological notion of race, wherein there is an assumption that real or imagined physical, mental, and moral characteristics are transmitted genetically and are therefore permanent. Racism assumes the hierarchical ordering and rejection of other races and the ideas, customs, and practices associated with them.... Racism is a modern concept that characterizes certain dominant-subordinate behavioral practices among different groups within the human family.<sup>13</sup>

**Diversity:** Diversity has come to refer to the various backgrounds and races that comprise a community, nation or other grouping. In many cases the term diversity does not just acknowledge the existence of diversity of background, race, gender, religion, but implies an appreciation of these differences.

**Ethnicity:** Ethnicity refers to the social characteristics that people may have in common, such as language, religion, regional background, culture, etc. Ethnicity is revealed by the traditions one follows, a person's native language, and so on. Race, on the other hand, describes categories assigned to demographic groups based mostly on observable physical characteristics, like skin color, hair texture and eye shape.

**White Privilege:** White privilege, or "historically accumulated white privilege," as we have come to call it, refers to whites' historical and contemporary advantages in access to quality education, decent jobs and liveable wages, homeownership, retirement benefits, wealth and so on. The following quotation from a publication by Peggy Macintosh can be helpful in understanding what is meant by white privilege: "As a white person I had been taught about racism that puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an advantage. . . White privilege is an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in every day, but about which I was meant to remain oblivious."<sup>14</sup>

## **Institutional racism**

*Institutional racism is the process by which racial oppression is imposed on subordinate racial groups by dominant racial groups through institutional channels. While individuals carry out single acts of discrimination, societal institutions are the primary settings where patterns of racial discrimination are established and perpetuated toward subordinate peoples. Central to the operation of institutional racism is a racial hierarchy of power, and, despite differences in historical development and racial-ethnic group composition among the world's countries, institutionalized racism tends to be prevalent in countries that have both dominant and subordinate racial groups...*<sup>15</sup>

*Central to institutional racism is the power differential whereby patterns of discriminatory practices reward those of the dominant group (typically whites and lighter-skinned peoples) and*

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<sup>13</sup> "Racism", Preston N. Williams, *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, 2nd edn. Eds. James Childress and John MacQuarrie (Philadelphia, Westminster press, 1986) 526

<sup>14</sup> Peggy Macintosh, "Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack." excerpted from Working Paper #189 White Privilege and Male Privilege a Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences through Work in Women's Studies. Wellesley, MA: Wellesley College Center for the Study of Women (1989)

<sup>15</sup>Kristen M. Lavelle Joe R. Feagin 'Institutional racism' *Encyclopedia of race and racism*. ed. J. H. Moore, Vol 3 (London, Macmillan. 2008) 180-183

*harm subordinate groups. White elites in many white-dominant countries, such as the Netherlands, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, and the United States, have firm control of the political, corporate, media, and academic arenas, and they are able to generate and reproduce racism through these powerful channels, consciously or unconsciously (Dijk 1993). This occurs not just through the establishment of discriminatory institutional practices but also through the creation of a white supremacist ideology, which gives people rationalizations for out-comes of even extreme levels of racial inequality...*

*In the United States, overt racism, for the most part, is no longer inscribed in law. Nevertheless, this does not mean that racism is not still institutionalized. According to extensive research done by Harvard University's Civil Rights Project (2003), there is a striking "pipeline" leading from schools to prison. This funneling of students of color into prisons occurs through the systematic tracking of "high-risk" children of color and includes such practices as high-stakes testing, disproportionate special education placements, resource inequities, and stringent disciplinary procedures. This treatment of students of color (most significantly black and Latino boys) combines with law enforcement trends that treat these same juveniles with increasing harshness for both major and minor offenses (see also Oakes 2005).*

*Here again the cumulative impact of racial discrimination comes into focus. Because of institutional racism in the education system combined with discrimination by law enforcement, a young male of color is likely to enter the criminal justice system and then experience institutional racism there. An abundance of social science research shows that people of color (especially black men) are racially profiled and harassed by police, are likelier to be arrested and charged with crimes, receive harsher sentences, and have more difficulty achieving parole than their white counterparts. Additionally, beyond the prison, in the employment sector, a black man with a criminal record will have extreme difficulty finding a job, compared to his white counterpart (Pager 2003).*

*In education, institutional racism can also be seen operating through standard classroom materials, where textbooks omit or skew the truth about racial histories and seriously neglect any discussions of racism and anti-racism (Loewen 1995; Dijk 1993). Virtually all mainstream textbooks are controlled by elites, who most often have an interest in upholding the racial status quo and offering a "whitewashed" perspective on difficult matters such as slavery and colonization, a perspective that will play down the unfair advantages whites have gained through centuries of racial oppression.*

*All of these institutionalized racist practices are supported by a white supremacist ideology, including insidious stereotypes that rationalize these serious oppressions of people of color. Although media cannot be blamed for creating harmful, racist images of people of color, they certainly project them to the mainstream for consumption and, thus, fuel white conceptions of the goodness of whiteness and the criminality of people of color (Russell 1998). ... The world's populations consume the white supremacist ideology and images and receive ready-made rationalizations for racial inequality that leaves the darkest-skinned peoples at the bottom of a global racial hierarchy through the worldwide operation of institutional racism.<sup>16</sup>*

*Two terms often associated with institutional racism, structural and systemic racism.*

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<sup>16</sup>Kristen M. Lavelle Joe R. Feagin 'Institutional racism' *Encyclopedia of race and racism*. ed. J. H. Moore, Vol 3 (London, Macmillan. 2008) 180-183

## **Structural racism**

Structural racism deals with policies and practices entrenched in established institutions, that has the appearance of equality yet the structural elements afford more opportunity to one group and acts more restrictive for another, this result in the exclusion or promotion of one groups. Structural racism describes racism as a structure of society. It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with “whiteness” and disadvantages associated with “color” to endure and adapt over time. Structural racism is not something that a few people or institutions choose to practice. Instead it has been a feature of the social, economic and political systems in which we all exist. In this regard the whole society order is predicated on a passive neglect shown towards one group and an active favoritism towards another.

## **Systemic Racism:**

Systemic racism describes racism in how, attitudes, emotions, and habits, embedded in social and economic systems guide the way races relate to one another. It describes the interplay of policies, practices and programs of differing institutions which leads to adverse outcomes and conditions for communities of one group compared to another. In many ways “systemic racism” and “structural racism” are synonymous. Systemic deals more with the current “wether-like” conditions that produce inequity. We take the system as a whole and understand the evidence of inequality by observing disparity between groups. Data on social and economic welfare show disparities between many persons of color and their white counterparts.

- Unemployment rates for Africans Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans are considerably higher than the national average. Growing income inequality increasingly affects minorities.
- In the United States, median wealth for white households is ten times greater than for black households, and eight times greater than for Hispanic households.
- Minority homeownership rates lag behind their white counterparts, and yet research shows that minorities face extra hurdles in getting approved for mortgages.
- African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans are disproportionately affected through every stage of the criminal justice system, despite the evidence that different racial and ethnic groups commit crimes at roughly the same rates.

## **Symbolic Racism**

“Symbolic racism” blends anti-black feelings and traditional American moral values in a way that results in support for the racial status quo. Symbolic racism argues that whites are still prejudiced, but in a new way that combines a moralistic discourse with anti-black affect.<sup>17</sup> Symbolic racism was coined by David Sears and John McConahay in 1973 to explain why most white Americans supported principles of equality for black Americans, but less than half were willing to support affirmative action, a programs designed to implement these principles.<sup>18</sup> The study understood the rejection of affirmative action to be based the values held by white America. Symbolic racism argues that whites are still prejudiced, but in a new way that combines a moralistic discourse with anti-black affect. For example, these scholars interpret whites' opposition to programs such as affirmative action as a symbolic expression of their prejudice. Because the racism is not out in the open any more, it has to be found hiding behind other arguments. Proponents of this view maintain that by operating out of symbolic racism, privileged people are able to maintain prejudicial stereotypes that normalize their own

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<sup>17</sup> P. J. Henry, David Sears, *Symbolic and Modern Racism. Encyclopedia of race and racism.* ed. J. H. Moore, Vol 3 (London, Macmillan. 2008) 111–112

<sup>18</sup> This argument is found in *The Politics of Violence: The New Urban Blacks and the Watts Riot.* eds David O. Sears,; John B. McConahay, (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin. 1973).

cultural values and oppose social policies aimed at improving the status of underprivileged groups without having to feel as if they are racists.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Simo V Virtanen,.; Leonie Huddy, "Old-Fashioned Racism and New Forms of Racial Prejudice". *The Journal of Politics*. Issue 60. Vol 2. 1998: 311–332.

## **Intersectionality (courtesy of 'Chance Gamble' PhD)**

Intersectionality was coined by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw in her 1989 essay analyzing a legal case in which General Motors (GM) was found not guilty of discrimination against black women. The court ruled in favor of GM because they refused to examine racial and gender-based bias together: since black men and white women were employed by GM, the five black women who filed the suit could not prove race or gender hiring discrimination. That GM did not hire black women prior to 1964 and fired all black women hired after 1970 in a layoff based on seniority was deemed irrelevant.

In the time since its creation, intersectionality has expanded as a concept and theoretical framework. It is a key term in much feminist, critical race, ethnicity, and gender scholarship in academia, and since higher education is a place of training for our nations' youth, it always impacts culture. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives are just one example of how these academic philosophies have manifested change in society. Today, intersectionality "as an analytic tool examines how power relations are intertwined and mutually constructing. Race, class, gender, sexuality, dis/ability, ethnicity, nation, religion, and age are categories of analysis, terms that reference important social divisions. But they are also categories that gain meaning from power relations of racism, sexism, heterosexism, and class exploitation" (Collins and Bilge 7). Intersectionality provides language and support for considering the multiple facets any person(s) experiences in social situations. Consequently, it creates "a conceptual space through which to study how various oppressions work together to produce something unique and distinct from any one form of discrimination standing alone" (Dhamoon 231).

Intersectionality originated in the context of critiquing a legal system in which black women were unable to prove discrimination because of their being both black and female. It continues to provide useful tools for looking at systemic issues, such as healthcare and education disparities. For example, though African American girls represent 15.6% of all girls in school, they constitute 24.7% of 1<sup>st</sup> graders, 34.5% of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders, and 39.5% of 4<sup>th</sup> graders held back (National Women's Law Center calculations using data from U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2013-14). Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt praise the insights intersectionality offers into developing greater understanding between different groups of people, but critique interpretations that increase tribalism and impose moral hierarchies predicated on inverse power differentials. (Works Cited at end of document)

### **Works Cited in Intersectionality definition**

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Lukianoff, Greg, and Jonathan Haidt. *The Coddling of the American Mind: How Good Intentions and Bad Ideas Are Setting up a Generation for Failure*. Penguin Books, 2019, Print.

## Evaluating of Intersectionality as a Concept

Dear reader I [Dawson] would like to take a little moment of your time to consider the proper and improper use of intersectionality. Intersectionality is a theory based on several insights which have validity and in the right context can be useful. “Insights such as power matters, members of groups sometimes act cruelly or unjustly to preserve their power, and people who are members of multiple identity groups can face various disadvantage in ways that are often invisible to others.”<sup>20</sup>

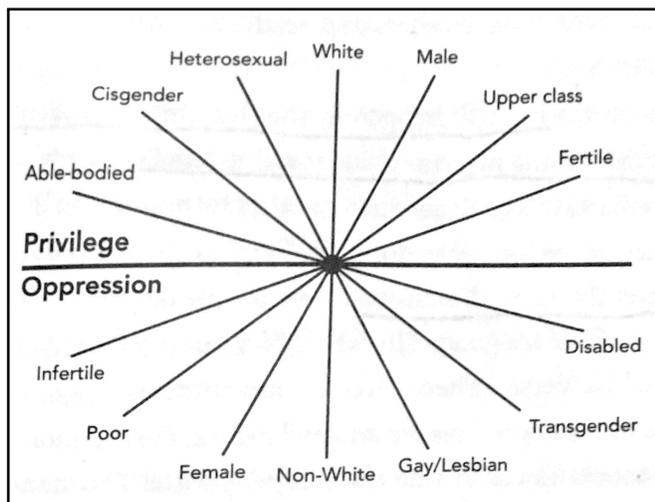
Intersectionality is first a legal term, a descriptive legal term. Such terms are best used in the courtroom and can have unforeseen consequences when broadly applied across many disciplines. We see this most clearly in the application and effects that certain interpretations of intersexuality are having on college campuses. As one scholar put it:

The human mind is prepared for tribalism, and these interpretations of intersectionality have the potential to turn tribalism way up. These interpretations of intersectionality teach people to see bipolar dimensions of privilege and oppression as ubiquitous in social interactions. It's not just about employment or other opportunities, and it's not just about race and gender.<sup>21</sup>

It's about power. On many campuses, intersectionality is taught in conjunction with two key concepts: privilege and oppression. “Privilege involves the power to dominate in systematic ways, which are simultaneously how do you logical and material, institutional and personal... Oppression involves the lived, systematic experience of being dominated by virtue of one's position on various particular axes.”<sup>22</sup>

Below is a diagram used to teach intersectionality, some call it the matrix of domination (I know sounds like a D&D reference “The woodland elf followed the path from the Teriban forest until it ended at the dark and foreboding, “Matrix of Domination — Roll six or higher to cast a ‘light of dawn’ enchantment”).

Back to the M of D diagram, the center point represents a particular individual living at the “intersection” of many dimensions of power/privilege. Each line represents intersections of social inequality. The endpoints of the lines represent maximum privilege or extreme oppression with respect to the perpendicular line. A person will be high or low on any given lines. Each point is simultaneously a locus of our agency, power, disempowerment, oppression, and resistance.



<sup>20</sup> Greg Lukianoff, and Jonathan Haidt. *The Coddling of the American Mind: How Good Intentions and Bad Ideas Are Setting up a Generation for Failure*. (New York, Penguin Books, 2019) 69

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 70

<sup>22</sup> Kathryn Pauly Morgan ‘Describing the Emperor’s New Clothes: Three myths of educational (in-)equality’, eds. Ann Diller, Barbara Houston, Kathryn Pauly Morgan and Maryann Ayim, *The Gender Question in Education: theory, Pedagogy and Politics* (Boulder. Westview Press, 1996), 106

According to intersectionality each person's lived experience is shaped by his or her position on these dimensions. Taken as a whole, the points plot out someone's social reality and situate the self in relation to a world of oppressive forces. The concept clearly becomes a way of seeing the world.

Some teachers use the matrix to analyze how two of those axes, race and gender, interact to structure schools in ways that privilege the ideas and perspectives of white males.<sup>23</sup> Currently, Women make up a majority of all students on college campuses. Many schools, follow suit teaching women (the majority of most student bodies) that they are forced to live and learn within ideas and institutions structured by white men. The concept being communicated is you're a colonized population. We could use the word oppressed population. Three likely outcomes can be posited. If you view your situation as oppressive: 1.) You will likely not experience a sense of empowerment, 2.) It will likely encourage an external locus of control. 3.) Your education will likely be hindered. Who would want to engage with their teachers (indoctrinator/oppressors?), let alone, do the readings, and work hard to get ahead if getting ahead is impossible. It is becoming clear, such a framework for understanding your place in the world is not helpful. Some authors have gone a bit further, claiming, it may be harmful.

In *The Coddling of the American Mind*, Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt explain:

What will happen to the thinking of students who are trained to see everything in terms of intersecting bipolar axes where one end of each axis is marked "privilege" and the other is "oppression"? Since "privilege" is defined as the "power to dominate" and to cause "oppression," these axes are inherently moral dimensions. The people on top are bad, and the people below the line are good. This sort of teaching seems likely to encode the Untruth of Us Versus Them directly into students' cognitive schemas: Life is a battle between good people and evil people. Furthermore, there is no escaping the conclusion as to who the evil people are. The main axes of oppression usually point to one intersectional address: straight white males.<sup>24</sup>

The authors go on to illustrate their point:

An illustration of this way of thinking happened at Brown University in November of 2015, when students stormed the president's office and presented their list of demands to her and the provost (the chief academic officer, generally considered the second-highest post). At one point in the video of the confrontation, the provost, a white man, says, "Can we just have a conversation about—?" but he is interrupted by shouts of "No!" and students' finger snaps. One protester offers this explanation for cutting him off: "The problem they are having is that heterosexual white males have always dominated the space." The provost then points out that he himself is gay. The student stutters a bit but continues on, undeterred by the fact that Brown University was led by a woman and a gay man.<sup>25</sup>

They conclude:

In short, as a result of our long evolution for tribal competition, the human mind readily does dichotomous, us-versus-them thinking. If we want to create welcoming, inclusive communities, we should be doing everything we can to turn down the tribalism and turn up

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid. 106-109

<sup>24</sup> Greg Lukianoff, and Jonathan Haidt. *The Coddling of the American Mind: How Good Intentions and Bad Ideas Are Setting up a Generation for Failure*. (New York, Penguin Books, 2019) 70

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

the sense of common humanity. Instead, some theoretical approaches used in universities today may be hyper activating our ancient tribal tendencies even if that was not the intention of the professor.<sup>26</sup>

I end this assessment with a little metaphor. Intersectionality can be compared to a good wine. Like a good wine, a little can go a long way in making a things better. Intersectionality can promote compassion and reveal injustices not previously seen. Also, like a good wine, it only pairs well with a few specific things. Enjoy it with a bag of potato chips, and you may be full of regret later. Likewise Intersectionality if pared with standpoint epistemology, critical race theory, or anything penned by Foucault, will get you drunk on power and then leave you with a bad taste in your mouth.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid. 70-71