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Biblical Principles Which Can Lead the Campus Beyond the Categories of Political Correctness Towards a Resolution of Tension

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Biblical Principles Which Can Lead the Campus Beyond the Categories of Political Correctness Towards a Resolution of Tension

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“Faculty of color in higher education, in general, face unique challenges simply by their presence, therefore, it is unrealistic to expect that Christian institutions are immune to secular cultural influences.”

Currently, the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU), which consists of 99 institutions, has outlined a framework for encouraging the development of a more racially diverse faculty. However, the CCCU faculty of color membership is approximately less than five percent. In the article "Enclave Adaptations, Multiculturalism and Evangelical Christian Colleges" by Dr. McMinn (1998), it is outlined that evangelical Christian Colleges "lag behind other private liberal arts colleges in their ability to recruit and retain people of color." The scarcity of faculty of color on Christian campuses presents barriers that impact retention and professional development for this faculty population. When traditionally marginalized faculty arrive on Christian campuses they are faced with various challenges. The challenges faculty of color face may include, but are not limited to: issues related to retention, tenure, admission standards, and community ethos, as well as other campus norms associated with Christian doctrine. Faculty of color must navigate the agenda set by other faculty members who see their role as maintaining the "conservative" tone found at most Christian institutions. For some traditional faculty at conservative Christian institutions the terms diversity and inclusion are synonymous with postmodern liberalism.

Research supports increasing dialogue on the topic of recruitment and retention of faculty, as well as students of color. This dialogue should not be limited to non-religious institutions. The presenters are encouraged to lead a discussion on:

- How faculty members of color address issues of exclusion even after being hired.
- How faculty of color support each other spiritually and emotionally.
- How a biblical frame of reference is key to addressing the day-to-day issues associated with being Christian, and a person of color.
- Identifying power struggles under the disguise of spirituality.
- Strategies for creating a critical consensus platform that involves institutional leadership.
- Policy development, mentoring and continuous progress for faculty and students of color.

- Issues related to gender, equity and faculty of color.
- A review of the gaps that exist between the stated beliefs of many Christian institutions and the actual practices.
- Behaviors and interventions that appear to have the most impact on the inclusion of faculty and students of color.
- Maintaining a "spiritually centered" attitude while working for change in an atmosphere of conflict.
- A model for Christian institutions successfully interfacing with multiculturalism in a pluralistic society.

Institutions of higher education face a dilemma when attempts are made to increase the number of faculty of color beyond that of a "token" presence. The research is broad in outlining the barriers to retention for faculty members classified as "of color" in higher education. Faculty of color in higher education in general face unique challenges simply by their presence; therefore, it is unrealistic to expect that Christian institutions are immune to secular cultural influences. However, it is realistic to expect that Christian institutions take steps to implement the teachings of scripture in order to embrace their brothers and sister who are classified as "of color."

Leaders in all arenas, both religious and secular, should focus on strategies, which will create a critical consensus platform that involves institutional policies that lead to systematic changes.

PRESENTERS:

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Yvonne Redmond-Brown is an assistant professor of Education and the director of Disabilities Services at Northwestern College in St. Paul, Minnesota. She earned her bachelors and masters degrees in Education from Northeastern Illinois University. She holds a doctorate in Educational Policy and Administration from the University of Minnesota. She has been a guest lecturer for International Programs at the University of Minnesota since 1997. She is also a guest lecturer for the University of Minnesota Leadership Academy. Since 1991 she has been a Diversity and Inclusion Trainer. She has been published in several publications and has received many awards for her work.