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**WHITENESS AS WITNESS: RE-CONCEPTUALIZING  
DIVERSITY IN CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION**

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**Whiteness as Witness:  
Re-conceptualizing Diversity in Christian Higher Education**

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*“Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?”* The Brother’s Grimm, *Snow-White*

### **Diversity is Not Enough**

Diversity is not enough. Having a good compositional mix of students on any given campus does not automatically lead to more equitable treatment for students of color. Moreover diversity is neither the problem nor the solution. If anything, the amount of intentional and unintentional racism might increase rather than decrease, as a result of having students of color engage in more interactions with their dominant White counterparts. A missing piece of the puzzle is the interrogation of whiteness, white dominance, and anti-racism education on college campuses in general, and within divisions of student affairs in particular. As equity scholars we hold that a truly transformative process begins with a reversal of our gaze upon the Other. We ask that rather than looking through a window upon people of color, educators hold up a mirror that will facilitate recognition of various forms of privilege, power, and dominance that has long been unrecognized, unchecked, and unchallenged.

A faculty colleague in sociology and I (Cha) decided to host a program following a Tim Wise lecture across town, and called it “Exploring Whiteness”. I was in my third year of doing diversity work at Westmont College in Santa Barbara and our office has become accustomed to preaching to the same ole’ choir of fifteen to twenty students, primarily students of color who frequented our programs. That night, the lounge was overflowing with over 75 students looking for seats, some settling for the floor to ensure a spot at our program. As it were, this program was scratching an itch. It created an entryway for the 75% of our student population whom identified as White to join the conversation on diversity. For the last decade I (Jun) have been teaching a doctoral level course on diversity and social justice in higher education to mostly

White doctoral students at Azusa Pacific University. I suspect that had this course not been required, a good number of students opt out of this course. The class had at times, become a painful exercise in confronting privilege, sitting in the midst of hard oftentimes frustrating moments of denial, resistance, and awakening. With this room full of administrative leaders who serve as leaders to scores of students in Christian colleges across the country, I was at times distressed that my doctoral level course on justice was at times reduced to nothing more than a remedial class on diversity.

In this chapter we call for an evolution of diversity education in student affairs to move beyond cultural awareness and educate students on systemic White supremacy as a way to ultimately engage in anti-racism advocacy. The evolution of our efforts is divided into *four* distinct sections. The first section, *Why should I care? Shifting the Diversity Paradigm*, we offer an overview of ongoing problems that have plagued Christian higher education in terms of a lack of diversity, and also redefine terms to set the stage for the rest of the chapter. The second section, *Understanding the Landscape of Whiteness: The Invisible Side of the Problem*, begins with a discussion of whiteness and White culture that is embedded in American evangelicalism. This section addresses Whiteness as the invisible side of the problem of racism. We also interrogate Whiteness in Christian colleges, the role of whiteness in the church, and the ongoing problems of colorblind theology. In section three, entitled, *Toward Critical Race Consciousness of Dismantling White Dominance in Our Minds*, we address the importance of dismantling of White Dominance in the minds of students, the problems associated with compositional diversity, and a discussion of proactive versus reactive approaches to diversity in student affairs. We then discuss the role of distributing diversity work across departments within student affairs divisions, and conclude the third section with practical approaches to creating critical White

consciousness. In the fourth and final section, *What then Shall I do?: A Race Conscious Paradigm*, we build upon implications for practice with recommendations for building a race conscious paradigm that conceptualizes diversity at Christian colleges. Our ultimate goal as the title suggests, is to address whiteness to become a better collective witness on racial justice to a watching world. We acknowledge that our focus centers whiteness and this could be problematic for White and People of Color (PoC) colleagues alike, but we are compelled to address the heretofore unchallenged, unchecked, and uncritical normativity of whiteness for administrators, faculty, and students who work toward and care about diversity in college.

### **Why Should I Care? Shifting the Diversity Paradigm**

Institutions of higher education often measure their progress on diversity based on the diversity of their undergraduate enrollment. The commonly used term Predominately White Institution (PWI) demonstrates this as it refers to the numerical statistics of the racial diversity (or lack there of) within an institutions undergraduate student body. For some, aiming to become at least 40% students of color or even better over 50% is a sure measurement of reaching the threshold of being a diverse institution and thus, no longer a PWI. Racial enrollment ratio, while significant, can be a myopic way to measure institutional diversity. Collins & Jun suggest this may be a weak unit of analysis and advocate focusing more on dominant whiteness and utilizing the term Dominantly White Institutions (DWI). This accounts for the history, location, habits, and proportions of faculty and executives who are White (Collins & Jun, 2017).

Too often, the racial diversity conversation can be seen as an issue for people of color rather than one that also profoundly impacts White people (Dalton, 2015). So the burden of dismantling a dominant white system continues to fall on People of Color to educate their white

colleagues, classmates, professors and administrative leaders. These endless incidental educational moments leave PoC with manifold burdens. Within academia, there is a growing awareness of the importance of whiteness and White racial identity theory for expanding racial self-awareness (Malott, Paone, Schaeffle, Cates, & Haizlip, 2015; Croll, 2007) and for White people, race is understood in the context of the other and whiteness is assumed to be normative (Rothenberg, 2015). Understanding whiteness, White privilege, and racial consciousness is critical in preparing White students to be effective in civic learning and democratic engagement (Kivel, 2011).

A closer examination of Christian colleges and universities reveals even larger problems of homogeneity. White students are graduating from racially homogenous Christian colleges with little engagement of their race or across racial differences (Yancey, 2010). Many White people never consider their own whiteness, and this obliviousness to their own social location is fundamental to the problem of White college student's underdeveloped racial identity. White people are not aware of their own cultures or the value of understanding whiteness (Dalton, 2015; Wise, 2015; Wallis, 2016). The need to graduate racially aware White college students is more critical today as we find ourselves at a time in society marked by ongoing racial discord (Myers, 2015; Nesbit, 2016).

An inability or unwillingness of White people to think of themselves in racial terms can perpetuate disengagement for White students and can have decidedly negative consequences (Dalton, 2015). A lack of consciousness not only denies White people the experience of seeing themselves as beneficiaries of systemic racism, but also in doing so, frees them from taking responsibility from eradicating it (McIntyre, 1997; Wise, 2011; Kivel, 2011, Rothenberg, 2015). White people are used to talking about race as a Black or PoC issue, but few analyze what it

means to be White in this culture, specifically in terms of the advantages Whites receive (Wise, 2015). Higher education and student affairs divisions play a crucial role in developing this type of social consciousness during the formative years of undergraduate education (Chang, 2002). It is therefore important that college educators and student affairs professionals examine the experiences of White students and incorporate understanding whiteness and White racial consciousness into curriculum and student affairs practice (Case, 2007; Neville, Poteat, Lewis, & Spanierman, 2014).

Exploring whiteness and studying White racial identity development (Helms, 1993; Croll, 2007; Mallot et al., 2015) is an area that is largely missing in Christian scholarship and practice. Very few books address White identity let alone White privilege, are written by Christian authors (Harris & Schaupp, 2004; Wallis, 2016; Collins & Jun, 2017). This is a reflection of the larger body of Christian scholarship on race, which is lacking an understanding to the significance of whiteness, White privilege, and White consciousness. The focus of this chapter is an important shift to examine not only an understanding of the racialized experiences of people of color, but also the other side of the race conversation; an understanding of whiteness in Evangelical Christian contexts.

### **Understanding the Landscape of Whiteness: The Invisible Side of the Problem**

Whiteness and White privilege is described as the other side of racism (Rothenberg, 2015). We would modify Rothenberg's concept and refer to this as the invisible side of racism. This shift from thinking about racial diversity as an issue only for and about people of color, interrogates whiteness as a normative, natural, and dominant ideology. This level of intentional, critical engagement to examine the role and significance of whiteness is an important but often elusive transition for college undergraduates both in and out of the classroom. Some would

argue this is the very nature of the privilege of Whiteness. It is normative and blinds White people from seeing the problems rooted in one's own racial identity (Rothenberg, 2015; Wallis, 2016).

In a 1993 Charlie Rose interview with famous Pulitzer Prize-winning African American author Toni Morrison, Rose wanted to understand the daily experience of Black people. When asked whether she faced daily encounters of racism, Morrison poignantly paused and then informed Rose that he is asking the *wrong question*. She clarified to Rose that the right question is "How do *you* feel?" thereby shifting the discussion to how racism affects White people as well as people of color (Blay, 2015). She encouraged a shift in thinking to an examination of whiteness and the accountability of White people to dismantle racism.

Most White students have not thought critically about their own racial identity and when they do, it is also associated with a feeling of guilt and shame; these are a part of the hidden costs of racism (Tatum, 2003). Beyond initial negative emotive reactions, most diversity education concludes with awareness and appreciation of one's own White culture, without taking the very necessary and important next step of addressing what anti-racism advocacy ought to be. Thus, the cost is great to White students who are not encountering opportunities to develop a healthy consciousness of race during college. Specifically, White students should encounter opportunities to examine their own racial identity and their whiteness.

Furthermore, many White college students experience what DiAngelo (2011) refers to as fragility. White people in North America often live in an insulated environment of racial comfort and have a lowered ability to tolerate racial stress, which triggers a range of defensive moves (DiAngelo, 2011). This state of fragility can create an unhealthy perspective on White racial identity that makes it challenging to move toward engagement with race. In a White



dominant environment, it is often a challenge for Whites to know how to respond in constructive ways when issues arise (DiAngelo, 2011).

Christian scholars have not sufficiently examined whiteness and the affects of White privilege on the church and its significance in the discussion for racial justice. The emphasis on racial reconciliation fails to interrogate White privilege, falls short of anti-racism advocacy, and may ultimately prohibit White people from using their privilege redemptively (Bradley, 2013).

It can be argued that the Christian college learning environment is more insulated than is often the case at secular institutions, given less racial diversity on many Christian campuses (Yancey, 2010). The evangelical struggle with race does not often reflect overt racism, rather an inability to see the particularity of White evangelical culture and its captivity to middle-class American norms (Trulear, 2013). In a newly written book, *White Jesus: The architecture of racism in religion and education*, I (Jun) worked with colleagues to dismantle the misguided theological interpretations in American Christianity for white evangelicals that fail to separate White western nationalism from evangelical Christianity (Jun, Jones Jolivet, Ash, and Collins, 2018).

Although there is no evidence that White Christians are deliberately keeping their children in Dominant White Institutions (Collins & Jun, 2017), Christian colleges are more likely to be racially homogeneous compared to other secular institutions (Yancey, 2010). As a result, many Christian institutions represent essentially White enclaves that do not offer effective diverse learning environments for students. Research has shown that a lack of interracial contact hinders the ability of White people to understand the challenges people of color encounter (Oliver & Wong 2003, Woods & Sonleitner 1996, Yancey, 1999). This necessitates greater intentionality to engage White students at Christian colleges around issues of race.

*Whiteness and the Christian University*

While increasing racial diversity and enacting diverse learning environments on college campuses is a commonly shared ideal in higher education, Christian colleges and universities struggle to address this issue effectively (Yancey, 2010; Jun & De La Rosa, 2013). Racial diversity on Christian college campuses continues to remain behind that of its secular counterparts (Wolfe, 2006; Yancey, 2010). Not surprisingly, Christian colleges and universities mirror the largely White evangelical church. These demographics elicit questions about the learning environments for students at Christian colleges and the extent to which opportunities are being provided for engagement across racial differences.

White evangelical students who are attending DWIs are less likely to encounter contemporary forms of racism facing the U.S. and more likely to internalize the assumptions of colorblindness (Yancey, 2010). This type of colorblind thinking has been described as a modern day expression of racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2013; Neville et al., 2014). Both the low racial heterogeneity and an environment that perpetuates colorblind assumptions elucidate a need to actively examine both racial diversity and racial homogeneity at Christian colleges and Universities. Accordingly, Christian higher education is challenged to prepare the future leaders of the church and beyond in regard to the shifting racial demographics of the U.S.

*White Evangelical Christianity and the Church*

Students' underdeveloped sense of racial consciousness is reflected in the broader culture of evangelicalism as a whole. White evangelicals tend to be more racially isolated and more prone to explain racial inequality in individualistic and only interpersonal terms (Emerson & Smith, 2000; Paris & Schoon, 2007) rather than structural issues. In 2014, when the country was faced with deep racial unrest after incidents in Ferguson, leaders in the Black community

challenged evangelicals for being silent *en masse* and having no call to action (Anyabwile, 2014). The White evangelical church leadership and mobilization of the church was absent when the many others were taking action.

People struggle to distinguish evangelicalism and White evangelicalism because the evangelical Christian faith was historically and consistently shaped by whiteness (Chang, 2017). The challenge of racial homogeneity and White dominant culture permeates evangelical institutions and is markedly evident in Christian higher education, which is preparing the next generation of Christian leaders. According to Yancey (2010), it is unlikely that overwhelmingly White evangelical colleges and universities are in a position to provide churches and organizations with the necessary leadership to effectively engage with growing racial diversity (Yancey, 2010).

According to Yancey (2006) predominately White Christian colleges have historically perpetuated colorblind ideologies when it comes to issues of race, including the minimization of addressing issues of race and racism. A common Christian attitude leans on being “one in Christ” and essentially racially colorblind (Harris & Schaupp, 2004). This learning environment makes it challenging for White college students to find opportunities to become more racially aware and engaged in learning about race. Given the often-encountered racial homogeneity in Christian higher education, it is just as if not more important to think about racial diversity and also critically examine the deeply permeated implications of whiteness within Christian institutions of higher education.

*Colorblindness: We Can Not Change What We Do Not See*

In my five years of doing diversity work at a Christian college, perhaps the greatest challenge has been the deep seeded mindset of colorblind thinking that is undergirded by the

normativity of whiteness. I liken doing diversity work at a Christian college to swimming upstream against the strong currents of a culture of avoidance and minimization of race and racism. This characteristic of White dominant culture is built into the structures of our institutional environments and leadership and perhaps more importantly deeply imbedded into our way of thinking. In part, this is what Collins & Jun (2017) refer to as the White architecture of the mind. Students, staff, and faculty of color often experience this White dominant culture and colorblind thinking acutely upon arriving and throughout time on Christian college campuses.

This colorblind thinking is related to White racial normativity and positionality. Dalton refers to this as race obliviousness and the natural consequence to being in the drivers seat (2015). This race obliviousness blinds Whites to the fact that their lives are formed by race just as much as are the lives of people of color (Dalton, 2015). Colorblind thinking permeates the ethos of many Christian college campuses that either overlook issues of race and/or conceals them. Murakawa describes colorblindness as *the* problem of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as this ideology refuses to acknowledge the causes and consequences of enduring racial stratification (2014). A colorblind approach does little towards dismantling existing injustice (Shin, 2017)

With whiteness and White culture dominating the existing structures and culture of our Christian colleges and universities, what is being done to change the landscape? As educators, we must look to dismantle the damaging effect of a dominant, yet seemingly invisible reality of whiteness. As believers, we must do this for the body of Christ and for the kingdom.

### **Critical Race Consciousness: Dismantling White Dominance in our Minds**

In order to dismantle White dominance within Christian higher education, we must first center it in order to see it and make it visible. From there it is imperative to critically examine

White dominance to ultimately de-center whiteness. This process is rather complex, it can often be painful, especially for White students, and it may sometimes require repentance and forgiveness, of both White students and students of color. And of course, this work will take time. The problems that led to systemic racism in higher education are complex and took generations to evolve. The solution to end racial injustice in higher education will be as complex as the reasons that created the problems in the first place. This is perhaps why this process of disentangling the historical sin of racism and excavating its effects on our thoughts is so challenging. There is no quick fix. No silver bullet. No panacea. Only hard work and intentionality to address the problem directly will help with solutions.

It starts with our minds and can be translated into actions and ultimately our student affairs practice. A framework for this process referred to as critical consciousness can be found in critical pedagogy and is often tied to the work of Freire and the concept of *conscientização*, which names a critical investigation of the world (1970). Collins and Jun describe this awakening process and also introduce a process that is a cycle of critical consciousness (2017). Based in a Critical Race Theory framework, Horsford introduces a multi-step progression of race consciousness that starts with racial literacy and ultimately strives towards racial reconciliation (2011).

We must first start with developing this critical consciousness of our own racial identity (both White and people of color) and understand the nature of race. We then develop a consciousness of a racialized society, including issues of systemic power and historical oppression (Freire, 1970). This is tied to many tenets of Critical Race Theory and the concept of racial realism that is historically rooted and deeply pervasive (Bell, 1992). Once we awaken to racial realism, we begin to race and also the widespread underrepresentation and inequity for

people of color while also the dominance, normativity and invisibility of whiteness (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). This will guide us to taking on the practice of continuously naming White dominance and in turn dismantling it in our minds and in our practice. The cycle also consists of a process of activation, awareness, alliances, and advocacy that are interdependent and cyclical (Collins & Jun, 2017).

What does this mean for our student affairs practice? Practically speaking, this starts with our own education and the curriculum within our student affairs graduate programs. It would behoove us to incorporate critical pedagogy into our student affairs curriculum at Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) institutions that are preparing the next generation of student affairs professionals for Christian Higher Education. It must also continue in our student affairs practice with repeated revisiting of the cycle of consciousness (Collins & Jun, 2017). As student affairs professionals we must learn how to incorporate this into our everyday work, anywhere from student programming to how we train and develop our student leaders. This transformed practice, in turn allows us to continually dismantle the White dominance that permeates our institutions and culture.

#### *Beyond Compositional and Toward Structural Diversity*

Over a ten-year period from 2004-2014, the enrollment of students of color at the Council for Christian Colleges and University (CCCU) institutions nearly doubled, from 58,000 to 104,000 students (Stemmler, 2016). These data indicate that students of color account for much of the growth in Christian colleges and universities. However, these post secondary institutions have a poor record of hiring faculty of color that disproportionally reflects the growing student of color enrollment over the past decades (Rah, 2009). While compositional racial diversity is

notably increasing at Christian colleges and universities, structural and institutional change around racial diversity and consciousness is lagging behind.

One could argue that an institution is only as diverse as its leadership. It is imperative that we critically examine our personnel and leadership. This touches on the ongoing challenge of both the recruitment and retention of faculty and staff of color in higher education and particularly in Christian higher education. Again, Christian colleges and universities are reflecting the racial homogeneity of the evangelical church. The pool of candidates of color for faculty and staff positions that fit into the specific faith alignment is slim. However, consider the growing racial diversity at CCCUs as we begin to see increasing numbers of people of color in student affairs and faculty roles in recent years. The racial diversity of the personnel and leadership of institutions cannot be overstated. A crucial element in building capacity for diversity is whether the institution has the human capital and expertise to engage diversity (Smith, 2015).

Other components to structural diversity in addition to personnel are areas like strategic mission, curriculum, and core institutional processes (Smith, 2015). The people leading, making decisions, implementing processes, and guiding the strategic direction of the institution are imperative to dismantling White dominance and pursuing diversity structurally and not merely compositionally. Christian institutions of higher education must evaluate change on multiple levels including culturally, systematically, and pedagogically to create a sense of learning that eliminates an unconscious insider-outsider mentality (Hernandez, 2012).

#### *Proactive vs. Reactive Approach to Diversity in Student Affairs*

Too often, student affairs professionals are merely reacting to issues of diversity and racial inequity. This can be easily found in the common struggle to hire diverse student leaders

whether it is for resident assistants, orientation leaders, or campus activities. Another example is addressing the alienation of students of color or them lacking a sense of belonging in very White spaces. More notably, is the retention and academic success of students of color at DWIs. This way of framing diversity is focused on responding to events and often is implemented to serve specific populations (Smith, 2015). It is reactive in nature.

A developed racial and critical consciousness should translate to change in how we approach diversity in our student affairs practice. It should create a shift from being reactive to issues of diversity to becoming proactive. To be effective agents of education and justice, student affairs professionals cannot simply react to issues of diversity. It is imperative that they believe in diversity in order to shift their practice to a proactive approach to diversity in education.

For many people of color, this simply exists through lived experiences (often a lifetime) that translate to a natural advocacy for representation, awareness and social justice. For many White folks, this needs to happen through a shift and an awakening of critical consciousness due to the nature of their racial privilege and position personally and professionally. Without a developed critical consciousness, educators will more than likely approach diversity reactively rather than proactively. Critical scholars may reference this differentiation as the concept of interest convergence, which claims that White people only pursue issues of racial justice when a benefit to self is identified (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). White student affairs professionals and student affairs professionals of color need to be conscious of racial justice issues, and also actualize their consciousness into their practice.

This principle of proactively racially conscious practice should certainly also be applied to hiring. As mentioned, the personnel of the institution are crucial in leading change. Both



hiring people of color and White professionals that have awareness and a demonstration of actualizing their racial consciousness are essential. In addition to personnel, demonstrating a commitment to racial consciousness and diversity in strategic documents, visions, and mission statements is also vital to demonstrate institutional commitment (Smith, 2015).

*Distributing Diversity Across Functions: A Shared Responsibility*

Who does diversity work on your campus? The answer should be, everyone! Oftentimes (if fortunate), Christian colleges will have one office that is staffed by one individual student affairs professional engaging the campus in diversity initiatives. Many Christian campuses don't even have that. Sadly, not because they have advanced approaches to collective and shared responsibility, rather it's more likely than not, because they have yet to recognize the need for supporting of students of color.

Yes, the history of multicultural center work and the formation of cultural centers in higher education is reactionary and served as counter spaces within the dominant culture of White institutions (Patton, 2010). So is the history of ethnic studies, student activism, and effectively the civil rights movement. However, it is now time to also be proactive. A developed critical consciousness should lead to *infusing* diversity into ones student affairs practice. This can and should look proactive and across student affairs function.

No singular diversity professional can make an institution what it is not; rather change must be internal, deep, far-reaching and the work of *everyone* in leadership and on the ground (Hernandez, 2012). Hiring, training, and anticipating all student affairs professionals to understand and actualize racial consciousness into their practice, demonstrates a proactive approach to diversity. It expresses a commitment to infusing diversity into their practice across all functions. People of color and White student affairs professionals alike, must be critically

conscious of whiteness and actively working to deconstruct White normativity and dominance while also advocating for racially conscious educational practice. This is how educators can create a socially conscious and inclusive environment in our residence halls, programming efforts, counseling, advising, and across all functions of student development and services.

This chapter focuses on a shift in thinking about diversity to name, see, and dismantle whiteness. It is important to note, this approach can and should happen while also advocating for diversity initiatives and creating diverse and supportive learning environments for students of color. This chapter suggests the importance of doing both/and.

Naturally, a process of doing diversity work grounded in critical consciousness (naming oppression, privilege, and power) will also unveil the implications of whiteness and White dominance. As the beginning of this chapter mentioned, the invisibility and normativity of whiteness obscures the need to dismantle it. This often results in a reactionary and one-sided approach to supporting students of color through specialized services only. Rather, this chapter advocates that both happen concurrently and collectively in order to shift our approach and dismantle White dominance that is damaging to the body and ultimately to the witness of the gospel.

*White Racial Identity Work on Christian Campuses: Toward Critical White Consciousness*

The emergence of research on whiteness and White racial identity over the past thirty years has marked a significant shift to critically evaluate the “unexamined center” of U.S. race and ethnic relations (Delgado & Stefanic, 1997). This research and developed models of White racial identity have been an important framework for shifting the discussion beyond people of color and towards the process of reconstructing a positive White identity and engaging in

antiracism as a pedagogical context (Kincheloe, 1999). Critical White studies and White racial identity development models have emerged as frameworks that can be applied to college student identity development and is also prompting how educational interventions can influence positive White racial identity (Garriott, Reiter, & Brownfield, 2016). This elucidates the significant role of colleges and universities to educate and develop students graduating from institutions of higher education.

The largest gap is the application of this research and study on whiteness and White racial identity in Christian higher education environments. Again, exploring whiteness and studying White racial identity development (Helms, 1993; Croll, 2007; Mallot et al., 2015) is an area that is largely missing in Christian scholarship and practice. Christian higher education is lacking an understanding of the significance of whiteness, White privilege, and White consciousness that will be important to explore like many secular counterparts have already begun. It is imperative that Christian higher education explores critical pedagogy and critical White studies in order to effectively prepare the next generation of leaders of a racially just community, church, and society.

Practically, Christian colleges could explore opportunities to develop and offer courses on whiteness and critical White studies. These could be interdisciplinary, or perhaps within Sociology departments that can expand on courses on race. Partnerships between student affairs professionals (likely diversity professionals) could collaborate with faculty to actively engage Christian colleges in navigating whiteness. It would be valuable to have these initiatives and learning happening both inside and outside of the classroom in Christian colleges.

A specific emphasis on critically studying and exploring whiteness would allow the majority of our students to take a proactive learning approach to the complexity of race. This

shift in emphasis would engage our students to become active contributors and more self-aware citizens. This approach would also concurrently shift the burden of responsibility and investment from our smaller percentage of students of color, to a collective whole of all students. It would create a diverse learning environment that would graduate more racially conscious scholars, servants, and leaders for the kingdom.

### **What Then Shall I Do? A Race Conscious Paradigm**

Individually, each professional has agency over their own development and evolving student affairs practice. Our (Cha and Jun) graduate programs were catalysts for our own development and awakening to a critical consciousness that informed our practice with a social justice lens. Our hope is that regardless of where we are in our development around issues of racial awareness and anti-racism advocacy, each student affairs professional has felt the need to incorporate racial consciousness into their daily work. As student populations continue to evolve, so should diversity education evolve, be responsive, and skills be retooled.

It is clear that Christian Colleges need to engage in diverse educational practices more effectively (Hernandez, 2012; Rah, 2009; Yancey, 2010). With this felt need, each professional needs to take on the responsibility of becoming racially literate (Horsford, 2011) and continually developing individual racial consciousness. Again, this process is not without challenge and requires community, alliances, activators, and advocacy (Collins & Jun, 2017) in order to sustain ongoing development and awareness.

As one learns how to actualize their consciousness in their work, they will discover how to infuse it in their daily practice. It can be infused into: one-on-one meetings,

supervision, recruiting, selection, hiring, staff development, and training our student leaders and professionals. Racially conscious student affairs practice has the opportunity to change the culture and ethos of our Christian colleges and universities.

Collectively, the implementation of a race conscious student affairs approach can be applied to departments, divisions, institutions, and professional associations within the field of student affairs. The field is seeing this more in research and scholarship that, in turn, continues to inform our practice. As mentioned earlier, graduate programs serve an essential role into the development of our student affairs professionals as the field becomes more specialized. The curriculum in those programs need to be racially conscious and will be integral in shaping the future of our student affairs practice.

Associations and networks like the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU), Association for Christians in Student Development (ACSD), and the North American Coalition for Christian Admissions Professionals (NACCAP) also have agency to influence the landscape of our profession. These associations have opportunities to identify future student affairs professionals from diverse backgrounds and begin mentoring and grooming future professionals. These associations also must recognize the responsibility to take on more racially conscious educational practices and incorporate such into their own practice, scholarship, and contributions to the field.

In closing, we recognize that this process of confronting racism and moving towards critical consciousness requires a posture of humility for all who are willing to listen and learn. For our White colleagues, confronting White dominance and racism can feel way too personal. We implore our colleagues to approach the material with a posture of humility, compassion, and empathy. For our colleagues of color who tirelessly teach diversity both

formally and informally across the country, we pray that they would continue to engage White colleagues with grace and charity. May this work be motivated by a love for one another, a sincere love for the body of Christ, and for a tireless desire for justice.

### **Benediction**

The process of confronting and dismantling systems of dominance is a difficult yet necessary process of sanctification for those who love Christian Higher Education and seek to see Gods people flourish and thrive. We must examine both the experiences of students, staff, and faculty of color (looking through windows) but must also look inward and excavate the dominant culture of white systems and ways of knowing (looking at a mirror). We cannot address what we cannot see. So it is crucial that we take a long honest look at ourselves, and our various forms of privilege, power, and dominance. Upon seeing ourselves, we must not forget what we look like. We are reminded in Scriptures of the danger of looking at ourselves, then going away and immediately forgetting what we look like (James1: 24).

May we be aware of our various forms of dominance and privilege.  
May we remember and not forget.  
May we move toward justice for the sake of others.  
May this awareness of whiteness serve as witness.  
For unity of the kingdom, and the glory of God...

### Discussion Questions

1. What are the primary barriers to developing a critical consciousness on Christian Colleges around race and racial identity?
2. How can I infuse a race conscious approach and philosophy in my student affairs practice to dismantle a culture of colorblind thinking?
3. In addition to thinking about supporting students of color, how can I also critically examine and work towards a healthy White racial consciousness?
4. How can a racially conscious paradigm to our student affairs practice influence our curriculum, professional associations, and future scholarship?

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