

FROM DIVERSITY TO AGAPE: HEALING THE WOUNDS OF RACISM IN CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS



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HOW NOW SHOULD WE SCHOOL?

Christian schools should be “**holy ground**
upon which the wounds of racism have
room to walk and be **healed.**”

Mark D. Hearn, Seattle Pacific University

FROM DIVERSITY TO *AGAPE*

Diversity

I know we need more people of color in our school so I will try to quantitatively address it.

Inclusion

I know we need to move beyond numbers toward full participation in the life of our school with people of color.

Empathy

I am beginning to feel the feelings of people of color and learn from their experiences. My own experiences are being checked.

Agape

I not only feel the feelings of people of color but I am taking steps toward ensuring our school is a place where racial healing and justice can thrive.

AGAPE AND KENOSIS

Agape can be defined as “self-giving, others-empowering” love.

Kenosis (Philippians 2) presents Christ’s *self-giving* posture, which Paul calls us to emulate.

TRAPS TO BEWARE FOR WHITE PEOPLE

White Privilege – unconscious power or less persecution solely because we are white

White Fragility – fear of losing power or privilege because of increasing social diversity and shifts in justice

White Guilt – overcompensating for racial injustices in ways that devolve into condescension or pity

PLEASE DON'T DO MORE HARM THAN GOOD

“I don't see color.”

This is Color-Blind Racism. Gal. 3:23 does not imply God doesn't see color; God values color, difference, and diversity.

“We don't have a racism problem, we have a sin problem.”

Racism is the sin. Name it so we can repent of it and consciously check ourselves with the help of the Holy Spirit.

“I treat everyone the same.”

Fair is not always equal. Each child's circumstances, life experiences, and need are different.

“We are an evangelistic because we serve children of color.”

Equating race with a need for conversion is offensive; black and brown people are more likely to be professing Protestant Christians than white people in America (Pew Research, 2018).

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WHAT DOES AGAPE LOOK LIKE?

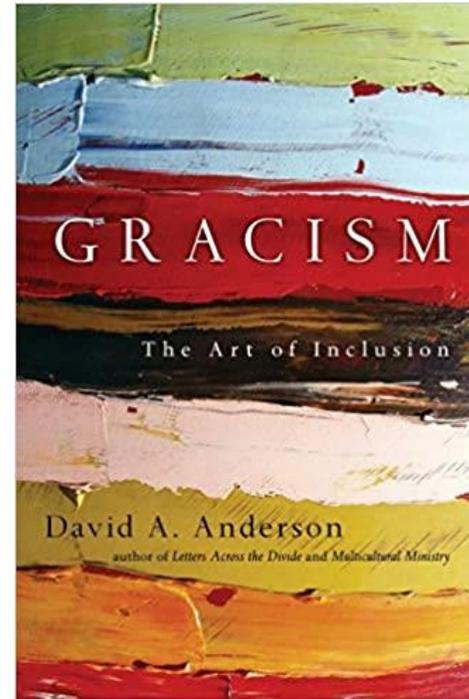
“... those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our **presentable parts need no special treatment**. But God has put the body together, giving **greater honor to the parts that lacked it**, so that there should be **no division** in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If **one part suffers, every part suffers with it**; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.”

– 1 Corinthians 12:21-26

FROM RACISM TO GRACISM

Racism – “the negative exercise of power over other humans based on color, class, or culture.”

Gracism - “the positive extension of favor on other humans based on color, class, or culture.”



AGAPE = SEVEN SAYINGS OF A GRACIST

1. **I will lift you up**

Lifting up the humble by assisting and elevating them towards success

2. **I will cover you**

Protecting the most vulnerable among us from embarrassment and harm

3. **I will share with you**

Opening up networks and resources to others who are systemically downtrodden, and refusing special treatment that may hurt them

4. **I will honor you**

Recognizing those who are the most humble heroes among us regardless of color, class, and culture

5. **I will stand with you**

Committing to stand with the weak-the majority committing to stand up for, and with, the minority

6. **I will consider you**

Having equal concern for our neighbors regardless of color, class, or culture by considering their perspectives and needs

7. **I will celebrate with you**

Rejoicing when the humble and marginalized among us are helped

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