2020

Exploring White Critical Consciousness Of Christian College Students At A Midwestern College

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EXPLORING WHITE CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF CHRISTIAN COLLEGE STUDENTS AT A MIDWESTERN COLLEGE

A Dissertation

Presented to

The College of Graduate and Professional Studies

Department of Educational Leadership

Indiana State University

Terre Haute, Indiana

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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by

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December 2020

Keywords: Whiteness, Critical Consciousness, Christian, College Students, Midwestern

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ABSTRACT

Whiteness is pervasive and hidden on Christian college campuses. Helms (2017) defined Whiteness as "the overt and subliminal socialization processes and practices, power structures, laws, privileges, and life experiences that favor the White racial group over all others" (p. 718). Whiteness can often be ignored or overlooked by White persons and predominantly White institutions. Normalizing Whiteness rather than working through Whiteness perpetuates the subliminal and overt practices found on many Christian college campuses. While the study of Whiteness in higher education is a growing field (Cabrera, 2014; Cabrera et al., 2016; Cabrera et al., 2017), limited research has linked Whiteness and Christianity. Even less research has explored the relationship between Whiteness, Christianity, and college students. This research examined the research gap regarding Whiteness and Christian college students. Specifically, this research sought to answer the following question: In what ways are White, Midwestern, Christian college students critically conscious of Whiteness? Fifteen participants were interviewed initially. As a follow-up, eight participants agreed to review and discuss the initial findings. Fifteen semi-structured interviews were completed. Eight participants agreed to review and discuss the initial findings in follow-up interviews. Responses were coded line-by-line, resulting in 1021 coded excerpts. Five themes emerged from the data including (a) awareness of Whiteness, (b) advantages and disadvantages of Whiteness, (c) responses to Whiteness, (d) Whiteness and faith, and (e) aspirational influence of faith on Whiteness.

PREFACE

This research project is the result of an awakening journey of Whiteness. Since the fall of 1997 when I discovered that I was White, I began a journey of awareness. At first, it was a general journey of racial awareness. Race influenced opportunities. Race influenced the Church and our image of God. Race was a burden for some and a privilege for others. Suddenly, I saw how racism permeated all elements of American society and Evangelical churches. As a product of the Evangelical church and Christian higher education, I was embarrassed. How many people have I offended or overlooked? As a follower of Christ, offending and overlooking the experiences of others seemed counter to the love that Christ modelled.

A transition in my thinking occurred five years ago. Thinking about race and racism, I primarily focused on the experiences of students of color. I studied Civil Rights history and the life of Dr. Martin Luther King. While I was gaining a better understanding of systemic racism and the experiences of others, I failed to critically consider the role of Whiteness. Through the program at Indiana State University, I was encouraged to focus on the impact of Whiteness. I cannot focus on systemic and personal racism without critically examining the weight of Whiteness.

This research is an attempt to understand the awareness of Whiteness in Christian college students. I was blissfully unaware of Whiteness until graduate school. Was my experience similar to others? What experiences elevated Whiteness? How did Christian college students reflect on Whiteness? Not only this but how did a Christian college influence the reflection on

Whiteness? As a place of learning, a Christian college has the privilege to not only educate but also reflect on critical issues. How can a Christian college educate and reflect on Whiteness? If a Christian college is shaping students to be followers of Christ within their spheres of influence, discerning the impact of Whiteness is critical.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

How does someone thank God for a gift except to use it to the best of their ability? I pray that this work expresses the best of my ability.

How does someone thank a loving wife for time away or being distracted with Ph.D. coursework and the dissertation? FINISH! Thank you, Hope, for your encouraging words and listening ears as I worked out various ideas aloud. I am grateful to be married to someone so gifted, intelligent, and compassionate. I love you and look forward to returning the favor someday.

Thank you to my children: Grace, Isaac, Eden, and Cana. Thank you for space to do homework. Thank you for letting me miss some events. I apologize for my crankiness when I was stressed about homework.

Thank you to my parents, Cris and Polly Brown. Thank you for your great questions and encouragement.

Thank you to Dr. Julie Anderton's Introduction to Student Development Theory graduate class at Eastern College in the fall of 1997. You assigned Peggy McIntosh's (1988) *Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*. I discovered that I was White and had a choice to make: Do I keep considering the influence of privilege in my life, or do I stuff it into the folder and forget about it? Thank you also to Dr. Bettie Ann Brigham and Eastern College for a launching point for conversations about race. Thank you to Tim Wolf and Craig Tavani for encouraging me to enter the field of student development.

Thank you, Dr. Norris Friesen, for taking me under your wing at Huntington College in the fall of 1999. You not only demonstrated grace and wisdom, but you also let me, a new professional, co-teach a class on the life of Dr. Martin Luther King. You always considered me an equal.

Thank you Martha Smith, Dr. Tom Bergler, Dr. Bruce Evans, Dr. Jack Heller, John Paff, and Nate Perry for your guidance and great conversations at Huntington College. Thank you, Dr. Ron Coffey for bringing me to Huntington College. Thank you also for your encouragement to begin the ISU program and your generosity with my time.

Thank you to Dr. Jeff Aupperle and Dr. Kelly Yordy for listening to 90s music, discussing M. W. Smith Hall and driving back and forth to ISU will always be treasured memories. Thank you for introducing me to Taylor University. Thank you to Dr. Skip Trudeau for your generosity with my time and encouragement. Thank you to my colleagues at Taylor University.

To Cohort #19, class with you was a joy. I smiled whenever I entered class because I knew we would discuss great ideas and laugh. I cannot imagine a better academic environment to discuss germinal ideas in higher education.

Thank you to Dr. Kandace Hinton and the faculty of the Indiana State University. I will remember the summer 2017 intensive because I will never forget early morning forced dancing.

Thank you to Midwestern University for permitting me to listen to your students. You have some AMAZING and thoughtful students on your campus.

Thank you to the many students who I had the pleasure of working with throughout my twenty-years of professional work. Whether we were on a trip to Civil Rights sites in the South, a student leadership class or discussion over coffee, you helped me shape the ideas and questions

in this research.

Thank you Dr. Kevin Miller and Dr. Denise Collins for your feedback on my proposal two years ago. It needed a LOT of work. Thank you for your feedback on this research. Thank you for so many valuable conversations, Dr. Miller.

Thank you to Dr. Mary Howard-Hamilton. When I researched the ISU program, I knew that I would learn critical ideas from Dr. Mary. Through seeing her scholarship, I knew that I wanted to work with Dr. Mary for my dissertation. Thank you for your guidance in the dissertation journey and my educational journey. I hope that you are proud.

Lastly, thank you, again, Hope, Grace, Isaac, Eden and Cana. I love you.

Really lastly, thank you, God. I hope that you are proud.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Christian colleges often serve as incubators for Whiteness. Helms (2017) defined Whiteness as "the overt and subliminal socialization processes and practices, power structures, laws, privileges, and life experiences that favor the White racial group over all others" (p. 718). Combining Evangelical faith, racial homogeneity, and campus climate, Whiteness often remains normative and undetected within faith-based college communities. As a result, Whiteness elevates the experiences, epistemologies, and traditions of White persons above those of minoritized individuals. Systemically, structures and ethos primarily reflect a White point of view and often overlook the experiences of communities of color. All campus spaces are accessible to White persons. Campus tension is reduced to accommodate White students' comfort. Racial inequalities, if exposed, are interpreted as isolated incidents (Cabrera et al., 2017). Within Evangelical faith frameworks, White epistemology and practices are foundational and the standard by which all belief and practice are measured. As a result, Whiteness permeates the identities and behaviors of White, Christian college students.

The normative position of Whiteness in Christian higher education is similar to the normative position of right-handedness in America. Many common pieces of everyday technology are right-handed such as scissors, hand-crank pencil sharpeners, lecture hall desks, computer mice, stringed instruments, firearms (discharge shell casings to the right), baseball

gloves, and golf clubs. Power tools such as table saws and circular saws are often designed for right-handed function. Numeric key pads, control panels, zippers, spiral notebooks, credit card swipes, manual can-openers, and camera technology yield to right-handed users. Each of these items is more readily accessible and usable for right-handed persons based upon construction and functionality. Additionally, when instruction is given, teachers instruct from a right-handed perspective. “Do this but left-handed,” is the instruction. Left-handed persons transpose right-handed instruction to left-handed instruction.

During the 20th century, American educators and psychologists discouraged left-handed children from writing and completing academic tasks with natural left-handed behaviors (Kushner, 2012). Professionals rejected that left-handedness was inherent. Instead, educators and psychologists believed that left-handed children acted out of stubborn rebellion. In order to correct childhood rebellion, professionals forced left-handed children to write and perform tasks using non-dominant right hands. “Retraining” (Kushner, 2012) left-handed students often involved restraining a child’s left hand, punitive swats, and punishments for disobedience.

While right-handed technology and historic preference for right-handedness is not exclusive in all contexts, it demonstrates a preference for right-handed performance, epistemology, and normalcy. To perform correctly is to perform right-handed. To think correctly is to think as a right-handed engineer thinks. To fit into the culture, one must fit in right-handedly. To perform, think or assume normalcy outside of right-handedness is foreign at best and historically punishable at worst. This often leads to left-handed accommodation. Left-handed musicians, students, athletes, and skilled workers must develop left-handed habits to accommodate right-handed technology and training. Left-handed persons must transpose and translate right-handedness into left-handedness. As an institution of education and reflection,

Midwestern University is well situated to introduce and reflect on Whiteness with MU students. Christian higher education institutions often perform, think, and define normalcy through a White lens just as American culture prefers right-handedness .

In order to interrupt the normative belief and practice of Whiteness, critical consciousness is required (Freire, 1973). White students attending Christian colleges must examine the influence of Whiteness on their identities, beliefs, and activities. Not only should White students critically reflect on beliefs influenced by Whiteness, but White students must also reflect on practices that challenge White normativity. Christian college students must *work through* Whiteness rather than *normalize* Whiteness (Cabrera, 2014). Critical consciousness moves students from ignorance and defenders of the status quo to respectful relationships, preference for one another, and commitment to equity. As a result of these realties for Christian college students, the purpose of this study was to explore critical consciousness of Whiteness in Christian college students.

Statement of the Problem

Whiteness is pervasive and elusive on Christian college campuses. Whiteness can often be ignored or overlooked by White persons and predominantly White institutions. Normalizing Whiteness rather than working through Whiteness perpetuates the subliminal and overt practices found on many Christian college campuses. While the study of Whiteness in higher education is a growing field (Cabrera, 2014; Cabrera et al., 2016; Cabrera et al., 2017), limited research has linked Whiteness and Christianity. Even less research has explored the relationship between Whiteness, Christianity, and college students. This research examined the research gap regarding Whiteness and Christian college students. Specifically, this research sought to answer the

following question: In what ways are White, Midwestern, Christian college students critically conscious of Whiteness?

Whiteness has a complicated influence on White students enrolled at Christian colleges. Several characteristics define Whiteness in contemporary culture: colorblindness, epistemologies of ignorance, ontological expansiveness, Whiteness as property, and assumed racial comfort (Cabrera et al., 2017). White privilege (McIntosh, 1997) and White fragility (DiAngelo, 2016, 2018) also frame Whiteness. Christian colleges employ White strategies or ignore the above characteristics in order to maintain a White normativity. For many White, Christian college students, Whiteness is an unnamed blind spot (Suchet, 2007), a benign campus norm (Fine et al., 1997), or invisible (DiAngelo, 2016). Whiteness predicated on White bias perpetuates cultures and epistemologies that maintain preference for White culture and superiority over minoritized cultures. Without recognition, critique, and opposition to Whiteness, Christian college students maintain White normativity and exclude minoritized identities and influences.

Paulo Freire (1973) introduced the concept of critical consciousness as *conscientização*. *Conscientização* is the interaction between critical reflection and critical action. When either reflection or action is absent, critical consciousness is sacrificed. Without critical action, a person suffers from meaningless talk or *verbalism*. Without critical reflection, a person easily falls into *activism* or fanaticism. Action for the sake of action is misguided and detrimental to change. When systems of superiority and exclusion are uncovered, it is not enough to simply denounce oppression because change does not occur without action. Only through the harmony of reflection and action will structures of Whiteness be uncovered and changed for the better (Linder & Cooper, 2016; Winant, 1997; Yancy, 2012b).

Whiteness is related to the construction of White identity. To be White, according to Helms (1990a), a person possesses physical characteristics, genetic origin, and perception of a shared White European heritage. Additionally, a primary factor contributing to a person's group identity is their sense of strength assumed in a given shared identity. A relationship exists between White identity and Whiteness in the United States. According to Helms, virtually every White person in the United States must overcome elements of racism, recognize the influence of systemic Whiteness on personal identity, discern the cultural implications of Whiteness, and redefine personal Whiteness avoiding structures of superiority. The development of an affirmative White identity is a two-phase process of internalizing racism and developing a non-racist White identity. Because of the historic and cultural influence of Whiteness, critical reflection and action can help one develop a thoughtful and reflective White identity.

Within Christian theology, racial homogeneity sustains Whiteness. Throughout history, many Christians ignored systemic oppression and maintained segregated relationships and congregations. Emerson and Smith (2000) noted that contemporary Christians reject the impact of structural systems of power and oppression and focus primarily on the significance of personal relationships. Emerson and Smith also noted that Christians defend freewill determinism and meritocracy. Individualism is a primary barrier to well-meaning White people. DiAngelo (2016) echoed, "As long as I don't see myself as personally *engaged* in acts of racism, I am exempt from it" (p. 195). White theology prefers individuality over community identity. If a White person is a member of a racialized group, the freedom to be an individual person is denied. Individuality reinforces superiority by denying the significance of race, gender, or class. Christian college campuses are also influenced by Whiteness. Because of the historic roots of

Whiteness in Christian colleges' leadership and enrollment, Christian college campuses often serve as incubators of Whiteness (P. L. Porter, 2011; Yancey, 2010).

White college students tend to live in racially White environments and experience minimal awareness of personal race or racism (Cabrera, 2014). While Christian colleges desire to increase racial diversity (Cross & Slater, 2004; Paredes-Collins, 2009), the incentive to change is often no greater than the homogeneous momentum of Whiteness. Historic school segregation and contemporary voluntary segregation maintains Whiteness and ignores the changing demographics of higher education in the United States. Fears of racial proximity between White communities and minoritized communities have exacerbated American and Christian segregation that has continued into higher education (Yancey, 2010). According to Menjares (2017), 79.8% of senior administrative roles at Christian colleges are men, 91.9% of faculty are White, and many institutions do not have a chief diversity officer. Whiteness is unexamined if campus leadership ignores the impact of Whiteness on a campus community and educational mission.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the critical consciousness of Whiteness with Christian college students. This phenomenological research is necessary in order to disrupt Whiteness-influenced belief and practice within the lives of Christian college students. Through semi-structured interviews, this research will explore the critical consciousness of Whiteness and experiences that challenged White normativity. The research is guided by the following question: In what ways are White, Midwestern, Christian college students critically conscious of Whiteness?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual frameworks for this research are Whiteness, critical consciousness, and critical race theory (CRT). Helms (2017) defined Whiteness as "the overt and subliminal socialization processes and practices, power structures, laws, privileges, and life experiences that favor the White racial group over all others" (p. 718). The work of Cabrera et al. (2017) outlined colorblindness, epistemologies of ignorance, ontological expansiveness, Whiteness as property, and assumed racial comfort as characteristics of Whiteness. Additional characteristics of Whiteness include White privilege (McIntosh, 1997) and White fragility (DiAngelo, 2016, 2018). Each of these strategies maintain pervasive Whiteness and prevent Whiteness from detection. Through critical consciousness, engagement in a non-racist identity begins with exploring the internalized racism and the evolution of a non-racist White identity. A non-racist identity also required realistic self-appraisal, and opportunities to confront racism and oppression in all forms (Helms, 2008). White identity requires an accurate awareness and consideration of Whiteness.

CRT also frames this research as a lens to explore institutionalized racism. As a collection of legal, education, and social science scholarship committed to resisting systemic racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Taylor, 2016), CRT scholars recognized themes of systemic prevalence and pervasiveness of racism, everyday White supremacist ideology, and subordination of minoritized groups. Within the field of CRT, the subsection of critical White studies developed. While CRT developed an intellectual and social space for marginalized voices interrogating racism, CRT also explored the construction of Whiteness and White racial identity (Cabrera et al., 2017; Leonardo, 2002; Yancy, 2012b).

Significance of the Study

This research is important not only because it expands the research focused on Whiteness and Christian college students but also because the findings have the potential to assist higher education professionals with strategies to expose, critique, and challenge Whiteness on Christian college campuses. This research is necessary in order to disrupt comfortable Whiteness within Christian higher education. Investigating the lived and personal experiences of Whiteness requires attention to phenomena that are likely hidden from students' consciousness. Consideration of the reality and tension of Whiteness and experience is critical to research. Without critically conscious education, Christian institutions will continue to maintain White cultural norms and perpetuate White normativity that leave little space for other voices and experiences.

Overview of the Research

This research will be reported in seven chapters. This chapter introduced the study, purpose, research questions, and significance. Chapter 1 also introduced Whiteness, White normativity, critical consciousness, and the background of the issues surrounding Whiteness on Midwestern, Christian college campuses. Chapter 2 provides the literature review themes of Whiteness, critical consciousness, White identity, CRT, Christianity perpetuating racism, Christianity challenging racism, and the influence of race on university campuses. Chapter 3 outlines the design and phenomenological methodology, including the participants, data collection and analysis, and qualitative controls for reliability. Chapter 4 and 5 will report the results of the qualitative research. Chapter 6 will offer an analysis of the research. Chapter 7 will conclude with implications and guidance for higher education, recommendations for future

research, and limitations of the study. Lastly, an epilogue concludes this research with a Chapel message entitled, “Go and Do Likewise.”

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this research is to explore the critical consciousness of White students attending a Christian college in the Midwest. The following chapter will examine literature relevant to the following themes: Whiteness, Critical Consciousness, White identity, CRT, Christianity's historic relationship with race, and the influence of race on college campuses. These subjects frame the discussion around White critical consciousness of White college students attending an Evangelical college in the Midwest.

Whiteness

There are numerous characteristics of Whiteness. Leonardo (2002) noted that Whiteness is a collection of strategies, personal unwillingness to define the parameters of racism, refusal to identify with a racialized group, and a minimized history of systemic racism. Cabrera et al. (2017) described the characteristics of Whiteness as colorblindness, epistemologies of ignorance, ontological expansiveness, property, and assumed racial comfort. Beyond these characteristics of Whiteness, scholars have explored White normativity (Helms, 2008), White privilege (McIntosh, 1997), and White fragility (DiAngelo, 2016).

Whiteness

Whiteness is normalized and strategically placed at the center of society. Helms (2017) defined Whiteness as "the overt and subliminal socialization processes and practices, power

structures, laws, privileges, and life experiences that favor the White racial group over all others" (p. 718). Additionally, Helms (2008) described White normative elements of culture that permeate society including rugged individualism; a nuclear family defined as the parental unit and children; the separation of mind, body, and spirit; the belief that time was a quantity; and a European aesthetic of beauty.

Whiteness is also pervasive in business and political leadership. According to Harper (2018), only 16 African-Americans led Fortune 500 companies since Fortune 500's inception in 1955. According to the Brown and Atske (2019), no Black men or women served in the U.S. Senate or governor's seats in 1965. Within the U.S. House of Representatives, only six Black representatives were active. As of 2019, House of Representative numbers increased to 52 Black men and women, which was representative of Black persons in the U.S. population. However, only three Black senators served while no Black governors were in leadership.

Given the pervasiveness of White leadership in politics and business and Whiteness within social practices, the United States has a White normative culture. Emerson (2010) defined White normativity as

> the normalization of Whites' cultural practices, ideologies, and location within the racial hierarchy such that how Whites do things, their understanding about life, society, and the world, and their dominant social location over other racial groups are accepted as *just how things are*. Anything that diverges from this norm is deviant. (p. 14)

Yancy (2012a) noted the prevalence of Whiteness, "In every direction, there are White bodies moving and communicating with ease, with no particular sense of being out of place or not at home" (p. 1). Whiteness is centralized in American culture.

Whiteness is pervasive in structures and media, as well. DiAngelo (2016) wrote that race impacts the lives of White persons through visible White power structures, media representation, social norms, psychic freedom from burden, and physical mobility. From an early age, White children belong at the hospital, school, and playgrounds. White persons fill most halls and seats of power. For many children, White experiences are always present in childhood stories. White normativity also influences educational norms through defining and retelling American history from White lenses. Yancy (2012a) noted, "Only Whites have that wonderful capacity to live anonymously, thoughtlessly, to be ordinary qua human, to go unmarked and unnamed in essence, to be White" (p. 4). Whiteness is normative because it defines what is expected not only for White people but for all communities of color.

Whiteness in films reaffirms normalcy and belonging through a wide range of roles and themes. The norm of humanity is White. Whites are "just people," or "Americans," or "Christians" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Whiteness defines the right human shape, hair texture, and developmental processes. Whiteness carries no psychic or social burdens. Whites do not worry about the perception of racial burden from minoritized groups. Whites are racially relaxed and navigate mainstream society with ease. Within White churches, Whiteness is the norm and other racially specific concerns are "special" ministries (DeYoung et al., 2003). Sometimes the church is silent to race conversations. DiAngelo (2016) defined White solidarity as "the unspoken agreement between Whites to maintain silence, not challenge each other, keep each other comfortable, and generally maintain the racist status quo and protect White privilege" (p. 181). Within racialized conversations, silence to racism and White solidarity is rewarded.

Pruett (2002) noted that Whiteness is the normative social position and power structures. Whiteness is primarily unexamined and middle-classness is synonymous with those who

constitute a White identity. Delgado (1989) refers to the in-group reality vs. the out-group reality that maintained, “Whites on the top and browns and Blacks at the bottom” (p. 2413). White normativity creates hierarchical power structures that elevate Whiteness and minimize minoritized cultures.

White Privilege

In McIntosh’s (1997) germinal work, she found a collection of 46 privileges that White men experience as a result of race and gender systems. McIntosh’s (1997) privileges were an “invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks” (p. 291) utilized each day by Whites. Examples of the privileges included an assurance that personal achievements were not attributed to race or gender, workplace-networking advantages, and increased accessibility to good housing, education, and financial services.

Privilege is active, embedded, elusive, and mostly unseen to a member of the dominant group. Privilege shields Whites from noticing race or racism. McIntosh (1997) described the lack of attention to Whiteness: “I realized I had been taught about racism as something which puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one its corollary aspects, which puts me at an advantage” (p. 291). Leonardo (2004) described White privilege as a “process of having money put in your pocket which comes with certain discursive consequences, including the process of racial accumulation, whereby Whites take resources from people of color” (p. 138). While the above privileges occur, Whites also earn such resources such as internships, summer employment, and friendly smiles from waiters. Gusa (2010) found, “Whites do not perceive their privilege because they do not appraise their circumstances in reference to minorities; rather, they restrict their situational assessment to other Whites” (p. 470). Along with meritocracy and

individualism, privilege often blinds White persons to advantages as a result of Whiteness.

Whiteness as Colorblindness

Colorblindness defines the reality of Whites. Cabrera et al. (2017) defined colorblindness as "regardless of information provided about the realities of contemporary racism, the evidence will always be interrupted in ways that find the root cause as anything but racism" (p. 20). Bonilla-Silva and Forman (2000) noted that the rhetoric of colorblind racism defends White supremacy, permits Whites to appear as "non-racist," preserves White privilege, and criticizes organizational remedies to racism in an apparently nonracial manner. Cabrera et al. (2016) found that White denial of systemic racism is so prevalent that Whites in the United States currently believed that "reverse discrimination" is a larger problem than racism against minoritized persons.

Previously, scholars argued that minoritized groups are mentally, morally, and intellectually inferior (Bonilla-Silva, 2018). Colorblind racism replaces beliefs about inferiority regarding minoritized groups with a polite attitude of colorblindness. According to Bonilla-Silva (2018), colorblindness requires four frames, including abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism, and minimization of racism. Abstract liberalism utilizes political and economic liberalism in an abstract way to explain the reality of racism. Naturalization explains away racialized phenomena as natural occurrences. Cultural racism relies upon culturally based arguments to explain the second-class standing of minoritized groups. Finally, minimization of racism explains individual discrimination or systemic prejudice affecting minoritized groups.

Colorblindness requires equal treatment to all people regardless of race (Bergerson, 2003; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). To acknowledge the color of another person's skin instead of merit when making a decision is unfair because many believed the goal of the Civil Rights movement

was to judge people "not by the color of their skin but the content of their character" (Bergerson, 2003, p. 53). However, colorblindness remains to judge people primarily and unconsciously through a color-framed lens. Helms (2008) rejected the notion that a colorblind society is a just society. In a colorblind community, any recognition of racial group membership is associated with racism or prejudice. Furthermore, colorblindness affirms the myth of White normative experiences, meritocracy for all races, and White racial comfort. Only minoritized groups have a skin tone and race. Conversely, White people primarily describe themselves by nationality or ethnicity.

Whiteness as Epistemologies of Ignorance

Remaining unaware and oblivious of systemic racism is a key component of Whiteness. Cabrera et al. (2017) noted that epistemological ignorance maintained racialized harmony and ease. Without the stress or burden of race or racism, Whites pass from experience to experience without difficulty. While racial bliss keeps Whites from interrogating racial inequality or oppression because race is not a lived experience, ignorance does not mitigate the advantages gained from Whiteness. Similarly, DiAngelo (2016) found that Whiteness positions minoritized groups as problematic while maintaining racial innocence. White persons maintain racial innocence while simultaneously arguing with minoritized individuals about the impact of race in society.

White persons are often naïve to the impact of race. Gallagher (1997) found that "Whites can be defined as naïve because they attach little meaning to their race, humane in their desire to reach out to non-Whites, defensive as self-defined victims, and reactionary in their calls for a return to White supremacy" (Gallagher, 1997, p. 6). Furthermore, Gallagher noted, "Some described their sense of Whiteness as being partially veiled, becoming visible and salient only

when they felt they were a racial minority" (Gallagher, 1997, p. 7). Epistemological ignorance maintains obliviousness in many White persons.

Whiteness as Ontological Expansiveness

Research on Whiteness informs physical space of college campuses and churches. Within the intersection of race and physical space, Whites often feel entitled to the epistemological, ideological, and cultural fabric of all physical spaces. Sullivan (2006) defined ontological expansiveness as follows, "White people … act and think as if all spaces—whether geographical, psychical, linguistic, economic, spiritual, bodily, or otherwise—are or should be available for them to move in and out of as they wish" (p. 10.) White ontological expansiveness requires White mastery over all elements of an environment including the people permitted "inside" and those who remain "outside." Sullivan (2006) continued,

> The polarizing of space into inside and outside that racism produces curtails Black people's inhabiting of space. White existence tends to [expand] when transacting with its world that is not equally available to non-White people. In contrast with White people, Black people generally are not allowed to direct their transactions with the world in significant ways. Instead, they often are compelled merely to accept the form of transaction forced upon them. (p. 146)

Whiteness can overshadow minoritized voices and make Whiteness exclusive and primary.

Gusa (2010) captured the "messages and practices that are exchanged within the academic milieu; subtle, nebulous and unnamed" (p. 472) as White institutional presence (WIP). WIP is an institutional mixture of White ascendancy, monoculturalism, White blindness, and White estrangement. Rooted in White people's historical position of power and domination, White ascendancy refers to thinking and behavior that go along with mainstream authority and

advantage. Monoculturalism is the academic expectation that all community participants conform to one scholarly worldview, which stems from beliefs in the superiority and normalcy of White culture (Gusa, 2010). White blindness is a racial ideology that obscures and protects White identity and privilege. A person's race is immaterial to any decision-making process because "everyone is the same" (Gusa, 2010, p. 477). Finally, White estrangement is the physical and social distancing of Whites from minoritized groups. This social-relational isolation contributes to racial ignorance, reliance on stereotypes, and evasion of those who are different.

Beyond North America's borders, Whiteness has a global influence. Leonardo (2002) noted that "Whiteness has developed into a formidable global force in its attempt to control and transform into its own image almost every nook and cranny of the earth" (p. 32). Furthermore, Leonardo (2002) continued, "Whiteness is guilty of a certain '*hidalguismo*,' or son of God status, in its quest to exert its brand of civilization on non-White nations" (p. 34). Racism is mostly unnoticed by Whites because it operates through every day and commonplace processes of Whiteness.

Turner (1994) referred to historically White colleges and universities that created an oppressive racial ecology where simply walking on campus as a minoritized person was unhealthy: where no "paraphernalia, paintings, scents and sounds appeared in the house" (p. 356). This racialized ethos must be explored because, like air pollution, it was difficult to see yet it poisoned us all. Jackson and Heckman's (2002) research found that White college students were unconcerned about race and believe that racism is an issue of the past.

Whiteness as Property

The primary scholar for Whiteness as Property is Cheryl Harris (1993). Whiteness as property is "the legal legitimation of expectations of power and control that enshrine the status

quo as a neutral baseline, while masking the maintenance of White privilege and domination" (Harris, 1993, p. 1715). The legalization of land seizure and forced labor of minoritized persons and Native Americans solidified Whiteness as property. Property rights were contingent on and entangled with race. Through the entangled relationship between race and property, historical forms of domination evolved to reproduce racialized subordination that remains to the present day.

Whiteness is also an element of self-identity with personal and psychological benefits. Whiteness moves from a privileged identity to a privileged interest when American laws affirm critical aspects of identity: Who was White? Who is White? What benefits accompany Whiteness? What legal entitlements come with Whiteness? Additional modern definitions of property include occupational licenses, contracts, subsidies, and a host of intangible items such as intellectual property, business goodwill, and enhanced earning potential from graduate degrees (Harris, 1993). Harris (1993) continued,

> If an object you now control is bound up in your future plans or in your anticipation of your future self, and it is partly these plans for your own continuity that make you a person, then your personhood depends on the realization of these expectations. (p. 1730)

Whiteness was an object to control and protect.

The construction of Whiteness as property is all-inclusive benefits for Whites and oppression for minoritized groups. Leonardo (2004) noted, "In order for White racial hegemony to saturate everyday life, it has to be secured by a process of domination, or those acts, decisions, and policies that White subjects perpetrate on people of color" (p. 137). The concepts of race and property united by establishing that property was contingent on skin color for Blacks, while Native Americans lost the legal right to own property. Property was defined as a right

characterized as a philosophical reality, instead of a concrete reality to possess. Even though Whiteness was not a physical entity, Whiteness remained as a property right. According to Harris (1993), the law accorded possessors of Whiteness the same privileges and benefits accorded to types of property possession.

Whiteness as Assumed Racial Comfort

Within the field of higher education, multi-racial conversations occur often. In order to ensure open and honest dialogue, a "safe" space is necessary. Without safety, students are reticent to share personal stories or frustrations about their lives. According to Cabrera et al. (2017), White students often require an environment free from tension in order to engage in cross-racial dialogues. In doing so, Whites commit acts of "linguistic violence" (Cabrera et al., 2017, p. 26) or microaggressions against minoritized students. Whites require an environment free of social discomfort. Prioritizing White racial comfort ignores cross-racial conversations altogether. Seeking racial progress without racial discomfort is impossible and leaves White students in a state of racial arrested development (Cabrera et al., 2016). Assumed racial comfort prevents many White students from critical reflection and action necessary to challenge Whiteness.

Critical Consciousness

Paulo Freire (1973) introduced the concept of critical consciousness as *conscientização* in his significant work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. *Conscientização* is the dynamic relationship between critical reflection and critical action. When either critical reflection or critical action is absent, critical consciousness is sacrificed. If a person only reflects critically on his or her experience and systems, a person may suffer from meaningless talk or *verbalism*. Reflection without action is only half of the process. When systems of superiority and exclusion are

uncovered, it is not enough to simply denounce oppression because change does not occur without action. If a person only acts critically, they can easily fall into *activism* or fanaticism. Action for the sake of action is misguided and detrimental to change. Only through an internal and communal dialogue of critical reflection and critical action can structures of Whiteness be uncovered and remedied (Linder & Cooper, 2016; Winant, 1997; Yancy, 2012b). Through critical consciousness, Whiteness can be interrupted in White students and predominantly White Christian colleges.

Systemic oppression occurs on numerous fronts including class, race, ability, and sex. The Contemporary Critical Consciousness Measure (CCCM) was developed to measure the awareness of the institutional forms of inequality associated with heterosexism, classism, and racism (Shin et al., 2016). Critical consciousness occurs when "oppressed or marginalized people begin to think critically about inequitable social conditions and take action to change them" (Shin et al., 2016, p. 211). Oppressive systems dominate resources, institutions, and ideologies that result in privilege for one group and marginalization for all other groups.

Jemal (2017) continued Freire's work on critical consciousness through developing a framework of transformative potential (TP). TP is defined as "levels of consciousness and action that produce potential for change at one or more socio-economic levels" (Jemal, 2017, p. 603). A person with high levels of TP critically reflects on the oppressive structures of a present reality and actively seeks to remedy the problematic conditions. TP encompasses transformative consciousness and transformative action. TP also requires internal and external resistance to oppressive realities which assist in creating change.

White Identity

White identity is not the same as Whiteness. White identity is a characteristic of White

persons while Whiteness is a system of benefits and burdens associated with White persons and persons of color. A significant framework for this research is Janet Helms's (1990a; 1990b) model of White racial identity development. White racial awareness must increase in order for Whites to understand the impact of Whiteness on both personal experiences and communal systems. Helms's (1990a, 1990b, & 2008) work serves four purposes for White people: (a) accept proper responsibility and actions to challenge oppression and racism, (b) discern the impact of racism on Whites and minoritized groups, (c) analyze racism through a model of White racial identity development, and (d) learn alternate ways of being and doing within a multi-racial context. Helms (2008) defined Whiteness as assimilation and acculturation within White Anglo-Saxon culture and phenotypes corresponding with European characteristics such as fair skin, light hair, or light eye color.

Whiteness influences racial identity. Helms (1990a) defined racial identity as "a sense of group or collective identity based on one's perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular group" (p. 3). Oftentimes, White persons examine identity without reference or perception to Whiteness. According to Helms, most racial identity theories describe identity in different approaches. Blacks can identify or not identify with other Blacks, or they can adopt or not adopt identities resulting from racial victimization, whereas Whites can identify or not identify with other Whites. Whites can also evolve or not evolve from an oppressive White identity. Moreover, a person's identity is complicated by personal reflections of identity, reference group identity, or ascribed identity. A person's identity evolves with respect to the weight given to each of the previous reference points. Within the United States' race-conscious society, racial group assignment results in psychological implications of inferiority or superiority, access, and perceptions of reality.

In Helms's (2008) later work, she maintained the possibility of understanding, experiencing, and identifying Whiteness while simultaneously disrupting the advantages of individual and systemic Whiteness. Abandoning racism, criticizing environmental Whiteness, discerning the differences between White culture and systemic racism, and ascertaining the positives elements of Whiteness are critical steps in White identity development. According to Helms, conscious Whiteness is not synonymous with overt, covert, intentional, unintentional, individual, cultural, or institutional racism. Helms (2008) concluded, "The way to overcome aversive racism is to make explicit one's biases and then actively attempt to counteract them" (p. 28). Ignoring, maintaining, or engaging in the advantages of systemic White racial superiority perpetuates racism in North America.

Helms (2008) developed a two-phase process of identity development: the internalization of racism and evolution of a non-racist White identity. Tatum (2017) noted that in Helms's first schema, termed contact, Whiteness permeated identities and culture as a smog. Individual acts of racism maintain prejudice and bigotry. Systemic oppression is invisible. Some White people live their entire lives without focused attention to Whiteness or contact with minoritized groups. As exposure or friendships develop, a White person moves into Helms's second schema, disintegration. Denial of racism is no longer possible. Conscious recognition of Whiteness and acknowledgment of benefits associated with Whiteness defines this second schema. White membership requires racial hierarchy, but new friendships or romantic relationships challenge White notions of superiority. Tatum found that college experiences or racial incidents captured through social media often burst the bubble protecting bigotry. Feelings of guilt, shame, or anger accompany increased awareness of racism. Tatum (2017) noted, as the White belief system is contradicted, "the cognitive dissonance that results is part of the discomfort that is experienced at

this point in the process of development" (p. 192). Disintegration challenges epistemologies of ignorance.

DiAngelo (2016) defined resistance to conversations about race, multicultural training sessions, or emotional resistance to Whiteness as White fragility. DiAngelo found that even minimal amounts of racial stress were intolerable and caused Whites to strongly argue, turn silent, or physically depart the racialized situation. Whites often lack the racial stamina to withstand racialized tension. DiAngelo (2016) noted, "[Whites] have not had to build the cognitive or affective skills or develop the stamina that would allow for constructive engagement across racial divides" (p. 248). White fragility is a response or condition developed through repeated experiences of White advantage. White fragility restores the "lost advantage" in the challenging situation through arguments or withdrawal.

The third schema of internalization of racism phase for Helms (2008) is reintegration and includes White consciousness and White idealization. The primary strategy for reintegration is blaming minoritized groups for racial inferiority rather than challenging White supremacy. Whites remain in reintegration because doing so they maintain superior social and economic status. Reintegration reinforces a narrative that minoritized persons exhibit racist thoughts and feelings just as much as White persons. If members of minoritized groups exhibit more effort and ability, racial inequalities may change over time. Tatum (2017) found that reintegration displaces all racial inequality outside of White responsibility because socially sanctioned stereotypes are so seductive. In order to abandon reintegration and challenge internalized racism, White persons must gain a stable hold on Whiteness, navigate multi-racial environments, and resist subtle and overt stereotypic views of Whites and minoritized groups.

Engagement in a non-racist identity begins with exploring the internalized racism that

overcomes the tendency to be oblivious or neutral toward racial issues, protects a privileged status, and maintains the status quo of a racialized society (Helms, 2008). The evolution of a non-racist White identity (pseudo-independence, immersion/emersion, and autonomy) requires challenging racial socialization norms, taking a realistic self-appraisal, and considering opportunities to confront racism and oppression. The pseudo-independence schema affirms a movement toward a non-racist identity. Feelings of White superiority remain, but a person in pseudo-independence actively pursues environmental explanations for racial disparities. The concept of racial fairness remains, but it is rarely applied to the White person's daily life. Tatum (2017) noted that persons in this schema feel self-conscious or guilty about Whiteness but escape these feelings by associating with minoritized persons. Helms (2008) found that Whites often "think" about race and racism without "feeling" racialized concerns.

DiAngelo (2016) noted that guilt accompanies the realization that racism maintains a system of White advantage and minoritized disadvantage. While guilt keeps a White person disengaged, resentful, or incapacitated, personal conviction facilitates personal agency and action towards socially responsible solutions of racial inequality. Feeling angry about systemic White superiority and motivated by conviction instead of guilt, a person moves into Helm's (2008) fifth schema, labeled immersion/emersion. Whereas the previous schema locates racial tensions primarily within minoritized contexts, immersion/emersion recognizes the contributions of Whites in race and racial tensions. Immersion/emersion develops a critical consciousness of Whiteness. Helms (2008) found that "resolving immersion/emersion issues involves an intensive and extensive examination of oneself as well as other Whites and White culture" (p. 72). Yancy (2012a) echoed this idea and encouraged students to "flip the script" (p. 11) on race and Whiteness:

> I want my students to shout, "Look, a White!" on a daily basis, to call Whiteness out, publicly. I encourage them to develop a form of "double consciousness," one that enables them to see the world differently and to see themselves differently through the experiences of Black people and people of color. (p. 12)

Yancy challenged his students to engage in the dangerous acts of self-awareness and critical reflection that threaten the White social system predicated on White superiority. Critical group and individual reflection increases understanding, recognition, and acceptance of White culture and distinguishes Whiteness from systemic racism. Critical reflection utilizes analytical skills needed to overcome White normativity and socialization.

The final schema of Helms's (2008) White identity development model is autonomy. Interacting with the world as a White person and maintaining practices and experiences that foster a nonracist identity mark the individual in the autonomy schema. A life-long journey of discovery and recommitment defines a consistent internalization of Whiteness. Furthermore, opportunities to increase racialized awareness or diversity and eliminate environmental oppression characterize an autonomous identity. Helms reminded readers that while struggles remain, perseverance leads to the enjoyment of diversity and greater human expression. Tatum (2017) found that Helms's White racial identity development increases effectiveness in multi-racial settings, respects the identity struggles of minoritized groups and White people, develops mutually respectful relationships, and strengthens coalitions for authentic cultural transformation.

After Helms's (1990a, 1990b) original works, Helms and Carter (1990) later developed the White Racial Identity Inventory Scale (WRIAS) to assess personal attitudes related to the first five stages of Helms's (1984) model. The WRIAS surmises that attitudes about Whiteness,

White culture, Blackness, and Black culture drive a person's conscious and subconscious racial identity development. Each of Helms's (1990a, 1990b) stages associates attitudes and identity as a White person with attitudes about and relationships with Black people.

Critical Race Theory

Within the context of this research, a systemic understanding of race provides a framework to explore Whiteness. CRT serves as a lens to view the wider research on race, individual identity, and systemic issues of racism and oppression. Primary CRT research explored critical consciousness (Cuyjet & Meriwether, 2016; Hughes & Giles, 2010; Linder & Cooper, 2016), the impact of oppression (Crenshaw, 2016; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Hughes & Giles, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Taylor, 2016), and elevated oppressed voices (Delgado, 1989). Within critical legal scholarship, primary researchers challenged the equity of law (Bell, 1992; Crenshaw, 2016; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Taylor, 2016), brought allies together (Bergerson, 2003; Tatum, 2017), and resisted dominant narratives that diminished humanity and freedom (Taylor, 2016). CRT exposed oppressive systems that are essential to maintain Whiteness.

CRT scholars discerned several common threads that unite critical scholarship, including White supremacy, the subordination of minoritized people, and the idea that race is not a fixed term (Bergerson, 2003; Crenshaw, 2016; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Hughes & Giles, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Taylor, 2016). CRT scholarship further maintained that racism is a common practice and White normativity, colorblindness, meritocracy, and microaggressions are everyday realities for individuals and institutions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 2016). Racism is not aberrational but the normal science, the usual way that society conducts business, and the everyday experience for minoritized groups (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

White supremacy maintains racial hierarchy and the subordination of minoritized people. Gillborn (2015) defined White supremacy as the "subtle and extensive forces that saturate the everyday mundane actions and policies that shape the world in the interests of White people" (p. 278). Whiteness is a "dominant, transparent norm that defines what attributes of races should be counted, how to count them, and who . . . gets to do the counting" (Bergerson, 2003, p. 53). Systemic superiority of Whites and inferiority of minoritized groups is normative and often covert.

Minoritized individuals experience numerous unnoticed interactions that erode a person's significance and cumulatively affect personal identity. Sue et al. (2007) defined racial microaggressions as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color" (p. 271). While perpetrators of microaggressions do not notice the insult, assault, or invalidation, minoritized individuals feel each sting and cumulative weight. Delgado and Stefancic (2012) defined microaggressions as "water dripping on sandstone, they can be thought of as small acts of racism, consciously and unconsciously perpetrated, welling up from the assumptions about racial matters absorbed through our cultural heritage" (p. 2). Little by little, microaggressions wear away at identities and experiences of minoritized persons.

Crenshaw et al. (1995) noted that while racial ideology and power maintain prominence within all elements of North American life, new ways of thinking are needed in order to resist contemporary racialized thinking. Counter-stories are tools used by CRT scholars to expose the privileges that Whites, men, middle class, and other normative points of reference create or maintain the legacy of privilege (Solórzano & Yosso, 2016). Without resistance, Whiteness

remains unchecked. New scholarship explored the construction of Whiteness and White racial identity. Race is not a fixed term. Who is White? Who "passes" for White? Defining Whiteness led scholars to trace the changing state of Whiteness (Gallagher, 1997), the superiority destiny of White people (Horsman, 1997), racial classification within slavery (Wright, 1997), racial inferiority of immigrants (Roediger, 1997), and the development of White consciousness of immigrants (Barrett & Roediger, 1997; Morawski, 1997). Cabrera et al. (2017) noted the significance of critical examination of Whiteness while maintaining the centrality of marginalized voices in CRT.

Christianity Perpetuated Racism

Admonitions of service and love for one another fill the Christian scriptures. Followers of Christ ought to love one another (John 13:34-35 New Revised Standard; John 15:12; Romans 13:8-10), be kind to one another (Romans 12:10-16), wait for one another (1 Corinthians 11:33), be affectionate with one another (1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12) and serve one another (Galatians 5:13). Jesus taught believers to love brother, sister, enemy, and friend (Matthew 5:43-44; Mark 12:31-34). Yet throughout history, many Christians have perpetuated interracial conflict and subjugation in the name of Christ or remained indifferent to segregation and oppression. The literature review will now focus on the relationship between race and Evangelical faith, a brief history of race and the American church, how Christianity challenged racialized norms, modern multicultural churches, the place of racial reconciliation within the American church, and the relationship of Whiteness with Evangelical faith.

Race and Evangelical Faith

Rooted in Martin Luther's reformation and church, the term "Evangelical" is a broad term that stresses an individualistic faith and strict reliance upon the Bible (Livingstone, n.d.).

Four essential beliefs and actions, known as the "Bebbington Quadrilateral," characterized Evangelical faith: (a) *conversionism,* which is defined as persons are changed or converted by the Gospel message which is an active faith in Jesus Christ, (b) *activism,* which is characterized by proclaiming the Gospel in an vigorous manner to others and a life of service, (c) *Biblicism,* which carries a high respect for the Bible as inspired by God and authoritative for personal life, and (d) *crucicentrism,* which elevates the sacrificial atonement of Jesus's work on the cross (Bebbington, 2005). Not only do personal conversion, evangelism, the *Bible,* and Jesus's work on the cross characterize Evangelical faith, but Emerson and Smith (2000), Emerson et al. (1999), and Hinojosa and Park (2004) noted that White Evangelicals hold three additional beliefs referred to as "Religio-Cultural Tools in the White Evangelical Kit." The tools are accountable freewill individualism, relationalism that centralizes one-on-one interactions and a relationship with Jesus, and antistructuralism or the rejection of systemic structural influences. Furthermore, religious groups have a strong desire to determine who is "in" and who is "out" of the group. Inclusion and exclusion provides a fertile ground for Whiteness to be cultivated.

Religious organizations often prescribe characteristics of the community, such as in-group relational intimacy, in-group positivity, out-group negativity, and cross-group friendships. Organizations also prescribe the appropriate depth of interactions among group members and disconnection to the broader community (J. R. Porter & Emerson, 2013; Yancey & Emerson, 2013). Homogeneity and isolation further undermines bridging group relationships (DeYoung, 1997; Emerson & Kim, 2003; J. R. Porter & Emerson, 2013). DeYoung (1997) found that Christianity often serves as a barrier to racial reconciliation and unity. Rather than a model of inclusiveness, Christianity echoes the segregation of culture. Some churches perform checkpoints or "race tests" for entering minoritized individuals (Bracey & Moore, 2017).

Racialized boundary maintenance permits the “right kind” of minoritized persons within Evangelical White institutional spaces. Macroaggressions based upon White interests, exclusion, or racial comfort prevent new members from gaining access or relationships with White church members.

While individualism is central to most North Americans, Evangelicals hold tightly to notions of individuality and personal salvation (Emerson & Smith, 2000). Rooted in spiritual awakenings and revivals, individualism matured through social periods of piety and holiness. Personal morality was central to the Christian faith. Shelton and Emerson (2012) found that individualism focuses on personal talents, giftedness, intelligence, work ethic, moral character, and personal motivation. Outside of social-gospel traditions that realize the impact of social concerns in the present, many Evangelicals are primarily concerned with personal salvation in the hereafter. The doctrine of original sin entrenched individualism because persons outside of healthy interpersonal relationships often made sinful choices.

Evangelicals view human nature as fallen and in need of salvation. White Evangelicals place a strong emphasis on family relationships and friendships within the church. In the beginning, sin separated humanity from a personal relationship with God, and only through the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross did humanity regain access to the personal relationship. Sin affects all of one’s relationships and shapes Evangelicals to view social concerns as relationships impacted by sin (Emerson & Smith, 2000). If racial tension is simply the result of sin, racism is simply a collection of individualized sins between persons. For many White Evangelicals, racism is simply a sin problem. Racism is a matter of the heart and a failure to love one’s brothers and sisters.

Influenced by individualism and relationalism, White Evangelicals describe systemic explanations of social concerns such as racism, poverty, or substance abuse as nonsensical or framed by liberal media. Blaming systemic legal prejudice, segregated housing, or underfunded school districts as structural inequalities, White Evangelicals believe structural perspectives shift the blame away from the accountable individuals making individual decisions. According to Shelton and Emerson (2012), structuralists argued that some persons are advantaged while others are disadvantaged. Structuralists believe that all Americans are moving toward success, but some persons start closer to the finish line or jump fewer hurdles along the way.

The homogeneous unit growth principle also supported primarily White churches throughout the latter half of the 20th century into the present day (DeYoung et al., 2003). As Whites focus on personal evangelism and discipleship, church growth experts follow cultural separation norms. New believers enter churches without crossing racial, ethnic, or class barriers. Racial segregation focuses time and effort in evangelism to a particular niche. Within church growth movements, segregation on Sunday morning is a strategy for growth rather than a statement of conviction. On Sunday mornings in North America, Whiteness remains unnoticed and unchallenged.

Christianity and Race Through the Reconstruction

The North American church was rooted in the interplay between theology and race. So deep are the roots of Christianity and race that Jennings (2010) noted a great theological distortion within the Church: “One must look more deliberatively at the soil in which the modern theological imagination grew and where it continues to find its deeper social nutrients” (p. 7) in order to grasp our distorted theology of race. Jennings (2010) continued,

> Christianity in the Western world lives and moves within a diseased social imagination. I think most Christians sense that something about Christians' social imaginations is ill, but the analysis of this condition often don't get to the heart of the constellation of generative forces that have rendered people's social performances of the Christian life collectively anemic. (p. 6)

The diseased imagination influences churches, denominations, sermons, outreach strategies, the salvific worthiness of souls, empathy for immigrants, and social justice efforts. Jennings (2010) noted, "Christian theology now operates inside this diseased social imagination without the ability to discern how its intellectual and pedagogical performances reflect and fuel the problem, further crippling the communities it serves" (p. 7). The diseased social and theological imagination perpetuates Whiteness within the American church.

Howard Zinn (1999) offered numerous accounts of conquest and colonialism within the confines of Christian faith. In one account of U.S. history, an encounter between Columbus and the Arawaks of the Bahama Islands resulted in conquest. In 1495, after having little success finding gold but needing to return his ship with an economic dividend, Columbus captured and confined 1,500 Arawak through a slave-raiding party. Columbus later wrote, "Let us in the name of the Holy Trinity go on sending all the slaves that can be sold" (Zinn, 1999, p. 4). Christian faith affirmed the dehumanizing practice of slavery.

When Pilgrims arrived in the inhabited land of New England, the governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, John Winthrop, declared the land a vacuum because the native people had not subdued the land. The natural right of the land was not as binding as the civil right of the land, declared Winthrop (Zinn, 1999). In order to defend their legal standing, the Puritans appealed to the *Bible*, Psalms 2:8: "Ask of me, and I shall give thee, the heathen for

thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" (as cited in Zinn, 1999, p. 14). Moreover, to justify the use of force, Romans 13:2 was used, "Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation" (as cited in Zinn, 1999, p. 14). P. Harvey (2016) described early Virginian colonizers' intent on Christianizing the New World and dependence upon the Christian God to govern the territories, to justify Christian evangelism, and to conquer the Native Americans.

Deliberate and systemic attacks for the purpose of terrorizing combatant or non-combatant native people in the northeast became common. Massacres of men, women, and children and burning homes and fields with the perceived blessing of God slowly extinguished the culture, civilization, and history of northeastern native peoples. One raid on a Pequot village was remembered by Puritan raider John Mason as an act of God's faithfulness,

> It was a fearful sight to see them thus frying in the fyer, and the streams of blood quenching the same, and horrible was the stinke and sente there of, but the victory seemed a sweete sacrifice, and they gave the prayers thereof to God, who had wrought so wonderfully for them, thus to inclose their enemies in their hands, and give them so speedy a victory over so proud and insulting an enimie. (as cited in Zinn, 1999, p. 15)

Zinn (1999) remarked, "There is not a country in world history in which racism has been more important, for so long a time, as the United States" (p. 23). While New World settlers began new lives, the need for labor and sustenance grew. White servants brought with the settlers were too few, the native people were too defiant, resourceful, and numerous to enslave. Colonists' technology and expertise, while superior in many forms, was insufficient and inferior for colony

survival, so the slavery of other peoples became a viable option (Alexander, 2012). As a result, Whiteness remained superior. Natives were inferior and enslaved.

According to Omni and Winant (2010), Europeans that arrived in the Americas were challenged to consider the visual and cultural differences of native peoples. Were *all* people part of the family of humanity? Gossett (1997) wrote,

> Race theory, then, had up until fairly modern times no firm hold on European thought. On the other hand, race theory and race prejudice were by no means unknown at the time when the English colonists came to North America. Undoubtedly, the age of exploration led many to speculate on race differences at a period when neither Europeans nor Englishmen were prepared to make allowances for vast cultural diversities. Even though race theories had not then secured wide acceptance or even sophisticated formulation, the first contacts of the Spanish with the Indians in the Americas can now be recognized as the beginning of a struggle between conceptions of the nature of primitive peoples which has not yet been wholly settled. (p. 16)

If native peoples were essentially distinct from Europeans, could native peoples be a different species from Europeans or have a diminished divine image from the Creator? Could the souls of native peoples be redeemed in the same manner that European souls were redeemed?

If colonialists were more significant members of the family of God and human family, the confiscation of property, slavery, and cultural massacre of native peoples were justified. According to Emerson and Smith (2000), 18th century preacher George Whitefield encouraged colonial landowners that cruelty to slaves was an acute reminder of personal misery in this world and therefore incentivized slaves to focus on the afterlife of the Christian gospel. For Whitefield, God permitted slavery to introduce and humanize the savage Africans. P. Harvey (2016) noted

that slaves converted to Christianity because it garnered respect from masters, obliged lighter punishments, or actually brought about temporal freedom. However, conversion was likely coerced for many slaves as masters maintained overt Whiteness.

Zinn (1999) continued that African slavery became the most cruel form of slavery in history because of the frenzied greed for agricultural profit and the racialized hatred that reduced the slave to a less-than-human status. Alexander (2012) echoed this superior sentiment: “That Whites were inherently superior, and that slavery was, in fact, for Blacks’ own good, served to alleviate the White conscience and reconcile the tension between slavery and the democratic ideals of the so-called New World” (p. 26). A faith rooted in superiority not only justified the political and economic system supporting slavery, but it preserved the racism required to maintain racial hierarchy beyond the emancipation of slaves. In this hierarchy of European superiority and African inferiority, White became master and Black was slave. P. Harvey (2016) noted that early definitions of race in the South were delineated by “Christian Europeans” and “heathen Africans” and rooted in religion (p. 19). Those who followed Christ followed the cultural and economic status quo. In order for status quo to remain, Whiteness remained elusive like a vapor.

While focused attention was given to converting slaves to Christ, the temporal experience of slaves and African peoples was neglected. Maintaining the social order was vital. Emerson and Smith (2000) noted that some Christians were conflicted about converting slaves to Christ because slaves may have related spiritual freedom with earthly freedom. Theological disputes arose regarding baptism. However, several colonial legislators declared that baptized slaved remained bound to their masters. A prominent minister and writer, Cotton Mather, defended the unchanging reality of slaves regardless of their Christian conversion (Emerson & Smith, 2000; P.

Harvey, 2016). Conversion did not require freedom on earth. Christianity served slaves well because the eternal soul was more significant than the temporal body. Scriptures encouraging patience in hardships, service to master, humility, and obedience were preached to root out sins of arrogance and pride. In fact, pride led to destruction because slaves wanted a freedom that God did not divinely ordain.

The birth of slavery in the New World funded the newly formed colonial colleges (Wilder, 2013). In February 1638, Governor Winthrop purchased some slaves, cotton, and tobacco from the West Indian vessel, *Desire*. One of the men aboard the *Desire* became the first documented slave of the colony and property of Harvard's first schoolmaster, Nathaniel Eaton. Within colonial higher education, the Christian faith advanced the submission of native peoples and profited from the African slave trade. Wilder (2013) noted that the first colleges within the New World included Harvard (founded 1636), William and Mary (1693), Yale (1701), and Codrington (1745) in Barbados. These institutions "were instruments of Christian expansionism, weapons for the conquest of indigenous people, and major beneficiaries of the African slave trade and slavery" (Wilder, 2013, p. 17). Harvard became a symbol of Christianity's success in the New World as an establishment to spread the Gospel to North America (Wilder, 2013).

Churches often held slaves or benefited from the economic system of slavery. Oast (2010) wrote of the Presbyterian minister William Hill's ministry at Briery Presbyterian church in Virginia during 1834-1836. Prior to Hill's arrival, Briery supported their ministers through auctioning slaves annually to local families. Even as many Presbyterians defended the institution of slavery, Reverend Hill felt convicted. Using slaves to support the minister's salary and mission of the church seemed contradictory to dignity. According to Oast, auctioning individual

bodies to the highest bidder with the permission of the church was the worst kind of slavery that Reverend Hill witnessed.

According to Oast (2010), slavery supported many congregations as an endowment. Through childbearing, over time, the financial stability of a congregation grew and furthermore diminished the necessity of personal financial contribution to the church. The Briery slaves included three adult women, one male youth, and a baby when they were purchased in 1768. By 1781, seven additional children were born into the Briery endowment. Until slavery was abolished a century later, this practice continued to support the Briery church mission and minister financially. This practice caused an additional tension for Christians: If slave-owning increased the wealth and "capacity" of ministry and propagation of faith, how can slavery be wrong? After all, God was prospering the church, it appeared, through slavery or in spite of slavery. Endowments built upon the backs of slaves perpetuated God's design for evangelical progress.

During the antebellum era, Christian thinking and practice continued to weave together slavery and racism. Christianity rooted itself firmly in the notion that an individual is a soul apart from community. Southern states defended the institution of slavery through print media and church teachings. Abolishing slavery would only lead to social evils such as race-mixing or anarchy (P. Harvey, 2016). Slavery was a part of the individual journey of an African's soul just as a child's soul is grown under the care of their parent. Southern theologians cited the Bible as a defense of God's curse upon the Black race:

> The sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) These were the three sons of Noah, and from them came the people who were scattered over the whole earth. Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded to plant a

> vineyard. When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered inside his tent. Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father naked and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it across their shoulders; then they walked in backward and covered their father's naked body. Their faces were turned the other way so that they would not see their father naked. When Noah awoke from his wine and found out what his youngest son had done to him, he said, "Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers." He also said, "Praise be to the LORD, the God of Shem! May Canaan be the slave of Shem. May God extend Japheth's territory; may Japheth live in the tents of Shem, and may Canaan be the slave of Japheth. (Genesis 9:18-27)

As a punishment for seeing Noah's nakedness, Noah's son Ham and his descendants were cursed by God and predestined to a life of service to his brothers. Noah's other sons Shem and Japheth were blessed by God. Additionally, the descendants of Shem and Japheth were the bearers of righteousness. Consequently, the genealogy of Blacks was cursed, and God gave responsibility to Whites to impose social order. During a sermon in 1850, James Henley Thornwell defended slavery as a means for "teaching the cheerful obedient performance of social duties" (P. Harvey, 2016, p. 79). According to many Christian preachers and theologians of the time, if God wanted to denounce slavery, God would have done so throughout the scriptures.

As the Civil War unfolded, southern theological ideas amended to maintain God's will for slavery. History would prove that slavery would remain until the sovereignty of God completed the work of salvation to Blacks. During a midpoint in the war, 100 Protestant ministers affirmed the relationship between infidelity to slavery and religious disobedience (P. Harvey, 2016). To fight against slavery is to fight against God's providence for national order.

Northern aggressors were infidel hoards believing in false doctrine. Even as a Southern victory in the Civil War faded from reality, Southern Christian solders saw their sacrifice as similar to that of Christ on the cross for humanity's redemption (P. Harvey, 2016).

During reconstruction, Blacks and abolitionist Whites hoped that the civil freedoms now gained by Blacks would result in a revival of Christianity and civilization. In Southern churches, congregational prayers focused on the election of Black political candidates, possessing church properties that were previously designated for slaves, and organizing freed peoples. However, proponents of slavery insisted on segregation of the races. The mixing of races was rooted in "infidel humanitarianism" (P. Harvey, 2016, p. 112). The unity of humanity must be rebuked. God's curse remained on Blacks. Attempts to alter God's sovereign curse were accused of promoting social equality. As the legal doctrine of segregation evolved after *Plessey vs Ferguson,* many Black churchgoers argued for the gradual development of Black-owned institutions. Segregationists responded with violence or legal resistance to Black progress (M. L. King, 1964). P. Harvey (2016) noted that sympathetic Whites found themselves swept up in a racialized institutional inertia that lost the war on slavery but developed a sophisticated system of racial superiority.

Abolitionist Societies

Not all Christian movements perpetuated racism through slavery. Antislavery societies and mass communication were filled with Christian church-goers and pastors (M. D. King & Haveman, 2008). Involvement in antislavery movements from parishioners and pastors varied based upon the theological framework of the local church, region, or denomination. Regarding social consciousness, M. D. King and Haveman categorized 18th and 19th century churches into two categories. Churches that focused on the redemption of souls, redemption of society, and

involvement with abolitionist movements were called “this-worldly.” Supporting abolitionism and relieving the tension between earthly brokenness and divine wholeness motivated “this-worldly” church-goers. Faithfulness demanded critical social reform.

The second group of churches criticized personal involvement within secular culture, avoided or undermined abolitionist activities, and primarily focused on the redemption and perfection of individual souls were called “other-worldly.” Personal conversion and relationship with God was the path of holiness. Withdrawing from the pollutants of this world and social concerns was the moral obligation of the other-worldly church member. P. Harvey (2016) noted that righteous conduct was the path to salvation and civilization. Without righteous conduct, White men would sink into depravity of the “uncivilized tawny or Black men” (P. Harvey, 2016, p. 15). Often these two types of churches coalesced within Confederate and Union boundaries and were motivated by theological responsibility to engage or abstain from social reform (M. D. King & Haveman, 2008).

Christianity and Race Through the Civil Rights Movement

Within the Baptist denomination during the 18th century, disagreements grew between factions of the faith. During the Baptist General Committee in Virginia in 1790, John Leland persuaded the committee to “extirpate the horrid evil (slavery) from the land” (Najar, 2005, p. 163). Five years prior, a different Baptist association advised their leadership to not interfere in slavery abolition because the Bible affirmed the buying and selling of slaves (P. Harvey, 2016). The subject of slavery belonged in the civil sector of society, not within the walls of the church. Whiteness and race was not a topic of church responsibility.

After reconstruction, progress in the South was mired in violence and economic disparities between Blacks and Whites. Black ministers focused on the uplifting of their

parishioners (Zinn, 1999). White supremacists constrained Black progress through economic and political threats and violence. Southern White Christians continued to analogize their sufferings with the sufferings of Christ and memorialized Confederate leaders through statues and murals. However, groups like the Bureau of Christian Social Relations, Southern Conference for Human Welfare, and the Fellowship of Southern Churchmen critically questioned the southern way of life and segregationist economic environment (P. Harvey, 2016).

Through many years of struggle and preparation, the era of the modern Civil Rights movement came to fruition during the middle of the 20th century (Zinn, 1999). Social activism stirred from church pews as *Brown vs Board of Education* offered a hope of desegregation. Images of a mutilated and murdered teenager, Emmett Till, piqued the consciences of Americans (Tyson, 2017). Through the work of Howard Thurman, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and the Congress of Racial Equality, a new strategy rooted in Christian teaching was offered: non-violent resistance and economic boycotts. A new Christian movement that challenged followers to put action to their faith ensued (Davis, 1998; Dent, 1997). In 1964, Fannie Lou Hamer shared with a large group of people to "trust God and launch out into the deep. You can pray until you faint, but if you don't get up and try to do something, God is not going to put it in your lap" (P. Harvey, 2016, p. 158). Critical action must accompany critical reflection.

At this same time, weekly church attendance peaked for young adults. In April 1957, 51% of young adults attended weekly services, which was an increase from 31% during February 1950 (Putnam & Campbell, 2012). Religion and patriotism were unifying themes for Americans in the era of the Cold War. During this time, "under God" was added to the Pledge of Allegiance and "In God We Trust" was determined as the national motto in 1954 and 1956 respectively (Putnam & Campbell, 2012). Religion's entanglement with patriotism increased.

Through the inspiration and diligence of national leadership like Martin Luther King, Jr., Fannie Lou Hamer, Ella Baker, and John Lewis and local leadership of Medgar Evers, Fred Shuttlesworth, and others, tenacity and courage grew within the religious churchgoers in the struggle for freedom (Branch, 1988). Channeling violence from supremacists into non-violence was rooted in Christian love. In spite of the deeply held tradition of self-defense, Christian love for the enemy joined social justice. Even in the dark days following the death of Addie Mae Collins, Cynthia Wesley, Carole Robertson, and Carol Denise McNair in September, 1963, in the Birmingham church bombing, King challenged the church and ministers to move beyond the safety of church pews and join the religious movement of justice for all men and women (M. L. King, 1964). Activist and preacher James Bevel shared the relationship between the Gospel message of sacrifice and the movement as he preached about some young men who sat in the streets and held up traffic in protest to unequal treatment:

> They didn't hurt the street and they didn't hurt anybody's car. But they was just out in the street. Making a witness against the system. For they themselves were exposing themselves to danger. And that's what we say in the nonviolent movement, is that I suffered to save you. Not I'm going to make you suffer to save yourself. And this is the psychology that Jesus has. That I'll go to the cross to save you. To redeem you. That is what those of us in the nonviolent movement must say to America. We will suffer in order to save you. So we can never resort to violence. (Houck & Dixon, 2006, p. 556).

Bevel noted the strong correlation between activism and love. Here, Bevel pointed out the non-violent movement was motivated by love and not violence. The movement was motivated by peace and not looting.

Dr. King's appeal for justice was often viewed as extremist by many Whites and Southerners (M. L. King, 1964). The hierarchical racial constructs within the individual and collective epistemologies of the mid-20th century were deep, hidden, and wrapped into the religious and cultural identities of many North Americans. Labeled as "communist," "divisive," or "ill-timed," civil rights supporters faced discouragement and continued frustration as they sought to bring the harmonious Kingdom of God to earth. Segregation and racism were spiritual disorders that diminished the spiritual and religious laws of the land and were highlighted throughout media during the civil rights movement. King modeled the critical reflective work necessary for change, but Whiteness dulled America's consciousness back to sleep.

Contemporary Christianity and Race in the Evangelical Church

In contemporary society, most Americans belonged and believed from a religious framework. From 1978 to 1994, Americans reported attendance at a church with people of a different race (along the Black/White binary) increasing from 34% to 48% (Putnam & Campbell, 2012). According to Emerson and Woo (2006), in order for a congregation to be multiethnic, at least twenty percent of the congregants were racially or ethnically different than the majority of the congregants. Twenty percent represented the critical mass necessary for organizational influence. According to Putnam and Campbell (2012) and Emerson (2009), 84% to 85% of church-going Americans attended services that were made up of all or almost all of the same ethnicity or race. Digging deeper, of the 16% of Evangelical Protestants who attended a diverse congregation the most likely candidates to attend a multiethnic church had the following characteristics: 20-year-old, women, attending a large church, in a racially diverse county within the Western United States (Putnam & Campbell, 2012). The most important predictor of a racially diverse congregation is a church membership of 1,000 members or more. According to

Emerson, larger churches staffed minoritized pastors, recruited diverse members, engaged in social justice concerns, and were better equipped to manage the internal opportunities of diversification.

The number of 1,000-member Protestant churches in North America with at least 20% of the congregation diverse from the majority group increased from 1998 (7%) to 2007 (15%) (Emerson, 2009). Most of this increase came from large, conservative Protestant churches. As training resources, networking, and institutional support increased the necessity of multicultural expressions of the Kingdom of God, the number of large multicultural congregations increased (Emerson, 2009). Whiteness and race soon became topics of conversation, sermon themes, and discussions in church lobbies. Fissures within the White framework began appearing. After all, Christians have a Christ-challenged motivation to love and serve others. According to the Scriptures, Christians ought to give away privilege instead of accumulating privilege.

Christianity Challenges Racism

Christians live in a unique position to focus on racial reconciliation and work for justice. However, Christians historically avoided rocking the boat and preferred mirroring American culture that perpetuated racism and other social inequalities. Sociologically, religion often legitimizes the world as it is rather than serving as a revolutionary force to redeem the world (Emerson & Smith, 2000). DeYoung et al. (2003) highlighted that the Christian church was an inclusive table of fellowship for all nations and voices. Not only were the early disciples of Christ a diverse collection of persons but the early Church was culturally and geographically diverse. While leadership struggled to maintain and integrate the diversity, the early Church was unified in their shared faith in Christ. Even the early ethnocentrism was converted to intentional diversity (DeYoung et al., 2003).

Core gospel principals focus on recovering from personal and communal struggle, living peacefully, reconciling brothers and sisters, and striving for social justice (DeYoung, 1997). In comparison to reconciliation attempts outside of the Church, Evangelicals have religious and spiritual motivation for seeking justice, understanding the harm of societal sins, and believing in the influence of divine intervention in human affairs (Glynn, 1998). Christian religion calls for the unity of ethnic and racial divisions and is a powerful motivational force to overcome hostility, unequal treatment, conflict, violence, and social ills associated with a racialized society (Emerson & Smith, 2000). Instead of using religion as a method to legitimize the world as it is, religion can serve to overcome the conflicts and concerns of the modern world.

Multicultural Churches

Multicultural churches are an affirmative expression of Christian impact for good. As noted previously, Emerson and Woo (2006) defined a multicultural congregation as one in which no single racial group comprised 80% or more of churchgoers. Until a church has 20% of a particular or non-majority group, the worship styles, leadership, and ministries remain mono-cultural. While mono-cultural churches often cite mono-cultural neighborhoods as the primary reason for minimal diversity, Emerson and Woo discovered that the vast majority of congregations were substantially less diverse in comparison to the community within a 10-mile radius of the church.

A host of authors focused on multicultural themes within the American Evangelical church within recent years. Anderson (2010) challenged Christians to be more inclusive to minoritized brothers and sisters than exclusive. Gilbreath (2006) shared his experiences as an African American raised in the primarily White church and reflected on King's continued challenge to the White church in "Letter From a Birmingham Jail." DeYoung (2007, 2009)

highlighted how Christian faith inspired social justice and a Biblical study on multiculturalism and diversity. DeYmaz (2007) outlined the Biblical mandate for diverse communities. DeYmaz and Li (2013) shared challenges for leadership in a multiethnic church. Soong-Chan Rah (2010) clarified how cultural intelligence is required to minister to an ever-diversifying nation. Most authors wrote from within the walls of the church to churched people who want to participate in multicultural religious environments. Whiteness does not need to fill all of the pews, classrooms, and sermon outlines in the North American church. Diverse perspectives reflect the diversity within the Kingdom of God.

Shelton and Emerson (2012) found distinct religious sensibilities between Black Christians and White Christians. Influenced by the consequences of historical stratification within North America, Blacks experience faith uniquely and differently from Whites. DeYoung et al. (2003) traced four prominent multicultural churches founded through diverse methods within diverse contexts. The authors also noted theological and practical explanations for segregation within churches. African Americans and Native Americans maintain cultural identity through religious practices. African American churches also serve as neighborhood community centers for activity and activism. White culture that permeates White churches often resonates with feelings of oppression for African Americans seeking relief from racism.

Multicultural churches require more than minoritized assimilation to White Christianity. Becker (1998) found that inclusion requires changes to worship services, leadership, and decision-making processes. Integrated services necessitate explicit and implicit culture criticism. Intentional structures ensure racial equity (Emerson & Woo, 2006). Becker (1998) continued, “[Churches] mined their religious traditions for metaphors that framed their new multi-racial mission focus in legitimate religious terms, and made it seem like a natural extension of their

previous identity" (p. 452). Healthy multicultural congregations become space where people engage with the struggles associated with multiple perspectives. Inclusive liturgy, music, and participation reflect institutional change toward multiculturalism. Integrated churches possess a more socially tolerant or politically progressive ideology on social issues such as interracial marriage and are less likely to stereotype Blacks (Yancey, 1999). Additionally, the more diverse focus, outreach interest, and resource allocation, the greater likelihood for a sustained racially diverse congregation (Emerson & Kim, 2003; Emerson & Woo, 2006).

While multicultural congregations become more inclusive, participants change through the diverse relationships and structures. Interracial contact alters racial attitudes in affirmative ways, most notably in Whites (Emerson & Yancey, 2011; J. Porter & Brown, 2008; Yancey, 1999). Emerson and Yancey (2011) noted that specific conditions are required in order for interracial contact to influence participants. When someone shares a pew with a person of a different ethnic or racial experience, the contact may have little significance unless a genuine relationship is present. Yancey (1999) echoed this belief and notes that Whites in interracial families and religious organizations are more likely to alter personal racial attitudes because of interracial friendships. Through listening to experiences of minoritized friends, loss of majority-group status and influence and witnessing the impacts of racism, Whites' perspectives on race and racism change.

Putnam and Campbell (2012) discovered a strong correlation between attending a racially or ethnically diverse congregation and having at least one friend of a different race. These conditions require more than casual interactions. Competitive, coerced, or unequal contact do not improve interracial connections. Moreover, contact unsupported by authority such as family or church leaders degrade interracial contact. Relationships based upon mutuality, cooperation,

egalitarianism, and intimacy develop a social context whereby true friendship unfolds. Whiteness is consciously and subconsciously challenged when White persons interact with minoritized persons in authentic relationships.

Racial Reconciliation

Racial reconciliation has long been a primary theme within Christianity. Theologically, reconciliation occurs between God and humanity through salvation but also between members of the human family. As the individual and community are reconciled back to God, the relationships and community within the human family are reconciled to one another. Reconciliation was modelled by the life of Jesus Christ and the early church in Acts. Reconciliation within the Christian church was rooted in the work of John Perkins (1993), Perkins et al. (1994), and Tom Skinner (2005) during the 1950s and 1960s. During the mid-1990s, Evangelicals turned greater attention to reconciliation through the attention of Evangelical leader Rev. Billy Graham's focus on racism, the Southern Baptist Convention's public apology for Baptist involvement in slavery, the work of Promise Keepers, and the joining together of the National Black Evangelical Association and the National Association of Evangelicals (DeYoung, 1997). As a result, new organizations, books, resources, conferences, and publications became available to a generation of Evangelical pastors, educators, and activists. Pastors exchanged pulpits and choirs, and congregational collaboration and Saturday morning interracial breakfast groups challenged local congregations to greater inclusion.

When founded in 1990, Promise Keeper's vision was "equipping the local church through the Word of God to empower their men to transform the world" ("PK Core Values," 2018). During the first National Leadership Conference in 1992, 22,000 men came to the University of Colorado and were challenged to pursue reconciliation across racial and

denominational lines (“PK History,” 2018). Washington and Kehrein (1993) offered a model of racial reconciliation for churches. However, Dube (2016) noted that Promise Keeper’s focus on interpersonal racial reconciliation did not influence the organization at an institutional level.

Some scholars prefer racial reconciliation above intercultural competence, intercultural integrity or cultural credibility (Salter-McNeil, 2015). DeYoung (1997) defined reconciliation as “a change from a state of enmity to one of friendship, the healing of a quarrel . . . [and] a radical change [that] occurs in which an intimate and personal relationship is renewed” (p. 44). Salter-McNeil (2015) defined racial reconciliation as the “ongoing spiritual process involving forgiveness, repentance, and justice that restores broken relationships and systems to reflect God’s original intention for all creation to flourish” (p. 22). Beginning with the creation account, Salter-McNeil traced a Biblical thread supporting the theological concept of reconciliation. The Biblical arc concludes with passages in the Book of Acts and Revelation that highlight the diversity of the early church and multicultural, multilingual, and multiracial Heavenly choir.

Racial reconciliation requires several steps to occur (Salter-McNeil, 2015; Shelton & Emerson, 2012). Shelton and Emerson (2012) discerned the first step as admitting that racism is problematic. Secondly, believers must submit to the will of God in order to remedy the problems of racism. Committing to interracial relationships is the next step of racial reconciliation. Relocating outside of familiar communities into diverse communities and addressing systemic racism in living conditions and opportunities for minoritized groups are the final two steps in Shelton and Emerson’s research on reconciliation. DeYoung (1997) found that reconciliation requires self-examination, consistency, persistent resolve, and intentional relationship.

Salter-McNeil’s (2015) steps of reconciliation includes realization of a new reality, identification and empathy with diverse groups, preparation for action, and actively working for

reconciliation. Through catalytic events such as racial tension, hostile environments, or intellectual dissonance, following the steps of racial reconciliation leads to transformation. However, through critical information, reflections, collaborative leadership, authentic communication, and conflict resolution, communities experience the genuine Beloved Community spoken of by Martin Luther King (1964). Reconciliation requires critical action.

DeYoung (1997) defined reconciliation for the Christian as costly: "Cheap reconciliation is unity without responsibility, forgiveness without repentance, equal treatment without restitution, harmony without liberation, conflict resolution without relational healing and peace without God" (p. xvii). Racial reconciliation as enacted by many Christians may only serve the individualistic faith outlined by Emerson and Smith (2000) and avoid systemic concerns. Primarily focused on personal relationships, racial reconciliation will exclude the critical work of systemic and structural reconciliation and justice. Teel (2012) noted that even the Christian imagination requires a theological conversion. Jennings (2010) purposefully avoided the theological term because of the poor historic deployment within Christian contexts:

> The concept of reconciliation is not irretrievable, but I am convinced that before we theologians can interpret the depths of the divine action of reconciliation, we must first articulate the profound deformities of Christian intimacy and identity in modernity. Until we do, all theological discussions of reconciliation will be exactly what they tend to be: (a) ideological tools for facilitating the negotiations of power; or (b) socially exhausted idealist claims masquerading as serious theological accounts. In truth, it is not at all clear that most Christians are ready to imagine reconciliation. (p. 10)

True reconciliation cannot occur without critical reflection and critical action.

Christianity and Whiteness

Several Christian authors have focused on Whiteness and White privilege. Harris and Schaupp (2004) explored the place of Whiteness in a multiethnic world. Wytsma (2017) researched the history and influence of Whiteness and privilege, Hill (2017) shared his awakening story of White consciousness and action, and Fernando (2016) offered a deeper understanding of Whiteness, race, and faith. White normativity frames many churches. Yancy (2012a) experienced church as a space for White bonding, White thankfulness, and White speech. Church is a space where White bodies break bread. While most Christians reject White supremacy, many Christians do not critically reflect on the influence of Whiteness and privilege. How do Christians reconcile the life of Christ and Biblical mandates of love with unearned privilege and the social marginalization of minoritized persons?

Through belief in Jesus, Christians ought to engage the deconstruction of racism and White supremacy actively. However, many Christians maintain a comfortable distance from social concerns like racism and instead follow cultural systems of White advantage and minoritized disadvantage. While contemporary Whites do not feel responsible for creating hegemony, Teel (2012) challenged Christians to engage Whiteness through a belief in Jesus. Following the teachings of Jesus's outlined in Charles Sheldon's (1985) book, *In His Steps*, the question, "What would Jesus do?" offered a critique on Whites' social privilege and power. J. Harvey (2012) noted that Jesus's parables conscientized the oppressed masses of Jesus's day. Teel noted that Jesus brought hope and healing to the outcast and marginalized and highly criticized the privileged religious elite. Cassidy (2012) echoed this sentiment. Exposure to suffering gave an opportunity to criticize and dismantle White triviality to suffering. Cassidy

(2012) noted, “It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needed than for a [White person] to enter the kingdom of God” (p. 49).

For the Christian, Whiteness is a problem to confront. Only when Christians overturn oppressive structures can faithful followers disrupt racism. Ruether (2012) stated that Jesus lived a life of liberation. Jesus suffered alongside the socially, politically, and economically oppressed. Only when White Christians unmask the privilege and power of Whiteness can Christ’s message of love be fully expressed. J. Harvey (2012) challenged Whites to acknowledge and refuse Whiteness simultaneously. Faithfulness requires persons to identify with Whiteness while strategically disrupting social processes and systems that promote Whiteness. Through repeated and persistent action over time, Whiteness may be reimagined. J. Harvey exemplified the life of Zacchaeus as an example of racial conversion:

> Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost." (Luke 19:1-10)

After a shared meal with Jesus, a transformed Zacchaeus dismissed his oppressor identity and gave his wealth away as an act of critical action.

Universities and Race

The influence of Whiteness affects college student identity development, social interactions, and campus climate on university campuses. Professionals and researchers within student development have examined the chilling effect of unwelcoming campuses (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado, 1992), of personal identity theories (Cross & Fhagen-Smith, 2001; Ferdman & Gallegos, 2012; Helms, 1990a; Horse, 2012; Kim, 2012; Sue & Sue, 2003), and the social impact of multicultural environments (P. M. King & Baxter-Magolda, 2005; Quaye & Baxter-Magolda, 2007; Reason & Evans, 2007).

Student Development Theory

Student development professionals expend many hours challenging and supporting identity development of college students. Either through programs or conversations, deans and directors focus on the impact of personal and familial history and present concerns, hopes, and future dreams wrapped around the question, “Who am I?” Identity development theories rely upon the disciplines of sociology, psychology, anthropology, history, and theology (L. D. Patton et al., 2016). Entering adult life often requires students to explore all elements of identity, including vocation, sexuality, religion, friendship, and race (Torres et al., 2009). Schwartz et al. (2011) found that implicit and explicit responses to the question, “Who are you?” define a person’s identity. Identification includes introspection and reflection responses but also intra-personal and communal responses. College student development requires critical reflection and critical responses.

As an alternative to Helms’s (1990a, 1990b) model, Rowe et al. (1994) developed the

White Racial Consciousness Model (WRCM). The WRCM explores racial attitudes of Whites and criticizes Helms's primary focus on Black-White binary narrative. The WRCM highlights dissonance as a motivator for change. Student experience of dissonance either positively or negatively affects the trajectory of personal identity development (L. D. Patton et al., 2016). Dissonance also factors into identity development models for Latina/Latino persons (Ferdman & Gallegos, 2012) and racial and cultural identity development (Sue & Sue, 2003). American Indian identity development (Horse, 2012), Asian American identity development (Kim, 2012), and Black identity development (Cross & Fhagen-Smith, 2001) all focus on increased racial consciousness as a key element of identity development. Similar to Helms (1990a, 1990b), dissonance increases racial consciousness and challenges Whites to explore Whiteness.

As a form of dissonance, Cabrera (2012) explored White racial agitation. While Whiteness originated as a means of oppressing racial minorities, Whiteness can be redeemed through confronting Whiteness. White racial agitation requires students to undo their identities and come to terms with a reconstructed identity that re-articulates Whiteness (Leonardo, 2002). Freire (1973) argued that in order to engage in liberatory praxis, people "must perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform" (p. 49). Cabrera (2012) noted that students working through Whiteness are not only aware of their racial privileges, but they also develop the agency and dedication to struggle against Whiteness. Working through racism means constantly asking the question: "How do my actions reinforce or challenge racism?" (Cabrera, 2012). White racial comfort glosses over racial realities for many students of color. Awakening requires dissonance to move from apathy to understanding. Cabrera et al. (2016) called for "an assertive pedagogy of racial agitation . . . . The challenge therefore becomes making the invisible visible, while creating

campus structures that foster targeted and intentional racial *dis*comfort for White students as a means of promoting both individual growth and racial justice" (p. 132). Challenging Whiteness requires discomfort with the status quo.

Through co-curricular and curricular activities in a multicultural environment, White students are encouraged to examine and develop their own racial identities, recognize White privilege, and understand other cultures. Participating in racial identity development and race relations courses, attending cross-cultural speaker series, building racially/ethnically balanced classroom curriculum and pedagogy, and developing racial justice student alliances promote White identity development (Gusa, 2010). The goal, according to Cabrera (2012), is to be responsible *for* and independent *of* White identity: "Own and take responsibility for our racial heritage and culture? Yes. Recognize that we can choose to not be determined by it? Yes. Take pride in Whiteness? No" (p. 379). As long as Whites feel comfortable with race, they do not sympathize with the pain and discomfort caused to racial minorities for centuries.

Student development theory and practice also focuses on the relational and social elements of personal development. Programs and conversations often provide opportunities to challenge White identity or develop a more multicultural perspective. Quaye and Baxter-Magolda (2007) used intercultural maturity as a framework for understanding students' developmental levels in cross-racial dialogues. The authors illustrated how the Learning Partnerships Model (LPM) enables educators to promote racial self-understanding and intercultural maturity among students through intergroup dialogue and listening partners (Quaye & Baxter-Magolda, 2007). Whiteness could be challenged through interpersonal relationships and through genuinely listening to the experiences of peers.

Reason and Evans (2007) examined students at institutions that perpetuate White

transparency and challenge White supremacy. The realities of race for White students are complicated and often difficult. Some students remain colorblind to their racial identity, while other students experience White consciousness. When Whiteness is the normative cultural practice, Whiteness remains invisible. Reason and Evans (2007) found that "those who are securely housed within its borders usually do not examine it" (p. 67). Most White students fall between unexamining and colorblind and having a salient, nuanced understanding of race and a propensity toward social justice. The authors proposed creating environments that move White students to racial cognizance and challenge hegemony (Reason & Evans, 2007). P. M. King and Baxter-Magolda (2005) focused on effective methods of achieving diversity program goals. Attributes of intercultural maturity included increased understanding and empathy.

Campus Racial Climate

Campus culture is defined in numerous ways. Swidler (1986) defined culture as "symbolic vehicles of meaning, including beliefs, ritual practices, art forms, and ceremonies" (p. 273). Culture also includes gossip, daily patterns, worldviews, or stories that perpetuate institutional traditions. Manning (2014) defined culture as actual or aspirational character of an organization. Parker (2000) defined culture as both verb and noun. As a verb, culture mediates action, achievement, and purpose. As a noun, culture builds consensus, gathers community members together and develops strength. Turner (1994) defined campus climate as

> the ambient, affective character of a place—the conditions that evoke feelings, either positive or negative, from the people in the organization. Climate is to the affective aspect of human beings in an organization what air is to the physical aspect. Climate is an organization's emotional atmosphere. People breathe it. (p. 355)

Sustaining a culture predicated on Whiteness maintains systemic preference for White students

and White ideas. College campuses often have a culture predicated upon Whiteness.

Campus climate study began with the germinal work of Hurtado (1992). Hurtado explored the structural properties of environment that shaped individual behaviors, attitudes, and social interactions on college campuses. Exploring institutional type, size, racial composition, and enrollment selectivity, Hurtado researched student perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity and student-centeredness. Hurtado found that racialized incidents are indicative of the larger societal climate that demands criticism and attention. While institutions focus on admissions, programming, and other support structures for minoritized groups, interpersonal aspects of increased diversity receive minimal attention (Hurtado, 1992).

Faculty governance, academic and student development programs, and enrollment initiatives shape the climate of higher education campuses (Hurtado et al., 1998). Campus climate is impacted by financial aid polices, hiring procedures, and the role of athletics and mentoring programs within an institution. According to Hurtado et al. (1998), four dimensions define a campus climate. The first dimension is an institution's historic legacy of inclusion or exclusion of racial or ethnic groups. The second dimension is structural diversity or the numerical representation of various racial and ethnic groups. This includes staff, faculty, administrators, and students. The perceptions and attitudes between and among groups define the psychological climate of an institution and impact campus climate. Lastly, the behavioral climate of campus intergroup relations affects campus climate. When campus climate is predicated upon Whiteness, minoritized groups are pushed to the margins.

Campus culture interacts with all participants and influences experiences and opportunities. Heinze (2008) noted that "organizations are made of individuals, and the 'life' and 'thoughts' and 'systems' of the organizations are human systems" (p. 7). When a group of

similar persons makes policy or program decisions, bias occurs. Heinze (2008) noted, "Cumulatively, when the people who represent the majority are organized on an institutional level these biases become institutionalized, exponentially so . . . individual bias will also be magnified exponentially as collective members of institutions" (p. 7). Campus climate bias is predicated upon innumerable and cumulative individual bias realities.

Harper and Hurtado (2007) continued Hurtado's (1992) research on campus racial climates. The authors determined that contemporary studies focus on differential perceptions of campus climate by race, prejudicial treatment, and racist campus environments experienced by minoritized persons. Turner's (1994) research indicated that many minoritized students do not find a positive level of comfort on many university campuses (p. 356). In fact, one participant described the campus climate as exclusive: "We feel that we're a guest in someone else's house, that we can never relax and put our feet up on the table" (Turner, 1994, p. 356). Furthermore, guests stay in a guest room, have little to no family history, remain on their best behavior, and are neither recognized in the photographs nor the scents of the house (Turner, 1994). Tynes et al. (2013) extended campus climate research beyond the physical settings and included online discrimination and stress.

Microaggressions also impact campus climate. Solórzano et al. (2000) used a critical race lens to define racism as (a) One group believes itself to be superior, (b) the self-defined superior group has the power to carry out racist behavior, and (c) racism affects multiple racial and ethnic groups (p. 61). Furthermore, "campus climates were impacted by conscious frameworks of oppression but also by unconscious, subtle, pervasive and seldom-investigated microaggressions which had a cumulative burden on minoritized groups that impacts mortality and confidence" (Solórzano et al., 2000, p. 60). Solórzano et al. (2000) concluded that minoritized students

experience microaggressions throughout the campus. Inside of classrooms, students felt invisible, experienced low academic expectations, felt self-doubt, and often viewed themselves as an imposter. Outside of the classroom, students experienced generalized discomfort, racial tensions, and discouragement from utilizing student services. In social spaces, students were watched with skepticism and had a different set of rules to follow. Elusive Whiteness perpetuated microaggressions towards minoritized students within campus communities.

Physical campus communicates essential messages about the ethos and community of an institution, such as inclusion, safety, equality, and societal roles (Cabrera et al., 2016). Physical campus inclusion relates to campus design, usage of space, climate, architecture, and density of students. Organizationally, inclusion refers to the ability of an environment to sustain the needed resources for all of the populations. Students interpreted the physical and organizational dimensions of the campus environment including objects like mascots, buildings, artwork, and building names through a majority White lens (Cabrera et al., 2016). Physical safety also expresses campus climate. Cabrera et al. (2016) noted that messages of inclusion or threat, such as graffiti, campus-sponsored advertisements that exploited women, or poorly lit areas of campus, influence if students feel safe on campus.

Multicultural Education

One element of critical reflection and critical action is intentional multicultural education. Racial diversity has become increasingly significant across university campuses and Christian campuses (Menjares, 2017; Yancey, 2010). Since 1970, the racial make-up of the United States has diversified. As of 2010, Latinos passed African Americans as the largest minoritized community (Wright et al., 2014). Colby and Ortman (2015) noted that Whites will no longer be the racial majority by the year 2044. By the year 2044, the United States projects to have 50.3%

persons from minoritized groups. However, enrollment in higher education has not mirrored the diversified American landscape (Adams et al., 2014). When a diverse learning environment is present, multicultural education influences multicultural understanding in all students but especially in White students (Cabrera, 2012; Ortiz & Rhoads, 2000). Whether students focus on self-awareness, cultural humility, different cultures, friendships, or an increased multicultural outlook, students benefit from diverse learning opportunities. Intentional multicultural education challenges White normativity.

Cabrera et al. (2016) found that structured guidelines are necessary for healthy multicultural education. Facilitators must set ground rules that (a) establish the environment as a space for an open exchange of ideas, (b) leave no room for racism, and (c) acknowledge that periods and feelings of frustration are normal. Unlearning socialized racism requires persistence and perseverance. While safe spaces are critical for conversation, this does not entitle participants to racial comfort (Cabrera et al., 2016). Experiences that develop racial awareness are cross-racial interactions, a humanizing pedagogy, and minoritized-affirming experiences. Minoritized-affirming experiences frequently develop empathy and understanding for oppressed communities and increase understanding across differences (Cabrera, 2012). Whites not only become aware of realities of students of color but also become aware of their own racial backgrounds.

A primary framework for multicultural education focuses on multicultural competency as the “awareness, knowledge and skills that are needed to work effectively across cultural groups and to work with complex diversity issues” (Pope et al., 2004, p. xiv). Multiculturalism must be woven into all aspects of the university experience, including pedagogy, evaluation, recruitment, retention, programs, and enrollment. Pope et al. (2004) noted that multiculturalism does not

function as an add-on but must be centered within the institutional mission and vision to create an inclusive environment.

Multicultural education requires White diversity leaders willing to lead with humility, understanding, and courage. According to Owen (2008), White leaders must model modest and courageous social justice leadership. Through leading as an anti-racist, a White male diversity leader can challenge other Whites to consider personal attitudes and challenge privilege. If White leaders promote awareness, cross-cultural experiences, coursework on race, anti-racist activities, and interactions with diverse friends, as well as living in intentionally diverse arrangements, they can take active steps to becoming a racial justice ally. Sensoy and DiAngelo (2009) utilize the term "ally" to refer to a member of the dominant group who works to end oppression through seeking support and advocacy for the oppressed group. To be an ally, one must validate and support people who are socially or institutionally marginalized, engage in continual self-reflection to uncover blind spots, advocate for the oppressed, share power, and build relationships with minoritized individuals.

Christian Colleges and Race

Christian colleges are often primary locations for Whiteness. Within Christian higher education, Evangelical undergraduate applicant pools have declined because of the overall Evangelical population decline (Menjares, 2017). In turn, historically underserved or minoritized populations increased during this same time. Since 2004, the proportion of minoritized students attending Christian universities increased from 19% of the total enrollment to 28% in 2014 (Menjares, 2017). According to Yancey (2010), the racial make-up of Christian colleges mirrors the racial make-up of Christian churches. Byrd (2017) found that the pre-college years of homogeneous socialization and experience of many students entering elite colleges establish a

firm racial identity that is difficult to challenge in four years of college. Early experiences of race and ethnicity acted like intellectual and social inertia that is difficult to halt. Whiteness moves forward with the momentum of personal and institutional histories.

Lack of racial diversity within Christian colleges may be the result of racially homogeneous churches, lack of concern for contemporary racism, or general lack of awareness of minoritized challenges (Yancey, 2010). While Christian institutions may not actively deny access to minoritized groups, Christian college campuses often have a chilly to lukewarm receptivity to diversifying the majoritarian narratives that perpetuate Whiteness (Menjares, 2017). Christian colleges want to diversify their campus enrollment and experience (Cross & Slater, 2004; Paredes-Collins, 2009). However, success at increasing enrollment, diversifying the faculty, and changing the institutional culture is challenging. Often, diversity in enrollment is a matter of institutional survival rather than an interest in greater multiculturalism (Menjares, 2017). Without strong support from a web of campus leadership, diversity efforts often remain stagnant (Kezar et al., 2007). Allen (1991) noted that many Christian colleges lack the necessary critical mass of minoritized faculty, board of trustee members, and administration to shape the institution.

Summary

The purpose of this research was to explore the critical consciousness of White students attending a Christian college in the Midwest. This chapter examined literature relevant to the following themes: Whiteness, critical consciousness, White identity, CRT, Christianity's historic relationship with race, and the influence of race on college campuses. These subjects frame the discussion around White critical consciousness of White college students attending an Evangelical college in the Midwest.

The following chapter outlines the methodology used to explore the critical consciousness of Whiteness in Christian college students, including participant recruitment, interview procedures, data collection and analysis, reliability and validity, and delimitations. Phenomenological interviews explored the lived experience of Whiteness. A personal epoche outlining my experience and awareness with Whiteness is also included in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHOD

The purpose of this research was to explore the critical consciousness of Whiteness in Christian college students. Data were collected using an applied qualitative approach. Christian college administrators, faculty, and staff can utilize this research to shape campus ethos, disrupt normative Whiteness, and develop critically conscious students. Phenomenological interviews explored the lived experience of Whiteness. Some students were more conscious of Whiteness, while others were unaware of Whiteness. Through critical consciousness of Whiteness, the intent of this research is to elevate awareness and critique the normative structures of Whiteness. Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology, including participant recruitment, interview procedures, data collection and analysis, reliability and validity, and delimitations. A personal epoche outlining my experience and awareness with Whiteness is also included in this chapter.

Basic Methodology

Qualitative research is the best method of study for researching critical consciousness of Whiteness because "insider information" from White students at a Christian college is the subject under study. As an applied research study, Christian college administrators, faculty, and staff can utilize this research to shape campus ethos, disrupt normative Whiteness, and develop critically conscious students. A phenomenological perspective is valuable for researching critical consciousness of Whiteness because open-ended questions permit the researcher to examine the

lived experiences of Christian college students. According to M. Q. Patton (2015), phenomenological research assumes an essence of shared experience with participants. The essences are the shared "whats" and "hows" of belief and practice.

This research also aims "to help people understand and challenge power relations in the process of the study and to make something happen *while the study is going on*" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 59). As M. Q. Patton (2015) noted, critical research "aims to critique existing conditions and through that critique bring about change" (p. 692). Informed by Freirean critical consciousness, CRT, Cabrera et al.'s (2017) characteristics of Whiteness, McIntosh's (1997) privilege, and DiAngelo's (2016) fragility, this research interrogated normative individualized and systemic Whiteness within a Christian college context.

Research Design

A phenomenological approach informed this research design. The interview was the primary method of data collection. Marshall and Rossman (2010) noted that phenomenological interviews focus on "the deep, lived meanings that events have for individuals, assuming that these meanings guide action and behavior" (p. 153). Clarifying or summarizing a participant's experience during the interview process enhanced the understanding of the data in the immediate moment. Through verbal or non-verbal cues, I amended the interview to explore nuances of the participants' experiences.

The researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis within phenomenological research (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). In order to maintain a stance of neutrality, the researcher "brackets" his positionality and experience with the shared phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Moustakas (1994) referred to this as the epoche and challenges the researcher to review the data with a fresh perspective, as if reviewing the data for the first

time. While the researcher is not entirely bracketed out of the research, he identifies personal experiences with the subject in order to be mindful of researcher bias and focus on the perspectives of the participants. Moustakas (1994) noted, "Whatever or whoever appears in our consciousness is approached with an openness, seeing just what is there and allowing what is there to linger" (p. 85). Eddles-Hirsch (2015) challenged phenomenological researchers to experience the topic with an open and inexperienced perspective.

Participants

Participants were selected from a Christian private university located in a Midwestern city of less than 50,000 people within United States. For confidentiality of the university, the pseudonym of Midwestern University (MU) is utilized. MU is a predominantly White (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Turner, 1994) Christian campus affiliated with an Evangelical church denomination. MU defines themselves as a Christian liberal arts institution and enrolls 1,100 undergraduate students.

All participants provided a pseudonym to protect their personal identities. Participants adhered to the following criteria:

1. Must be an undergraduate student at Midwestern University.
2. Must identify as a White person as defined by the physical characteristics, genetic origin, and perception of a shared White European heritage (Helms, 1990a).

Sampling

A purposeful network sampling method was utilized to find participants. Merriam and Tisdale (2016) noted that a typical purposeful sample is utilized when "the average person, situation, or instance of the phenomenon of interest" (p. 97) is the subject of research. Creswell (2013) noted that criterion sampling works well in phenomenological research because all of the

participants interviewed represent people who have experienced the phenomenon. M. Q. Patton (2015) referred to phenomenological participants as “information-rich cases” (p. 53). For this research, the typical student at MU was White and attends a Christian and predominantly White institution.

An appropriate number of participants for a phenomenological study ranges between one and 24 participants (Dukes, 1984; Haase, 1987; Morse, 1994). Dukes (1984) noted, “The aim of a phenomenological study is, finally, to uncover the necessary structural invariants of an experience, and those invariants are fully discoverable in any individual case” (p. 200). Cresswell (2013) noted that the number of participants depends upon the purpose of the research, the questions asked, and the resources of the research. Merriam and Tisdale (2016) noted that an adequate number of participants is reached when the data collected becomes redundant. When no new insights or observations occur, the data are saturated.

Recruitment

Participants were recruited utilizing purposeful sampling with gatekeepers at MU. After I e-mailed MU gatekeepers regarding details of the research (Appendix A), I attended nine classes taught by the gatekeepers and introduced the research topic to the students. After introducing the research topic, I distributed a brief summary of the research with my contact information (Appendix B). Participants e-mailed me to express interest in the research. I responded with each interested participant by e-mail (Appendix C) and included a consent to participate form (Appendix D). The consent to participate form included a purpose of the research and research design. If additional participants were needed, a follow-up e-mail for the gatekeeper to solicit additional participants was available (Appendix E). Interviews were conducted in a private conference room on MU’s campus (Appendix F).

Procedures

The Institutional Review Boards of Indiana State University and MU approved the study prior to data collection. Fifteen participants completed a brief demographic questionnaire (Appendix G) and participated in a face-to-face interview using a semi-structured protocol (Appendix H). After reviewing the research overview and completing the Consent to Participate (Appendix D), the open-ended questions focused on awareness and experience of Whiteness, factors influencing Whiteness, and factors that are influenced by Whiteness.

Phenomenological interviews require active, patient, and thoughtful listening in order to attend to the experiences and silences of the participants. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed and names were replaced by pseudonyms to protect participant confidentiality (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Participants were notified that the interview recording would be uploaded into Rev.com for transcription. Participants were notified that the transcript would be uploaded to Dedoose for data management. I utilized the pseudonyms during the interview, and participants determined what personal information to share during the interview. Field notes were collected during the interviews, which were observations of the participants' behaviors that were not captured by the audio recording (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). At the completion of each interview, key words or phrases, descriptions, hunches, settings, and observer reflections were recorded in a fieldwork journal. Reflexivity took place during the data collection and analysis in the fieldwork notes. Probst and Berenson (2014) defined reflexivity as the "awareness of the influence the researcher has on what is being studied and, simultaneously, of how the research process affects the researcher" (p. 814). Similar to a traveler's account of a journey abroad, these notes offered additional explanation on the discernment of the findings.

Data Analysis

At the conclusion of each interview, the audio file was uploaded to Rev.com for transcription. Rev.com files are securely stored and transmitted using TLS 1.2 encryption, which is the highest level of security available ("Rev FAQ," n.d.). Rev.com takes steps to protect personal data from loss, misuse, unauthorized access, and disclosure ("Rev Privacy Policy," n.d.). As the primary investigator, I used a unique and confidential username and password for access to the Rev.com account. Regarding confidentiality, pseudonyms were used on the recording and the recording file names. No participant descriptors were utilized in uploading the files to Rev.com. Upon the completion of the research, Rev.com will delete the audio files.

Qualitative data analysis is an emergent process that occurs simultaneously with data collection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). After the initial interviews, I reviewed the transcripts and field notes. I initiated data analysis through coding and theming the data via Dedoose. Dedoose is an online application for data management, excerpting, coding, and analysis ("Dedoose Home," n.d.). Dedoose utilizes several layers of industry-standard physical and electronic security measures designed to protect data used by investigators, including encryption and redundant storage ("Dedoose Terms of Service," n.d.). As the primary investigator, I used a unique and confidential username and password for access to the Dedoose account and data. No participant descriptors were utilized in uploading the files to Dedoose. Dedoose was used to manage and search the data regarding frequency and comparison. I coded the data according to the themes and key phrases from the participants. Saldaña (2016) described coding as "a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (p. 4). Moustakas (1994) described this

process as an open field where each angle of perception adds to the researcher's horizon of the phenomenon.

For the initial coding cycle, descriptive coding summarized a word or short phrase with a descriptive term (Saldaña, 2016). Descriptive coding is often called "hashtag" coding because it most often describes the topic of the data. A second coding cycle included in vivo coding. In vivo coding is also called "literal coding" or "verbatim coding" (Saldaña, 2016). Saldaña (2016) described in vivo coding as "'that which is alive,' and as a code refers to a word or a short phrase from the actual language found in the qualitative data record" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 105). In vivo coding prioritizes the participant's voice where the actual language emphasizes the participant's experience.

While the data are descriptively and "voice" coded, themes discerned within the coding were explored. "Theming the data" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 198) occurs when a phrase or sentence captures an overarching concept or expression of the data. Creswell (2013) referred to these shared themes as "clusters of meaning" (p. 82). Some themes remained as the data were collected, while other themes seemed less significant. Merriam and Tisdale (2016) referred to the comparative analysis of particular data as "trees" in relationship to the overarching data or "forest." Both Rieman (1986) and Colaizzi (1978) completed data analysis with an exhaustive description of the shared phenomenon as a final step. All singular codes, themes, and overall essences of the data was centralized electronically via Dedoose.

Participants were invited for a follow-up interview (Appendix I) to review the research findings and interpretations (Creswell, 2013). Participants willing to meet provided critical observations and clarifications about the preliminary analysis consisting of themes and

descriptions. Eight participants agreed to a follow-up interview. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed in a similar methodology as the initial interviews.

Reliability and Validity

In order for qualitative research to be considered reliable and valid, research must be rigorously conducted and accurately represent insights that resonate with participants, readers, and practitioners (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Tracy (2013) noted that a primary criterion for qualitative research is meaningful coherence, which connects the literature, findings, and interpretations with the research findings. Using methodological rigor in the data collection and interpretive rigor in the analysis guided this research.

Regarding validity, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) recommended several strategies to maintain research rigor including prolonged engagement in the field, clarification of researcher bias, member checking, and rich descriptions. Prolonged engagement with the subject built trust with the participants. Researcher positionality and bias was bracketed at the outset of the research with the epoche. Disclosing researcher positionality challenged data interpretations and assumptions. Member checking occurred with the follow-up interviews with participants regarding preliminary themes and observations. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) noted that "participants should be able to recognize their experience in your interpretation or suggest some fine-tuning to better capture their perspectives" (p. 246). Finally, rich descriptions described the phenomena with thorough detail in order to capture the specificity and interconnectedness of the data.

Delimitations

A delimitation of this study is that interviews were conducted with only students from one Midwestern university. An additional delimitation is the identity of Whiteness is limited to

the physical characteristics, genetic origin, and perception of a shared White European heritage (Helms, 1990a). Students may identity as White through other defining characteristics.

Epoche

The researcher reflects on personal experience with the phenomenon called the epoche. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) referred to the epoche as the researcher's personal exploration with the subject to become aware of personal prejudices or assumptions. Entering the research process, I was aware that I am positioned as a White, Christian, and cisgender male who attended a Christian undergraduate and graduate school. Since 1999, I have been employed at two different Christian liberal arts institution in the Midwestern United States.

In September 1997, I discovered Whiteness. During the previous 23 years, I was unaware of systemic and elusive advantages related to my positionality. I grew up in Akron, Ohio, which is a medium-sized, blue-collar city in the Midwest, and attended a public high school of 1,500 students. While my high school was racially mixed, I primarily associated Whiteness or Blackness with rock or rap music and popular culture symbols like Starter brand jackets and baggy clothing. Racial tension surfaced occasionally during high school, but I avoided most school tension as I hid within my advanced placement classes and church friend group.

My family attended a Pentecostal church 20 minutes away in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. Years later, I discovered that the city was often referred to as "Caucasian Falls" because of the high percentage of White residents. At church, the preaching was passionate and often emotional. The commonly expressed and affirmed Christian faith was a collection of "Do's" but mostly "Don'ts." Do pray, avoid temptation, and attend church whenever the doors are open. Don't give into temptation, listen to secular music, swear, smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, or hang out with people that do. Above all else, don't have sex. Whiteness was never discussed

because race was never discussed. Race was only used when a minoritized person was the butt of a joke or someone referred to “those people.” In almost two decades of church attendance, I cannot remember a single minoritized church member or guest. At church, Whiteness was invisible and far outside the edges of my consciousness.

After a powerful experience at church camp and a mentoring relationship with my youth pastor, I wanted to enter full-time church ministry as a youth pastor. The best path to youth ministry came through the nearest denominational college located seven hours from home in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania. During the fall of 1993, I eagerly enrolled at Valley Forge Christian College to study the Bible and youth ministry. During my four years at Valley Forge, I developed close friendships with a diverse group of friends. As an academic institution on the East Coast, students from New Jersey, Delaware, New York, and Pennsylvania all converged onto the small campus. Most of my college friends never encountered someone who was from “so far out west” as I was. In spite of the diverse collection of friends and thoughtful interactions, conversations about race rarely occurred. Not only was I unaware of Whiteness, I was also unaware of the influence of race on culture or the church.

The primary incident that piqued my consciousness to the impact of race came during the O. J. Simpson trial. When the verdict of acquittal was announced on October 3, 1995, my White friends assumed O. J. got away with murder. My Black friends cheered. I did not follow the trial other than pictures on the front page of *USA Today*. I did not have an informed perspective on his guilt or innocence. When my Black friends were exuberant, I soon realized that I had little rationale for assuming O. J.’s guilt. I primarily saw O. J.’s race and assumed his guilt. For the first time, I realized that race impacted my understanding and perspectives of minoritized people. While O. J. Simpson existed in a courtroom in Los Angeles, California, and broadcast into my

college's lounge television, my new friends were right next to me. My presupposition of Simpson's guilt was based upon his race. What presuppositions did I have about my African American, Latino, and Asian friends? Race became salient to me because I used it negatively to assume a person's guilt. Race became real yet Whiteness remained hidden. Race was something that Gary, Tony, or David had. I remained raceless.

My consciousness of Whiteness began in Dr. Julie Anderton's "Theories of Student Development" graduate course during the fall of 1997 when I also became aware of alternate epistemologies, stages of psychosocial development, racialized identity development, and religious faith expressions. New theories brought an alternative perspective to my previous 23 years of life experience. Some frameworks gave subtle boundaries to my experience. Other concepts crystalized in reflective conversations at the Gryphon Café over a pot of tea with friends. My brain buzzed with excitement and self-discovery. Through Dr. Anderton's guidance and classroom discussions, developmental theories outlined a scaffold for my identity. However, one article shook my scaffold of meritocracy and good behavior. I was unprepared for the splintering discovery of White privilege. The poet Emily Dickinson (2019) described a similar disruption in the following poem:

> The Brain, within its Groove / Runs evenly—and true— / But let a Splinter swerve— / 'Twere easier for You— / To put a Current back— / When Floods have slit the Hills— / And scooped a Turnpike for Themselves— / And trodden out the Mills— (Dickinson, 2019, p. 23)

The grooves within my consciousness swerved and flooded from the splinter of White privilege

After Dr. Anderton assigned Peggy McIntosh's (1997) exposure of White privilege, the reality of Whiteness tread out mills of my consciousness and scooped new paths of awareness.

An interior crisis ensued between McIntosh's examples of White privilege and my experiences as a White person. I told myself, "I was kind. I lived a good Christian life. I earned the accolades and opportunities given to me. I was a talented student, varsity athlete, and winsome Christian leader. I had credibility with strangers. I was an individual. What little I accomplished as a 23-year-old, I accomplished under my own ability. Moreover, people who looked like me accomplished great discoveries for centuries. People who looked like me birthed the United States of America, wrote the Bible, and died on the cross for my sins." I had no idea about the "special provisions, assurances, tools, maps, guides, codebooks, passports, visas, clothes, compass, emergency gear, and blank checks" (McIntosh, 1997, p. 291) that eased my journey through American culture; no one doubted my credibility or questioned my honesty, heritage, or education.

The small yet profound example of White privilege is a "flesh-colored" bandage. Like deodorant, make-up, crayons, and other "flesh-colored" items, bandages seem like a minimal part of the human experience. However, the reality that people with different skin tones do not have flesh-matching bandages splintered my consciousness. "Why should only White people be dignified with flesh-colored bandages? Why is 'flesh-colored' only flesh-colored for White people? If Whiteness appropriated flesh-colored bandages, Whiteness privileged White persons professionally, socially, and educationally in meaningful ways." Race not only puts others at a disadvantage but also gives me as a White person previously unforeseen advantages. Prior to my entrance in graduate school, I failed to reflect critically on my Whiteness. Even more, I was blind to my Whiteness or the advantages Whiteness granted me. While I grew up identifying as a White person, I never reflected on Whiteness as a cultural or systemic reality. I never reflected on the impact of Whiteness on my identity and opportunities.

As a graduate from and an administrator within Christian higher education, I have witnessed the overt and subliminal practice of Whiteness found on Christian college campuses. While identifying as a White Evangelical employee within a primarily White Evangelical institution, I have a greater experience and exposure to privilege and systemic Whiteness. My experience is that White students attending a Christian college have minimal conscious of Whiteness, yet Whiteness affords privileges within their communities. When the topic of Whiteness is broached without warning (most often White privilege), the idea is met with either suspicion or defensiveness. Occasionally students consider Whiteness or privilege as a possibility. Rarely do students admit the impact of privilege or Whiteness. I am an insider hoping to influence this reality from an insider's position. I anticipate continuing to serve at primarily White institutions for the remainder of my professional career but use my positional authority and influence to make critical changes.

However, my positionality is not without risks. As I prepared for the interviews, several questions came to mind: Will I be viewed as a "race traitor" or "liberal" who simply needs to "move on from the past?" Will students shut down if they experience dissonance or guilt? How fragile will the participants be? How will I monitor my own frustrations if the participants lack awareness? Will there be opportunities to give critical feedback about participants' racialized awareness? Will the participants be honest, even if it requires losing respect from the group? As a male, how will I interpret female experiences of privilege and identity? What if participants are further along in their racialized privilege awareness than I experienced as an undergraduate?

Summary

This chapter outlined the purpose of this research which was to explore the critical consciousness of Whiteness in Christian college students. As data were collected using an

applied qualitative approach, phenomenological interviews explored the lived experience of Whiteness in Christian college students. This chapter outlined the participant recruitment, interview procedures, data collection and analysis, reliability and validity, and delimitations. A personal epoche outlining my experience and awareness with Whiteness was also included. The next chapter will explore the findings of the interviews.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS 1

The purpose of this study was to discover, "In what ways are White, Midwestern, Christian college students critically conscious of Whiteness?" The research was conducted on a Christian college campus located in the Midwest. For this study, the pseudonym of "Midwestern University" (MU) was utilized. In this chapter, I will introduce Midwestern University and the 15 participants including age, academic major, class, hometown, faith, and race. Additionally, participant descriptions include motivation for participating in the research, academic major influence, family influence, and reflections of self-awareness.

Midwestern University

Midwestern University is a predominantly White (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Turner, 1994) Christian campus affiliated with an Evangelical church denomination. MU defines themselves as a Christian liberal arts institution and enrolls 1,100 undergraduate students. Regarding ethnicity, White students comprise 83% of the enrollment; Latino/a, multiracial, and international students comprise 6%, 6%, and 2% of the undergraduate enrollment, respectively. One percent of the undergraduate enrollment is African American.

The educational mission of MU includes references to Christ, Christian service, spiritual integrity, and faith-informed learning. The philosophy of education notes the necessity of a Christian worldview, a recognition that "all truth is God's truth," and developing a personal

faith. Lastly, MU challenges students to engage the concerns of the local and global community through faithful service and reflection.

Midwestern University is located in a Midwestern state. For confidentiality of the city, the pseudonym of Centertown is used. Centertown's population is less than 50,000 people. The racial makeup of the city is 96.4% White, and African American, Native American, Asian, and "other races" each make up less than 1% of the population. Hispanic or Latino of any race is 2% of the population and 1.5% of the population is two or more races. Centertown's history dates back to the Revolutionary War and includes members of the Continental Congress. Centertown is the county seat and located near primary waterways.

A visitor can arrive to Centertown from all directions. The main East-West highway passes the hospital and YMCA, the University, restaurants, and shopping centers. The North-South road takes visitors past Victorian homes, one of the main Catholic churches and through a revitalizing downtown district. Separating the North from the South is an East-West train track. Residential homes, factories, and the 4H Park are located south of the train track. Centertown is home to hiking, fishing, and Midwestern comfort food.

Driving on the highway, past farmland and forest in mid-fall, I can see the edge of campus. Around the curve and just past the hospital, Midwestern University is a cornerstone of the city. Pulling onto campus, a Midwestern University sign welcomes me. Past the sign, a fountain circle draws me in from the road. Maturing trees line the center median. I drive slowly through tree-lined roads around campus. Students are coming and going from classes and meals.

After parking, I walk up the main artery of campus. The front sides of the residence halls face me. A quiet lake is on my left. No one appears to be in a hurry. I pass the student center and another residence hall. I continue walking up the lamped and bannered walkway. I enter a part of

campus that seems older and quieter than the rest of campus. A column marks the entrance of an older or former campus grounds. To my left is the front of the spired building, which is more beautiful from this perspective. Brick steps welcome guests up the front entrance. In front of me and to the right is another fountain encircled by wooden benches. To my right is the other side of the academic building with the greenhouse. The best part of old campus, however, are the trees. Mature trees cover MU's old campus. Beautiful trees shade the compass walkways going to and from the fountain. Along with students going to class, I pass through old campus. The fountain seems to be the heart of campus, the pin of the compass dial. In each direction, it is a gentle and green campus. This picture is likely on Midwestern University's promotional material: spire, fountain, shade and open space communicate the heights, vitality, and contemplation of the college life. A quiet holiness settles in the shade. No one is running through old campus.

I continue into the classroom building where I will meet with my participants. Onto the second floor, I pass through the study lounge and into a small seminar room with too many chairs. I arranged my materials and situated a seat near the entrance for the participants. Next door, a raucous class session was taking place. From the sound of it, they were discussing social work experiences. The faculty person was unfazed by the energy and noise. One by one, participants begin to arrive.

Participants

The 15 women and men who participated in this study attended the same Christian university in the Midwest. For this study, the university pseudonym is Midwestern University. The sample included sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Table 1 provides a brief summary of participant profiles in alphabetical order and provides each participant's age, academic major, classification, hometown, religion, and race.

Table 1

Participant Characteristics

Name	Age	Major	Classification	Religion	Race
Anna	21	Social Work / Psychology	Junior	Christian	White
Catherine	21	Biology / Pre-Medicine	Senior	Christian	White
Chad	20	Psychology / Philosophy	Junior	Christian	White
Elijah	22	International Studies / Psychology / History	Senior	Christian	White
Elizabeth	24	English Writing / History	Sophomore	Christian	White / Native American
Ellie	19	Psychology	Sophomore	Christian	White
Grace	19	Exercise Science	Sophomore	Christian	White
Hallie	21	Social Work / Psychology	Junior	Christian	White
Hannah	20	Biology / Psychology	Sophomore	Christian	White

Jefferson	21	Psychology / Sociology	Junior	Christian	White
Kathleen	19	Agri-Business	Sophomore	Christian	White
Lynn	21	Social Work	Senior	Christian	White
Marie	21	Occupational Therapy Asst.	Junior	Christian	White
Rae	20	Nursing	Sophomore	Christian	White
Rose	20	Social Work	Junior	Christian	White
Triangle	44	Music / Psychology	Senior	Christian	White / Cherokee / Hebrew

Anna

Anna was a 21-year-old social work and psychology major. She was a junior and identified as White and Christian. Anna participated in the research project because of the $10 Amazon gift card incentive but also to be in a research project about Whiteness. She was eager to talk and not aware of other research on Whiteness: “I think kind of when people might think of researching Whiteness, they’d be like, ‘Well, White people are everywhere.’ Like we might not need to research them as much as maybe researching different cultures or races.” Anna was willing to reflect on Whiteness, however. When asked if she ever considered her own racial journey, Anna responded, “Never thought about that. It kind of makes sense though. Like not necessarily that I’ll become White, but I might become more aware of how White I am.”

Coming from an all-White community and high school, Anna could not recall having a minority teammate or classmate. Anna lived the life of a "pretty basic White person." Currently at MU, she discussed race or social justice in many of her social work classes, "So we talk a lot about social justice, and it definitely comes up. Not necessarily, the Whiteness side, but like everyone else I guess. So like we do talk about race a lot. But not specifically Whiteness I guess." Anna was a few steps ahead on her journey of Whiteness.

Anna experienced Whiteness for the first time on a recent trip to the continent of Africa. She did not indicate which country she visited. Whiteness gave Anna a celebrity status as she walked through the airport. "Little kids would just run up to us 'cause they just saw who we were. And probably assumed that we had stuff for them or could help them or care about them," Anna recalled. She continued, "Going to Africa, like it was a big change. Me being the minority while I'm there rather than being the majority." Anna's trip to Africa exposed an increasing awareness of Whiteness.

Catherine

Catherine was a senior majoring in biology and pre-medical. She was 21 years old, Christian, and identified as White. Catherine seemed interested in the study of Whiteness but lacked many experiences to frame a reflective reference point. Extra credit motivated Catherine to be part of the study. Beyond the additional class credit, Catherine was willing to discuss Whiteness because, "I've never heard anybody study Whiteness before. I thought that was really cool. That kind of made me want to do the interview." Additionally, "I just never, most people focus on like Black people's experience and how, like kind of in a negative way. So I think [the research] is interesting." Catherine was unaware that Whiteness was a subject to explore.

Catherine was aware of her Whiteness partially because of the discussions from news outlets. She was also aware of Whiteness through comparing herself to others in her church, "From an early age, there's lots of diversity in the church that I went to. So I think I was always aware of that and not always aware of like the differences between us just I knew that I was White." Recently Catherine's awareness increased, "I've known that I'm White for a while, but more recently in like my late high school and like college years, I began to be more aware of the different things that go on in relation to race." Little by little, Catherine's experience of Whiteness awakened.

A family wedding served as an awakening to Whiteness. When a cousin married a Black person, Catherine reflected, "My family does not like really have a big problem with it, but they definitely, it was uncomfortable, and it became very awkward and that really bothered me." Prior to the wedding, it was easier for Catherine to ignore White as a race. Seeing her family respond to the new in-law elevated her awareness.

Chad

Chad was a 20-year-old, junior. Chad was a psychology and philosophy double major. He identified as Christian and White. Chad was considerate and raised by parents who knew no bias. He was first exposed to Whiteness through social media, "There's a lot of talk about race from the perspective of Black Lives Matter, that whole movement and what it means to be Black. And I think that's very interesting, but it gets a lot of like headlines for good reason." Chad continued, "I've never heard of anybody wanting to do a study on what it means to be White. So I thought it would be interesting to participate in that and kind of discover. I've never thought about it in that sense." Chad never considered himself as White, "I've just thought of myself as a person."

Whiteness was “weightless.” When Chad reflected on Whiteness, it seemed familiar “like Grandma’s cooking.” Whiteness was comfortable.

Chad learned about privilege because of traveling to other countries. Chad also noticed a significant difference between his experience and his girlfriend’s experience: “In high school I dated a Mexican girl and getting to know her family and her background, it made me realize Whiteness is pretty different than being what I know from a Hispanic background.” Prior to these experiences, Chad “never had to think of race being like a thing. Like, I think subtly, I knew that I didn’t struggle as much as maybe other people did, but I never really thought of it like that.” Whiteness and race were too subtle to notice.

On MU’s campus, a Chapel speaker shared her “journey into Whiteness” and convicted Chad. He seemed conflicted about exploring privilege at a greater depth. While aware of the gaps in his experience, Chad wondered if it was easier just to “take the blue pill” and forget all about it.

Elijah

Elijah was a 22-year-old triple major in international development studies, psychology, and history with a minor in refugee and non-Western history. Elijah was serious and quiet. He seemed older than his 22 years. Yet with the seriousness, came depth. At the time of the interview, Elijah was nearing the end of his time at MU. Growing up with his parents and grandparents, Elijah identified as a White, Christian, and Republican. “It was like, these are the three; this is the pot of gold,” Elijah reflected. He continued, “I had Billy Graham, Franklin Graham, and Johnny Cash all in my boat to lead me to heaven.” Elijah lived in the heart of the Golden Circle.

Growing up, Elijah viewed Christianity in black and white terms. Catholics were destined for Hell while Christians were destined for Heaven. Elijah was convicted by the words of Jesus written in the Bible. “What does God love? Who does God love?” asked Elijah. He realized that his beliefs in Christianity were greater than his relationship with Jesus. During his first semester at MU, Elijah experienced a flooding event, “That’s when I really realized and really had like this epiphany of like, you know, it was actually, I was in tears the night that it happened ’cause I was like, I treated all these people terrible.” Now relationships and conversations are more important than ego or being correct.

Elijah heard of Whiteness but only as it related to contemporary politics. Whiteness was a political term. “I never heard Whiteness, like referred to [as a research topic], I guess. I mean you always hear in politics or anything like White Evangelical Christians are like these very daunting racial terms towards Whites in general,” he said. Elijah noted that the research on Whiteness sounded like a softer tone. Additionally, international exposure through college influenced Elijah: “When I got to that point in college where I realized that, you know, there’s a world out there bigger than my small town where I’m from and here, that was like a world out there outside of this.” Elijah was more familiar with paternalistic tendencies of international development, “I tried to keep it in the back of my mind that I’m quite from America. And, I have to be careful about my, about my innate, paternalistic tendencies.” Elijah was aware of privilege dynamics through his academic program and seemed to be waking up to the privileges of Whiteness.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth was a 24-year-old Christian and White woman. She was a sophomore double-major in English writing and history with a minor in non-Western studies. Elizabeth identified as

White and Native American. As a writing major, she considered several available pseudonyms before settling on Elizabeth. Elizabeth's eyebrows raised and fell with her articulate word choices. Elizabeth thought that the research sounded interesting, "Somebody who's doing a study on Whiteness in the middle of the Midwest where the population is predominantly White, I guess it was just unusual enough that it kind of caught my interest." Regarding the normative nature of Whiteness, "Where something is predominantly some way, people don't generally look at it and ask why it is this way. They just kinda tend to accept it as the status quo, and I like people that poke at the status quo." Elizabeth began poking at Whiteness during our discussions.

Elizabeth grew up in a family of strong Christian believers who instilled love for everyone. "They've always done a very good job in investing us in the fact that all of us are God's children. It doesn't matter what your skin color it is, it doesn't matter what, where you come from," she recalled. Race was not an issue growing up. Racism was minimal and as a Christian, she loved everyone regardless of skin color.

Elizabeth first experienced Whiteness while shopping. She reflected upon her experience versus the experience of shoppers-of-color, "I walk into a store and I get called Ma'am and the female workers call me darling, and I don't know, could just be because I look really young, but I feel like people are much more protective of me." She continued, "People go out of their way to express courtesy." Additionally, Elizabeth was startled when she and a friend visited a Mexican grocery store. "I walked in there and I was just like, I had never felt so White before. Everybody in here is Mexican," she recounted. "I felt like I was intruding on an entirely different culture," she continued. Elizabeth's awareness of Whiteness continued at college when she recalled, "Before I came to college I guess a lot of realizing that those stereotypes that exist has kinda

opened up a lot of questioning for myself." Campus was a good exposure of race and stereotypes but it seemed that Whiteness was still hidden.

Ellie

Ellie was a sophomore psychology major. She was 19-years old and identified as Christian and White. Ellie often paused before answering the questions. Whiteness was unfamiliar. "Never really thought about how being White could like affect some things," she reflected. Ellie was unable to see how race influenced her experience, "I don't think I've been influenced by my race at all. I don't see myself or anybody else, like as a specific race, I just see them as people." When asked to consider her experiences of Whiteness, Ellie shared:

> I don't think I really have any experiences 'cause like I said, I don't think anybody's ever said anything or I, I've never said anything or tried to use that against somebody else. 'Cause I feel like I've been in places where everybody's treated the same and I, maybe it's maybe I wasn't paying attention enough to like see the small details of somebody who was being discriminated against because of their race. But, I don't think I've ever like really seen that anywhere, I guess.

On Midwestern University's campus, Whiteness was not an issue. A barrier protected the outside from influencing the campus community. Ellie noted, "Here I think, since this is like a Christian college, I think that it's not really something that people have to worry about." The love for everyone expressed in Christianity diminished race. When Whiteness was conscious, Christians used Whiteness to act superior to others. Ellie recognized that these persons were not actual Christians. Ellie was curious, however to see how the questions would encourage her thinking about Whiteness and privilege. She also recognized that privilege gave her opportunities that other people did not experience and racial disparities remained within American culture.

Grace

Grace was a 19-year-old exercise science major with a minor in psychology. She was a sophomore. Grace identified as Christian and White. Grace wanted extra credit from her professor but also chose to participate in the study because, "I have heard a lot of different studies about different groups of people, but not really geared toward White people, I guess." Grace was polite and guarded about the topic of race. Grace was sensitive discussing race and did not see much influence between Whiteness and her experience. Grace attended small Christian schools with a majority of White students. Grace participated in a Haiti mission trip where she experienced being a minority for the first time. In comparison to high school pictures, Grace noticed Whiteness while looking at photographs taken with Haitians on the trip. It was easy for her to forget that the world was so big outside of the Midwest.

Grace knew that Midwestern University would be different because of the ethnicities of students in the admission's materials. Grace had minimal perceptions of Whiteness or awareness of race. In Grace's experience, race was something that other people had. Whiteness was difficult to perceive or even notice unless a blatant incident occurred. Grace reflected:

> I've never really been the minority except for two weeks, so I may have experienced opportunities that others wouldn't have because I'm White, and I just don't notice it because I guess that's what I'm used to. But I've never had something happened to me and thought, well, it's because I'm White.

Speaking of her perceptions of Whiteness, Grace recalled:

> I've never really thought about it before, but Whiteness, I just, I don't really know. I'd like to think that there's no difference between, you know, different groups of people

because like based on their skin color. Um, but I've never really sat down and thought what does it mean to be White.

Except in Chapel services, Midwestern University did not shape Grace's experience of Whiteness. Personal faith and Whiteness did not intersect. Grace was cautious about all matters of race and did not consider the influence of Whiteness on her faith. While recognizing many differences between White church worship expression and Black church worship expression, Grace was curious to experience a Black church but was apprehensive of accidental offense.

Hallie

Hallie was a 21-year-old sophomore. She was a double-major in social work and psychology. Hallie was White and Christian. She smiled during our entire conversation. She seemed motivated to care for others deeply and sincerely. Hallie chose to participate in the study because Whiteness was an unexplored personal topic, "I think that the topic and concept of it is really interesting because I don't think that we're asked these questions very often." During her follow-up interview, Hallie noted that only a few of the other research participants mentioned experiences of Whiteness on campus. She was quick to say, "I just feel like it kind of shows that we don't really think about it." This seemed like an accurate assessment of many White students at Midwestern University.

Hallie came to MU from a predominantly White town and school system, "There were like two Black kids at my school. I have grown up in a very White area, like my whole life. And so coming into college, like I've never really thought differently about people of color or people." On a trip to the continent of Africa (she did not mention which country), Hallie realized that she was White:

> Like I never really thought like I'm White until I got there and everyone's like, "You're White." So that was probably where like I really realized that I'm like White and I mean that's a weird thing to say, but I feel like less like the first time that I was really aware of it.

While Whiteness gave Hallie some credibility with the local people on the trip, standing out in a crowd because of her Whiteness made Hallie feel uncomfortable. During her trip, several men asked Hallie to be their wife. She recalled, "I've like always grown up just being White and not around people who aren't White. So when I'm with people who are like not White and I'm being noticed, I don't like it." Hallie believed that skin tone was significant but often overlooked. She shared, "In America it's just like, and 'I don't see color.' But I think that it's important to because then like you'll see the diversity and you'll see the importance of like what every person brings." Colorblindness dismisses God's creativity.

Hannah

Hannah was a 20-year-old sophomore. She was a double-major studying biology and psychology. She was a Christian and White. Hannah and I talked for the entire 90-minute interview. She shared about periods of high contact with diverse races and low contact with diverse races. Hannah spoke confidently and assumed I agreed with her reflections. Hannah admitted to an "odd history with Whiteness" and wanted to know what questions I would ask in the research. As a child, Hannah was in a diverse school. Her mother was a music teacher in the Midwest. She recalled the diversity of the choir, "So those were always like the cool kids 'cause they were in her choir." However, during high school, Hannah felt uncertain how to interact with people different from her because her home was isolated:

> I am ignorant on a lot of things, and I sometimes don't know how to act around people of different races and simply because the, I kid you not, there was literally one African American student in my school. And, five kids who were of other races, a couple from the Philippines, a couple of Latino kids.

When Hannah transitioned from grade school to high school, she noticed a difference in how she interacted with friends of color. As a younger child, she was comfortable but in high school, she lost some relational skills. She recalled, "It did make me almost like rusty 'cause you get, like I'm used to dealing with people who have a different background." Hannah's comfort with diversity diminished with her lack of exposure.

While at Midwestern University, she noticed the challenges of non-English speaking students but also assumed that Asian students excelled at mathematics and science. Hannah knew that colorblindness was not a solution because it ignored cultural backgrounds. Ignorance created additional problems for a campus community. Hannah was also conscious of absorbed stereotypes about Blacks and Latinos. When asked about the influence of Whiteness on her behavior, she talked about crossing the street when a Black man approached her. Yet, she recognized how critical it was to challenge this reactive thinking.

Jefferson

Jefferson was a 21-year-old White male. He was a psychology and sociology double major in his third year at Midwestern University. Jefferson was quiet, reflective, and served an administrative office in an out-front role. Jefferson chose to participate in the study because of his academic interest but also to participate in a research study. Jefferson may pursue a doctorate and was curious about the research process as a participant. He noted, "I just wanted to like see what questions you were going to ask and like have some like introspection of like what does it

mean to be White on a Christian campus?" Jefferson was eager to participate in the study. For many of the research questions, Jefferson sat silently before responding. As an example, I asked, "Do you think Whiteness ever comes up here on campus? I mean, do you think it ever people talk about it at all or think about it?" Jefferson thought for a minute and responded, "I don't think so, until you came around, until you showed up." We laughed, but it might have been accurate.

Jefferson admitted that his appearance situates him with privileges. Jefferson is athletic, tall, blond, and smiles easily. While driving his minivan home from a high school practice, a police officer pulled Jefferson over. "You're not selling crack, are you?" asked the officer. "No, sir," Jefferson responded. "I'm going to give you a warning for pulling off the shoulder, but you're not selling crack," said the officer. Someone in a different minivan in Jefferson's hometown was selling crack, it seemed. "You're not the guy," said the officer. Jefferson politely agreed, "I'm not selling crack." Later, Jefferson recognized that he would likely get "more slack" if he broke a rule at MU. In a fictional future office meeting with the Dean of Students, Jefferson imagined the Dean of Students assuring him, "You know what? You made a mistake. Come back on Monday. Yeah, forget about all of it." On or off campus, Jefferson was not going to get into trouble.

When asked to define Whiteness, Jefferson spoke of access to professors, serving as a role model on campus, or just acting normal. Jefferson is likely in a brochure for Midwestern University. Whiteness will remain unchecked, hidden, and comfortable in Jefferson's life unless he consciously reflects and redeems his Whiteness. Jefferson is reflective enough to challenge his Whiteness, but his privileges will not likely yield easily.

Kathleen

Kathleen was a 19-year-old woman and sophomore studying agribusiness. She identified as Christian and White. Kathleen was curious about the research and also used the term "colored person" too many times to count. I wondered how Kathleen interacted with students of color at Midwestern University. Was she corrected? Was she ignored? Kathleen is tall and thin with long blonde hair. Did her appearance protect her from challenging conversations?

Kathleen was, "Not 100% certain by what you mean by Whiteness," but also curious to listen to the questions in the study. Kathleen rarely considered Whiteness except when completing a document asking racial questions, "I mean, when you're filling out applications for anything, they ask you what race you are. So I mean just in that split second of checking the White Caucasian button." When asked if she discussed Whiteness on campus before, she responded:

> I can't say I have. It's just not something you really think about often. I mean, you're aware of it, but it's just like everybody's aware of it. So you don't really have, need to feel the need to talk about it all the time.

Kathleen seemed most comfortable in White spaces and White churches. She believed that most groups were most comfortable in similar-identified spaces. She did not anticipate making friends with students of color. She reflected, "I definitely didn't think I'd be friends with any of them, just not because I'm racist, just because I've always just noticed that we kind of just split off into our own little groups." Kathleen was not the only participant to note the grouping of White students or Black students at Midwestern University. However, I was uncertain if Kathleen believed separation was preferred or simply the result of friendships. MU's campus

was the first diverse community that Kathleen encountered. As a sophomore, she has a lot of time for additional diverse and reflective experiences.

Lynn

Lynn was a 21-year old senior. She was studying social work and identified as Christian and White. Lynn was the most "woke" of the participants to Whiteness. She was reflective and aware of systems that maintained power and influence to the privileged. Lynn was also up front with me. Lynn and her roommate wanted a new disco ball for their room. The $10 Amazon incentive was just enough to cover a $9 small disco ball. "And I like looked at her [the roommate] in class, I'm like, 'Disco ball.'"

Beyond the disco ball, Lynn was, "thinking about this concept, like being conscious of Whiteness on our campus or like Midwestern Christian campuses like this." Lynn was the only participant to use the term "conscious of Whiteness ." Since Lynn is a social work major, she "talks a lot about racial identity and like the oppression of minorities and White privilege." In class, Lynn heard many personal stories and watched videos that highlighted the advantages that she experienced in comparison to friends in college. Lynn experienced a diverse high school but noted that, "People often tend to stay and be friends with people who are similar to them." Lynn was no different but admitted, "I think I also wasn't super open to learning a lot from people who are different from me at that time 'cause I wasn't maybe mature enough or recognize the opportunity to learn then."

Lynn's family experience with race in America also increased Lynn's consciousness of Whiteness. Lynn was moved by the death of Michael Brown. Lynn shared that her grandmother, Janet, was also impacted by news accounts of gun violence and Michael Brown. Janet was conflicted between grief for the victims and the self-defense of the police. Janet's conflict

surprised Lynn because Janet's awareness of the struggle of many African Americans prior to Michael Brown was not vocalized. Lynn's mother also experienced attitude changes because of a personal relationship with an African American woman. Seeing her family change influenced Lynn's reflection and change. Lynn reflected, "There was a period like a couple months ago where I spent a lot of time wondering, 'Why am I White? Like, why am I White? And, other people aren't White or like, why am I not a minority?'" Lynn was aware of the pre-set and engrained Whiteness in society. Through her experience at MU, she seemed to be actively trying to impact Whiteness in her personal experience and systems.

Marie

Marie was a 21-year-old woman and occupational therapy assistant major. She was in her third year at MU. She identified as White and Christian although Marie's faith is "less than" in comparison with other students at MU. Marie was aware of White privilege. Before college, a majority of White students attended Marie's schools. The five to ten students of color did not have leadership roles or positions of influence in high school. Marie found students of color's lack of involvement as curious. Marie participated in the study because it was an interesting topic, and she reflected on experiences that may be beneficial for the research. Marie realized that White privilege caused Whiteness to stand out, "Like, have people asking you, 'When did you realize you're White?' You know, that definitely stood out."

Marie's awakening to Whiteness came in a January term trip. Even though Marie was not a theater major, she attended a theater conference with performance majors. Viewing a play that revealed White privilege, Marie's eyes opened in a disruptive way:

> I definitely was questioning if I was racist after that, watching that. And it kind of like, it just had me so upset because it's like I was just looking back through all my, like

> situations I've had with people like who are colored and thinking like was I insulting to them with my behavior, like offending to them during those situations.

Before this play, Marie never encountered so many Black students before. It was a new and disorienting experience. Even though the trip was challenging, it forced Marie into a stretching situation.

As an occupational therapy major, she was the only participant to note physical disparities between future White clients and clients of color:

> I think it makes me more conscious about like who that individual is and makes me reflect into like maybe different living situations that they would have that like I wouldn't have and how that would affect their rehabilitation. And then just like their normal environment, like we have like public access to like most things and like they may not, they may have to take the bus everywhere or, but that would be like for any one really.

Occupational therapy courses challenged Marie to consider the individual experience and spirituality of her future clients.

Rae

Rae is a nursing major. She is 20-years old and in her second year at Midwestern University. She identifies as White and Christian. Rae was interested in Whiteness but, "Never thought about it and like how it related to me and how I like how it was portrayed." After a member of Student Development shared a story of race, oppression, and Whiteness, Rae was curious about her own experience of Whiteness. When the research opportunity arose, she asked the question, "What does it mean to be White?" More specifically, Rae was curious about, "What advantages do I really have for being White and for being Christian and for being on this

campus? So that's, that's really why I wanted to do it 'cause I just wanted to like figure it out." Rae was curious about the weight of Whiteness at Midwestern University.

Rae often felt overlooked as a White student. Reflecting about classes, Rae noted, "Sometimes when I would like say something in class and then a person who's Black, who'd say something or have a similar idea, they would get noticed before I would, if our hands were up." She continued, "I don't know if the teacher is trying to make it seem that way, that our answers are not important or something. But sometimes I feel like they tend to pick minorities to answer questions instead of the majority." Rae also noticed this at a basketball game when an administrator ignored Rae and her friends but enthusiastically greeted a group of students of color.

Rae's grandfather was a tremendous influence in her life. At her grandfather's campground, Rae met a wide variety of people over the summer months. She has a vivid memory of a group of children excluding a Black child from playing. Rae remembered, "They're like, 'No, you can't play with us. You don't look like us.' And it made me so mad, and I was just like, 'Why? Like why is it a thing?'" Rae also had a similar experience as a nursing student shadowing a nurse at a hospital. A patient refused to have a Black nurse care for him. She recalled,

> 'I only like White nurses.' He's like, 'I only want White nurses to touch me. I want White doctors to touch me. And I was just like, at first I was like, okay, like that doesn't bother me. But then I like stopped and I looked and they had three Black nurses on that floor.

Experiences as a child or at the hospital raised her awareness of Whiteness yet she still wondered how her Whiteness made her invisible at Midwestern University.

Rose

Rose was a 20-year-old sophomore social work major. She identified as White and Christian. As a social work major, Rose noted her exposure to Whiteness, "cumulative disadvantage," and race early in her classes. Midwestern University seemed to have a great impact on Rose's consciousness of Whiteness. Prior to classes at Midwestern University, Rose had minimal experience of Whiteness. Rose was also interested in researching personal Whiteness and responded eagerly to the research questions. Rose reflected, "I don't think about being White until I think about someone else not being White and how that affects them negatively and how my Whiteness affects me positively." Rose saw her Whiteness in comparison to color.

Rose could not think of an instance when she was disadvantaged because of her Whiteness unless it was a joke, "The only time that anyone's aware of being White is when, is something like, 'Oh, you have terrible dance moves,' or 'You're going to Starbucks again,' like that's basic White girl stuff or whatever." However, Rose was aware that her skin color influenced how she navigated her interactions with others:

> I don't wake up every morning and the first thing I think when I look in the mirror is like, I'm Black so I'm going to have to, or I'm Hispanic, so I'm going to have to do something extra. Or I don't wake up in the morning and think I'm White. Like, I don't really think about my skin color.

Rose knew that her Whiteness enabled her to achieve. Race did not restrain her opportunities nor did she have to fear anything because of her skin color. Rose never worried about how she was treated or how strangers perceived her because of her Whiteness. This was different than students of color at MU. She noted, "It's hard to be heard when you're the only

one speaking." She knew that students of color at MU were often overlooked. Rose was uncertain how to change this reality but seemed interested in changing the campus conversation about race.

Triangle

Triangle was a 44-year old senior. He was a double-major in music and psychology. He identified as Christian. Triangle identified as the only mixed-race participant in the study, "I'm multiracial. I look White, obviously. I am part White, part Cherokee and part Hebrew and something maybe a dash of Apache, but we're not sure about the Apache." Triangle was the most cryptic of the participants. He carefully responded to each question. He seemed to anticipate my shock to his responses. He was well-travelled and his age increased his experience in comparison to the other participants. He was the only participant to discuss cultural racial tensions prior to the Black Lives Matter movement.

Triangle noticed Whiteness in paper forms that he completed. All forms lacked the diversity that he identified with:

> All the forms, people just clicked White. And until recently, if you looked White or you were more White than anything else, which I'm probably 55% to 60% White. But if you looked more so than not, you were always forced to fill out forms where it said "White," but there were no multiracial or other, there wasn't even a place to put "Other Than White ."

Triangle seemed disappointed that he "passed" as White. He was more than only White. Triangle was also Cherokee and Hebrew. Culture did not have a box for his identity. He also realized this in music settings. As an avid singer, he loved participating in Gospel choirs but was often dismissed because of his Whiteness.

Summary

Chapter 4 included descriptions of Midwestern University including demographics, mission, and physical campus. Also included were the 15 participant demographics including age, academic major, class, hometown, faith, and race. Participant descriptions also included motivation for participating in the research, academic major influence, family influence, and reflections of self-awareness. The participants included reflected on the question, “In what ways are White, Midwestern, Christian college students critically conscious of Whiteness?” In the next chapter, I will introduce the interview themes collected from the individual interviews.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS 2

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to discover "In what ways are White, Midwestern, Christian college students critically conscious of Whiteness?" Fifteen semi-structured interviews were completed. Eight participants agreed to review and discuss the initial findings in follow-up interviews. Responses were coded line-by-line, resulting in 1021 coded excerpts. Excerpts were selected using descriptive and in vivo coding. The excerpts coalesced into 246 categories including such categories as colorblindness, all missionaries are White, and Whiteness advantages.

Themes

Five themes emerged from the data including (a) awareness of Whiteness, (b) advantages and disadvantages of Whiteness, (c) responses to Whiteness, (d) Whiteness and faith, and (e) aspirational influence of faith on Whiteness. In this chapter, I will introduce the themes that surfaced from the participants' stories. Each of the five themes had numerous sub-themes that better captured the phenomenological realities of the participants. Included below is a vocabulary list of terms that define the differences between the phenomenological reflections.

Vocabulary list

Awareness of Whiteness: Participant responses collected around the conscious awareness of Whiteness in three different ways, including (a) perceptions of Whiteness, (b) witnessed Whiteness, and (c) campus influence of Whiteness.

Descriptions of Whiteness- Phenotype similarities were a common response to the question, "How do you define Whiteness?" Participants responded in three different ways, including (a) skin color, (b) Whiteness in comparison to Blackness or "otherness," and (c) elevated status.

Observed Whiteness- As a phenomenological study, participants were encouraged to explore the felt reality or day-to-day Whiteness. Several sub-themes emerged, including (a) descriptions of Whiteness, (b) advantages of Whiteness, and (c) disadvantages of Whiteness.

Perception of Whiteness- An insight or observation of Whiteness, participants reflected on weightless Whiteness, nostalgic Whiteness, skin color, and Whiteness as an elevated status.

Privilege- An advantage of Whiteness, participants recognized the cultural preference towards White persons and White culture.

Weightless Whiteness- Unaware of the personal or systemic influence of Whiteness. A person does not feel White nor experience the benefit and burden of Whiteness.

White Assumption- A normative reality of Whiteness where a person assumes the identity or system is probably White.

White Comfort- A feeling of security because of White normativity.

White Normativity- Emerson (2010) defined White normativity as "the normalization of Whites' cultural practices, ideologies, and location within the racial hierarchy such that how Whites do things, their understanding about life, society, and the world, and their dominant social location over other racial groups" (p. 14).

Whiteness- Helms (2008) defined Whiteness as assimilation and acculturation within White Anglo-Saxon culture and phenotypes corresponding with European characteristics such as fair skin, light hair, or light eye color.

Awareness of Whiteness

As a phenomenological study on Whiteness, participants were encouraged to explore the felt reality or day-to-day Whiteness. Participants shared varied experiences and depths of Whiteness. Some participants reflected deeply about Whiteness as a personal identifier or system of advantage. Other participants shared shallow reflections of the influence of Whiteness. Participants were aware of Whiteness in three primary areas, including the perception of Whiteness, witnessed Whiteness, and campus influence of Whiteness. Each of these themes are described below in detail and illustrated with participant reflections.

Perception of Whiteness.

Within the first theme of perception of Whiteness, participants reflected on weightless Whiteness, nostalgic Whiteness, skin color, and Whiteness as an elevated status.

Weightless Whiteness. Whiteness was perceived as unfamiliar or unknown for some participants. Grace reflected, “I’ve never really thought about it before, but Whiteness, I just, I don’t really know. I’d like to think that there’s no difference between, you know, different groups of people because like based on their skin color.” Grace was unable to sense how the weight of Whiteness influenced her experience. Grace continued, “I’ve never really sat down and thought, ‘What does it mean to be White?’” As Grace considered Whiteness, her uncertainty seems on the surface:

> I don’t know. I guess stemming from history, maybe like privileged, I guess. But now like in my own life, I’m not sure if I, I have a feeling one way or another based on, I don’t know, being White or anything. I just feel like all like all my life, like it’s always been, I don’t know, it’s just something I don’t, I don’t know ’cause everybody’s just kind of like (pause), what’s the phrase? I can’t remember. It can’t remember it. But like when

> I, it's just like a sensitive thing I guess just with Black people. So I mean, I feel like everybody's just kind of pushing like, "Hey, be sensitive! Don't talk about it!" And stuff like that.

As noted in the above quote, Grace was uncertain how to express or explain Whiteness. Yet, this weightlessness remained within the invisible knapsack.

Nostalgic Whiteness. Not all of the participants perceived Whiteness as privilege or uncertainty. Elijah noted a sense of pride in Whiteness, "There's almost like a tense pride of your White race. That's what I think of in a sense." He continued, "I think that a lot of people would see that as a negative thing, but I don't think that it's super, I don't think it's terrible to be proud of who you are in a sense." Chad observed a similar idea, "I think, and this is probably bias, but I definitely have a positive first like initial feeling towards Whiteness. It feels familiar." Chad continued, "Like it, it feels like positive, like familiar, like nostalgic. And I think like, I think of also like deep rooted, like almost like a history. Something feels like traditional about being White." For Chad and Elijah, Whiteness was a sense of pride.

In the worst form of pride, Ellie noted that Whiteness was often associated with superiority, "White people just, they subconsciously, now they do think that they are superior to the other races from everything that's happened in history and everything." Regarding superiority, Marie reflected,

> I just think that like some people get cocky about it. Like we don't really have to go around thinking like, "Oh, I'm Black. How will people think of me?" Like they're just like, "Oh well, I'm White. I can kinda like do what I want."

Marie also noted that with a position of authority, feeling superior is even more likely.

Grace described White privilege as a form of familiarity, “Just stereotypical. Like if I’m telling a story, I just assume they’re White unless I get some other description, I guess.” Grace continued with storytelling, “I’ll tell her a story and about like a woman or something and if she’s White, then I won’t really say any descriptive things about her. But, if it was a Black woman, I’ll say, “This Black woman came up.” It was easier for Grace to notice color when it was not White.

Skin Color. Regarding White skin pigment, Triangle noted, “Physiologically there’s the obvious lack of melanin in the skin and in the eyes and variety of hair colors.” Triangle continued a step beyond skin tone, “There are certain facial features that are slightly different and smells that are slightly different from one group of people to another.” Marie echoed this sentiment: “Whiteness I would say is the like the skin color you are born with.” She continued, “More of like a social aspect. It’s the culture and the environment in which you live and that affects how you are White.” Rose added, “Like my skin is a light color.” Catherine also noted skin tone, “I would probably just say the color of your skin. I don’t know if there’s a term that I would associate with that other than just you’re White.”

Whiteness as an Elevated Status. Several participants defined Whiteness as an elevated status. Here, Ellie saw a difference. “I picture White people like on a top of a pyramid,” noted Ellie. Elizabeth continued the reflection regarding elevated status,

> There’s definitely an amount of respect that comes along with it. Typically it carries with it a sense of higher social status only because when people think of like, ‘Oh yeah, two car garage, happy family with two kids house on the end of the cul-de-sac. Like that’s typically something that you picture a White family in.

Elizabeth continued, “I guess stability is in there, too. It’s secure enough that we never questioned it not being secure. I don’t know how else to put it.” Hallie echoed this status: “I’m really stereotyping here but I think Whiteness is kind of like an entitlement.” Hannah discussed Whiteness as a “pre-set:”

> Hannah: Yeah, or like a template. Template is probably the best word for it. You’ve got a White person, most likely these things are things that are true about them.
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> Researcher: Okay, do you feel like that happens here at MU?
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> Hannah: Yeah, and I don’t think it’s exactly bad because it’s kind of true. It’s based off White cultural norms. Yeah, you’re in this group so typically if you are in a certain group there are certain things, that you’re going to behave in a certain way. There’s certain things you’re probably more likely to like than other things, that kind of thing. Words, even terms, you’re more likely to say. That kind of thing. I think it does happen here, but it’s not exclusively here.

For Elijah, Whiteness was synonymous with Evangelical Christians. He replied to the definition of Whiteness as,

> When I hear Whiteness I think of like Evangelical Christians. Listen to the political science and what they’re doing throughout the world and how that kind of, how a lot of politicians are saying like that’s what caused the election of the results in the elections of 2016 and how they can have a big effect.

For several participants, Whiteness was synonymous with skin tone, elevated status and primarily noticed in contrast to Blackness or “otherness.”

Witnessed Whiteness

Within the first major theme, awareness of Whiteness, a second sub-theme emerged regarding witnessed Whiteness. Participants witnessed Whiteness in student leadership roles, student programming, the dining hall, personal cultural unfamiliarity, and Whiteness in comparison to Blackness or "otherness."

Student Leadership Roles. Jefferson observed that one group of student ambassadors were primarily White, "Like, like I said, like all the majority of them will be White and then some will be like minorities." Lynn noted, "So like, most of the leaders on campus are usually White." Rae echoed, "I feel like most of like student-led groups, if you look at him it's like, oh, 'We're all White.'" Rae continued with her perception of some sports teams including tennis teams, women's basketball and golf:

> Like some of the tennis teams, like there's not a Black person on them or the girls basketball team. Like it's an all-White team where like if you look at other colleges, like you see some, like you'll see Black people playing or like you'll see different people playing and it's not like an all-White team… And the golf team. I had another one where it's like, it's all White. Like there's never not a person who's Black.

Student Programming. Student programming was another space where participants witnessed Whiteness. Lynn described White student programming this way, "Most of the activities that we do are like kind of like White people things." Rae echoed this thought. Triangle also mentioned a line dancing competition as a White event. Speaking of line dancing, Lynn said, "That's pretty White." Triangle referenced the country and Southern rock music as strong indicators of Whiteness.

Dining Hall. Elijah noted the dining hall as a place where Whiteness was evident in contrast to the Black students gathered, “The North American minority students kind of flock together as they don’t really intertwine as much. And, so that’s something I guess I really noticed.” Kathleen noted Black and White students gathering in the dining hall, “I don’t know if this would be considered Whiteness, but you always see the White kids normally sticking with the other White kids and being friends, you don’t really see much mixture in White and Black here on this campus.” When asked where students gathered by race, Kathleen responded, “I would definitely say in the dining hall, walking to class a lot.” Marie found that minority students acted as a clique that, “Made it very intimidating, I’d say.” Dining hall tables were observed as silos of similarity.

Elizabeth could not recall a time that she observed Whiteness. She recognized that the campus was primarily White but reflected, “I’m not sure I can actually give you a specific instance because this particular campus is incredibly open minded and loving and welcoming to anybody no matter who they are.” She continued, “Most of the time when I’m just going about my daily life, like it doesn’t even come into play because like I said earlier, I’ll forget it and act like it’s not even a thing.” For Elizabeth, it seemed that Whiteness required a conscious action.

Cultural Unfamiliarity. Hannah offered some unique perspective of Whiteness at Midwestern University. She found that many students were sheltered from interacting with people of differing backgrounds, “Someone trying to go up to someone of a different race and relate to them culturally. The thing they’re trying to relate on is actually insulting and they don’t know. They don’t know that it’s insulting.” Hannah continued, “They’ll be like, ‘Oh yeah, like, I love Mexican food,’ or something like that. But it’s like awkwardness that where people really

do make an effort to connect, but it just comes off as like, 'oh my gosh, White boy.'" Sheltered experiences prevented healthy conversations and interactions.

Hannah also noted the difficulty of pronouncing unfamiliar names correctly, "There's a girl, I probably shouldn't use actual names. She's from Columbia, like in South America and her name is hard to pronounce for an English speaker. And so that often gets mispronounced." She continued, "But, like it sometimes I think it might be like a side effect of the fact that we don't deal with multicultural stuff very often here." Additionally, Hannah believed that students who spoke English as a second language faced challenges with writing papers outside of their native tongue, "I think a lot of the people who are ESL have a serious issue with writing in English as we are expected to because like it's hard. English is a stupid, really weird language. It has really odd rules." Whether it was name pronunciation or writing papers in English, Hannah knew that some students faced challenging language norms at Midwestern University.

Whiteness in Comparison to Blackness or "Otherness." Lynn saw Whiteness in comparison to Blackness. According to Lynn, Black had a stronger sense of identity, "And I feel like, with other races you get like a stronger sense of identity. I know that like, my roommate identifies strongly about like being Black and like, Black culture and she talks about that." Jefferson said similarly about the lack of identity, "But to be like you're just White, like you're not of any like any minority or racial ethnicity."

Lynn completed a classroom exercise in which the class participants wrote three descriptors of their identity. Lynn's friend wrote, "Black" while Lynn never considered writing, "White." She reflected, "The teacher asked us and she wrote down Black as one of them and like I wouldn't think to write White, you know." Lynn concluded that Black identity was partially defined by solidarity, "I guess there's more community and identity in that when you're a racial

minority because I feel like you probably have to like stick together in a way." In the opposite, Whiteness lacked identity for Lynn, "I guess like sometimes I think of Whiteness as like the absence of an identity in that way because you don't use that to define yourself." Ellie could not define Whiteness or recall an experience of Whiteness. "I don't know," Ellie replied. Whiteness was not part of Ellie's conscious personal identity.

Hallie noticed Whiteness on her trip to the continent of Africa. She recalled, "I really noticed my Whiteness while I was there, and it really opened my eyes to the things that are different or people think are different about me versus them. So I think that's where I really saw it." For Hallie, Whiteness was realized in contrast to the Blackness of her visit to Africa. Hallie never named which country on the continent of Africa she visited.

Campus Influence of Whiteness.

Within the first major theme, awareness of Whiteness, a third sub-theme emerged regarding the campus influence of Whiteness. Participants reflected on the campus influence of Whiteness in the classroom, Chapel and relationships with friends and roommates.

Classroom Influence of Whiteness. In the descriptions above, I shared academic influences for each of the participants. Additional data will be shared in this section regarding classroom influences of Whiteness. Anna was a social work major. In Anna's classes, social justice topics influenced her thinking about race but not specifically Whiteness. Rose did talk about White privilege in her social work classes, "I'm social work major so we talk a lot about like White privilege and what that means to be White." Rose continued, "When I came to this university, being in social work classes and having people that were aware of it, educating me really made me so much more aware." However, Rose deferred to students of color in the classroom discussions regarding race, "If we have any discussions about skin color, it's always

like we're waiting for the people that have a different skin color than White to respond because we don't feel like we should be able to say anything about it." Rose was cautious to engage in conversations about race within a classroom setting.

Elijah experienced a larger world outside of his hometown after arriving at Midwestern University. The bigger world influenced Elijah to change his major from history education to international development. He reflected on the new requirement to study different cultures, "That was a big thing 'cause I had to, I was kind of required in a sense to study cultures." Elijah continued, "The parts where I talked about cultures and how they're different, how those things can be different in different cultures and races. I found myself like gravitating towards those and wanting to understand that more." Rose echoed Elijah's interest in studying cultures, "I want to know more about different cultures. I want to be more culturally competent and I thought that be like a safe place to, to learn about it." The classroom setting opened Elijah and Rose up to new cultures and increased understanding.

Chapel. Midwestern University required students to attend weekly Chapel services. Three days a week, students sing praise and worship music and listen to a sermon related to college student experiences. The campus pastor, guest speakers and University employees bring the Chapel messages most often. For many participants, Chapel was a primary location of Whiteness regarding music, speakers and topics. Hannah noted, "Chapel is one of the places where the whole race line becomes more apparent. I don't know if it's for everybody. It probably is for me." Chapel has a crystalizing effect for race at Midwestern University.

Hallie noticed the White style of worship music, "You can definitely tell that most of the songs are just geared toward us because we don't have a lot of variety in the music that we do and the worship styles and things like that." Hallie continued, "With worship and things, it's

pretty much just one style, and there's not a lot of change in that." Rose noted that students of color notice the White worship music and style, "I know the chapel worship is always something that a lot of minority students take issue with because it's very much White worship, like Hillsong and Elevation Worship and stuff like that. It's very mainstream." Rae also noted the White identities of the chapel worship band, "Like every person in there is White." Lynn reflected, "I feel like some people want to try out for [the worship band} but they don't because like they're not Black or like, I mean they're not, they're not White, they're Black." Chapel music and music leadership was a focal point of race and Whiteness.

Rose is friends with the worship team leader. After talking with Rose about more diversity in the worship, the leader offered a response:

> Her response I guess was that she's not here to please people, she's here to please God. And we've talked about it and it's not that she specifically doesn't want to do any other style of music or anything like that just because she doesn't want to discriminate against Black people or anything like that. But she doesn't want to change how she worships to please people and she feels like if she does that only to please people then it would be sinful, which I can understand.

While Rose understood the perspective of her friend, she also recognized the reality of overlooking the experiences of students of color, "And so I think if people feel like they're not being seen and they can't worship, then reaching out to them is probably something that Jesus would do too." In Rose's mind, Christianity requires loving others and not overlooking students.

Regarding speakers for Chapel, many participants noted the variety of voices and experiences. Again, Hallie noted, "We've had a lot of different backgrounds come and speak, which has been really cool, and our pastor did a really good job at bringing in a diverse group

and so they were speaking to everyone." Rose recognized the variety of speakers, also, "This semester I feel like they've done a lot. I feel like they've done a lot to try to have more people, at least more diversity in speakers, specifically speakers." For some participants, Chapel was a great exposure to diverse ideas and preaching.

Hannah noted the speakers were either, "White, White, White chapel speakers or we have Black, Black, Black chapel speakers." The difference between the two types of speaker is often in the introductions. She recalled the campus pastor's divergent enthusiasm:

> He would say, "My brother, my mister." The introductions are markedly more enthusiastic. Or he'd be like, "Oh yeah, there's this person they did such and such." You can be pretty sure this is a White person. You can be like, "Oh, this person probably a Black person," because he's just a lot more enthusiastic. It's not like there's a quality difference [in the speakers].

Visiting Black chapel speakers often noted the racial make-up of the chapel audience. For some participants, this elevated the consciousness of Whiteness in chapel. One particular participant, Catherine shared many insights to her experience of Black speakers in Chapel. She reflected, "Even today, it was evident in chapel. There was a pastor, and he introduced himself as a pastor of a Black church and he was like, 'I look out here and I just see a lot of White people.'" Catherine and I continued the discussion about her experience as White student under the Chapel leadership of a Black speaker:

> Catherine: I think that the style of, we'll just say church, because that's what he said today. He said, "At my Black church, people talk back to me and there's a lot of energy and stuff." And he's like, "So I'm going to have to shape you guys up to whatever. When I say this, you say this," and things like that. And I think that that's just how it is, and at

> some churches that's what they do. And when they come here and they see a bunch of White people who usually just sit and listen, it's recognized and they, I don't know. I don't really know why they do that. It's kind of awkward, but,
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> Researcher: Because you guys might actually be a responsive audience, right? When did the speaker say that?
>
> Catherine: At the beginning. When he got on stage.

At this particular chapel message, the speaker assumed that the audience was nonresponsive. The speaker was correct, but Catherine felt the criticism from the speaker about audience participation. Catherine continued, "I don't hoot and holler during services. I listen and take notes and keep to myself. And I know that that's not how everybody is. So when they say that, I'm just kind of like, 'Yep, you're right. Like, whatever.'" For Catherine, she was annoyed at the speaker's dismissal of her style of Chapel engagement, "I definitely kind of roll my eyes a little bit internally of just like, 'Oh, here we go again. Going to make me repeat amen back to him three times," and "That's not good enough. Say it again." After Catherine says, "Amen" again, she continues with her note taking. A Black friend close to Hallie had a more acute experience from some Chapel speakers, "She feels like a lot of our chapel speakers come in and are like targeting the White students and not like everyone as a whole." For Catherine, Chapel sometimes made her feel "looked down upon" because she did not match the speaker's enthusiasm.

Additionally, Catherine noted her embarrassment when a Black chapel speaker performed a rap during a service, "I feel like White people don't always know how to respond when there are those like kind of cultural differences of like rapping. So everyone obviously like cheered for her, but it was like, 'Oh gosh, we're definitely really White.'" Catherine recognized the difference in her style of worship and engagement and the Black speaker's style of worship

and engagement. She also recognized her uncertainty of different styles of music in the often White space of Chapel. While it may not specifically elevate or highlight Whiteness, Chapel is a place where race-related observations and experiences occur at Midwestern University.

Friendships. Friendships and roommates elevated Whiteness and race for many participants. The proximity of a close friend willing to discuss race and Whiteness or a roommate from a minority experience raised awareness of race and Whiteness because of the counter-experience to the White participants. Hallie recalled, “I think I notice my Whiteness a lot more when I’m with my friends that aren’t White.” For Hallie, it was not about direct conversations but jokes regarding non-White experiences.

Elijah shared his experience with a minority roommate, “I have a friend from Pakistan who looks very Middle Eastern, but he is the nicest guy in the world.” Elijah appreciated his friend’s graciousness regarding conversations about race, “Just becoming friends with them and then him being gracious enough to teach me about his culture. And learn from him, kind of being in presence and relationship and learning from that. And I found a huge benefit from that.” Elijah recognized his naivety in light of his friend’s experience. At one point during the previous year, Elijah confronted a different friend regarding insensitive language directed at a shared minority friend. He recalled, “It was kind of the one of the first times where I’ve kind of felt that way in that sense.” For Elijah, friendships with students of color and responding to insensitivity was a new experience.

Upon coming to campus, Rose was apprehensive to discuss race with anyone. She shared, “I think the more we integrate people I guess, or have more diversity in people and have open conversations and do things like this and stuff like that, the less apprehension there’ll be around the subject.” As Rose asked questions to close friends like, “What do you want me to call you?”

Rose appreciated opportunities to sit and talk. Several friends told her, “Ask me whatever you want.” After spending time on campus, Rose felt less apprehension to talk about race.

Two participants shared about increased empathy through friendships with students of color. Elizabeth shared about a friend who does not speak English as a first language: “It’s really hard to have to speak English all the time.” Elizabeth reflected, “I’d never be able to speak their mother tongue.” Chad experienced a similar reflection. As he noticed his privilege in comparison to peers on campus: “I’ve been able see that where I come from is not necessarily what the world is.” Chad is open to the reality that not everyone comes from similar access and opportunities.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Whiteness

The second major theme of the participant reflections revolved around advantages and disadvantages of Whiteness. The reflections shared demonstrate personal experiences by White students. Without a contradiction to the participant experiences, the advantages and disadvantages remain unchallenged.

Advantages of Whiteness.

Participants reflected several advantages of Whiteness including privilege, White assumption, White comfort, and majority status.

Privilege. Privilege was a primary advantage of Whiteness. Participants perceived privilege either personally, systemically, or not at all. Personally, Chad noted that Whiteness offered some protection, “I’ve never worried about going out and being persecuted for my race.” He continued, “I never go to the grocery store and get looks for being White.” Rose shared, “I don’t feel like I am because nobody looks at me and sees my skin color. They just look at me and they’re like, ‘She’s like probably gonna be a capable person.’”

Catherine defined it as, “Kind of having like a one-up on somebody for no, like real reason other than the fact that you’re White.” Hallie reflected, “Our nation’s kind of geared towards White people.” Grace noticed privilege through history, “White people in America just had it like so much easier than other races.” She continued, “Like thinking you’re better than somebody else because like, you know, the three-fifths and the whole slavery thing that happened.” Jefferson noted that privilege was unchallenged: “No one is challenging my race. No one’s really challenged the advantages I get, of being White. Or the privileges I get.” For Jefferson, job application credibility were another form of White privilege.

Marie described privilege as increased opportunities. She reflected, “I’d define it as like circumstances which you’re given and others who are not White don’t necessarily get those privileges.” Ellie talked about privilege in this way: “I think of privilege and having, not really superiority but like the blessing I guess to like have something that others don’t have. It’s like given to you, it’s an opportunity given to you that others might not have.” Rae shared a similar sentiment: “Sometimes I think being White is easier because like all I have to do is like wake up and like if I go to work, people are like, “Oh, it’s a White person. Like no big.’” Systemically, Rae summarized privilege of opportunities with the following statement: “It’s also like easier for us to get things. I mean like it’s easier for us to get things and to earn things and to like move up in the world as where like I believe it’s harder for those who are not White.”

Participants reflected on the relationship between privilege and unequal justice. Hallie shared, “I think of like Black people getting pulled over and being like, afraid that they’ll get shot because they got pulled over.” Jefferson noted that privilege influenced the judicial system: “Like you see African American men getting locked up for like marijuana possession and then like Brock Turner sexually assaults of women behind the dumpster and gets off in three months

probation." Rose described privilege as, "And I think that I'm not like not dangerous, even though most of the people that like commit crimes or do things are White." Defining privilege plainly, Rose reflected, "Part of the perception of Whiteness is it doesn't have to be feared."

Several participants recognized some ignorance of personal privilege: "I've never really realized I had certain privileges until I used them. And so I think in that sense, maybe a privilege is a privilege because it's being used and that maybe be conscious or unconsciously." Lynn believed that privilege was unknown to many students: "I feel like I know a lot of people even here who don't realize the impact of their privilege on themselves and not always like deliberately, but they just, they have never been exposed to something else." Ellie did not experience privilege: "I don't feel like I'm more privileged than somebody else." Privilege was described as "entitled and blissfully ignorant" by Lynn.

White Assumption. There were several advantages and disadvantages to Whiteness at Midwestern University. Lynn also noticed the "pre-set" of Whiteness: "It also seems like a preset. Like, you just assume that a lot of people are White or you assume that someone that you're meeting that you might not have seen before is probably White. It's kind of like ingrained." Rose believed that Whiteness protected other's perceptions of her: "Probably just not having to worry about your color of your skin. I guess not worrying about it affecting how people treat you or how you're going to be viewed." Whiteness weighed less than color.

Hallie wondered if White persons were trusted more often. She reflected on this advantage: "And so I think that we are more like, more often than not, people will trust us more if they see us versus like a person of a different color. Um, so I think that's a big thing." Hallie continued about the advantage of perceived intelligence: "Maybe even like intelligence, they might see us as like, 'They know a lot because they're White.' I don't necessarily think that way,

but I think a lot of, not a lot of people, but I think that a stereotype." Whiteness seemed to add credibility to students.

White Comfort. For Chad, one advantage was comfort: "I'm thinking about what it means to be White. I think there's definitely a certain level of comfort that is associated with being White and like no rights or wrongs attached to that." The idea of Whiteness was new to Chad. He recalled:

> Like I said just a few seconds ago that I've like never really thought of myself as being White. And so I think there's a certain level of comfort that comes with that, that I know I'm not gonna for the most part, I'm never going to be in a situation where my Whiteness per se is a point of contention between me and another person.

As Chad noted the assurance of comfort, he was aware that his skin color provided him with a distinct advantage.

Majority Status. An additional advantage to Whiteness was majority status. Elijah also noted the majority status of Whiteness: "There definitely is a perceived advantage of being 90 per cent, probably 99 per cent of our faculty is White and staff, majority of the students are White." Hannah noted, "We're in the majority and majority when you have a majority, people kind of start to think that they can do more things because they're in a majority." Hannah was uncertain how majority status influenced her, but it was a mindset: "I definitely think it's a mindset like, 'Oh, you're not in the majority, so there's something less right about you.'"

Talking about the campus of Midwestern University, Lynn reflected, "I think mostly because the majority of the population is White. I think I saw a statistic yesterday that was like 4.7 of all students on campus are minorities. Literally everyone else was White." She continued, "I think just even in this small setting, like when you're the majority, you make the rules and you

kind of abide by them and your, your voice is heard. You don't have to speak loudly to be heard." Whiteness created a majority perspective.

Disadvantages of Whiteness.

Participants noted some disadvantages of Whiteness. Perceived disadvantages included scholarship opportunities, insider access, perceived perceptions by Black students, and lacked shared experience. Several participants noted one additional disadvantage: ignorance to race.

Scholarship Opportunities. For several participants, the main disadvantage of being White at Midwestern University was scholarship opportunities available only to minority students. Catherine noted:

> The one thing that I can think of is the [minority] scholarship. I mean you can just claim any type of race and apply for the scholarship and get a full ride or almost a full ride. And since I'm White I can't do that.

Catherine continued, "Sometimes it's frustrating 'cause some of the students that have that scholarship either drop out or they don't care. And it's like you have free education. And if I could have that, like what could I do with it?" For Grace, she had a similar sense of the scholarship program: "I think I'm disqualified from some of [the scholarships] because I'm White." Elijah also noted the scholarship access for minority students: "It seems almost there's special scholarships if you're not White." Students of color were advantaged because of an identity quality unavailable to White students.

Insider Access. Participants also noted a sense of insider access for minority students. Elijah noted, "There's also because they are the minority on campus, I think that some staff might go out of their way to like welcome them individually and stuff like that." He continued that some White students perceive a special status attributed to minority students: "There's

special events and special attributes and some special specialties that go with not being White also that are given in a sense or at least perceived. I don't know if that's true, but as perceived benefits." One special advantage was "front row" with the campus pastor, who was Black. Elijah did not believe access to the campus pastor was equitable across student race. Jefferson felt that as a White person, he often just blended in: "Yeah, I feel like you can become like I'm just a part of the mix, like a part of the whole, you know what I mean? Like one more White person." Being White was believed to reduce benefits more accessible to students of color.

Perceived Perceptions of Black Students. While it is challenging to accurately assess how another person or group perceives someone, Hallie and Lynn perceived negative perceptions of Black students towards White students. Hallie struggled with a perception that she was advantaged: "I would say kind of the disadvantage would be that the [minority] students look at us like we have an advantage. So I kind of think that's a disadvantage." Lynn shared a similar sentiment: "[Minority] students already have a preconceived notion of you because you're White, so you, it's way harder to get to know them." Some White students assumed rejection from minority students because of their Whiteness.

Lacking a Shared Experience. Having a shared experience or something in common was another disadvantage to Whiteness on campus. Students did not shame the perceived shared experience of minority students. Instead, Lynn observed and seemed to yearn for belonging. She noted, "I think if you were a minority, you kind of have like an in. I guess you have something in common. You're relatable." Hannah, however, believed Whiteness was excluded. She found, "It's kinda rude and sometimes there's disadvantage for us. There's a little bit of an exclusiveness in the non-White population here. Like, 'We're cool because we're multicultural.' You're not sorry. And it's not like overt again, it's never stated." Rae described the exclusion in

a deeper way: “In that sense it kind of feels like being White has fewer roots. It’s kind of like it’s got, more unknown roots.” Students of color had a shared experience that White students desired.

Ignorance of Race. Chad and Rose noted a different disadvantage with Whiteness: ignorance to race. Chad noted, “And so like I think being White on campus and I think it goes back to that privilege or that security or that like almost like ignorance to what’s actually happening.” Rather than taking the red pill from the Matrix, White students take the blue pill and forget all about the issues or weight of race. For Chad, the disadvantage of ignorance was too much: “At the same time I feel like you can, you almost might be better off for it. I think I’ve definitely been better off for like going and traveling and visiting different cultures and seeing different people’s way of life.”

Rose echoed this statement: “Because there’s so much of it [Whiteness] that we’re not, I feel like we’re not getting a, I do have a diverse experience and we’re not being educated necessarily on topics that we should be.” Rose continued about Whiteness, “A lot of people aren’t aware of their Whiteness and I think that that negatively affects them and how they’re going to interact with other people that aren’t White and what their view of other people that aren’t White.” For Rose and Chad, Whiteness prevented a diverse learning environment that college strives to attain.

Responses to Whiteness

The third major theme of participant reflections included personal responses to Whiteness Participants responded emotionally and behaviorally to Whiteness in three primary ways including feelings of Whiteness, practices of Whiteness, and color-conscious/color-avoidant behaviors. For many participants, the conversation about Whiteness was new and unfolded in

real-time during the interviews and follow-up interviews. Students enrolled in social work and international development explored systemic race-related issues. The remaining students responded to Whiteness in limited ways prior to the interviews.

Feelings of Whiteness

Regarding feelings of Whiteness, students experienced apprehension about race and racial conversations above all other feelings. Additionally, students experienced fear, uncertainty, defeat, and defensiveness.

Apprehension. Many participants expressed apprehension, fear, or anxiety about discussing race and even talking to a student who was culturally different from them. Kathleen described racial conversations as "trigger." Hallie recalled, "People are afraid to hurt other people's feelings, and offend, and all of those things, so they avoid it instead of going and asking a minority student what it's like. And so they just avoid it rather than talking to them." Ellie echoed this feeling: "It's a sensitive topic around everyone, you have to be careful what you say so you don't offend anybody. Even if you don't mean it in the way that they think, it could still create problems." She continued, "Depending on what you say and in what context you say it, it usually results in anger." Rose was afraid to talk about race: "Anytime I'm in the group discussion or the diversity group, like I said earlier, I'm scared to say things about people of color." Rose also noted that if I was not a White person, she would not speak openly to me about her experiences: "Like if you, if you are not White and I was talking to you about this, I would not be as open about things because I feel uncomfortable that I would say something wrong." Apprehension about racial conversations was a common feeling for the participants.

Fear. Many participants cited accidentally making an inappropriate comment as a great concern. Rose discussed, "I'm even scared to advocate for people that are of color most of the

time, because I'm scared that I'm going to sound wrong or I'm going to say something that's actually racist or something like that on an accident." In her conversations on race, Rose noted, "I want to say something, but I know if I say one wrong word, it would just affect the Black population here. Then everybody would be after me and I'd be like, 'Well, you don't understand what I was saying.'" Rae shared similar apprehension: "Sometimes you want to make a point, but you know just for you and everybody around you and how it could affect you. It's better not to say what you want to think." Hallie continued, "I think a big part of it is that we don't really think we're doing anything wrong, and so we don't really want to be told that." The worst for Hallie was accidentally doing something wrong when she did not actively want to do something wrong.

Uncertainty. In a similar vein, participants were uncertain about the appropriate use of common terms such as African-American. For a class presentation, Rose recalled, "I don't know what to call people of color. Do I say Black people? Do I say African-Americans? Like what do I say?" She continued, "Just not even knowing what to call people of color. Is people of color offensive? So yeah, because it is such a touchy subject and there are very strong feelings surrounding it, it is really hard to talk about it." Elijah shared this reflection: "Even in conversations with people, I'm like, can I say Black? Can I say African-American? Like, what's going to be appropriate? Can I say Mexican? Latino? Hispanic? Like I don't, I don't know." Catherine also felt similarly: "You never know what you can and can't say because sometimes people within minority groups can talk to each other a certain way. But if you say something that they say to each other, then it's considered very offensive." In the end, Elijah gauges what to say based upon the relationship, and Catherine often just keeps her mouth closed.

Several participants did not want to be perceived as racist or insensitive. Hannah reflected, “I do not consider myself to be racist. I am, I know at times, just because I live in the middle of nowhere in a White community. There’s this huge pressure on White people to not say the wrong thing.” Grace did not want to be disapproved from others: “I care about what others think of me and I just really, I hate it when anybody feels uncomfortable or like disapproving of what I’m doing towards them or anything like that.”

Catherine was annoyed when she was labeled racist like other White people. She reflected, “I don’t want them to like, think of me as the news would portray White people at times. I don’t want them to think that I’m like against them or don’t like them just because of their color.”

Defeated. Once a person is labeled “racist,” it is difficult to recover from that label. “It’s like I can’t say anything wrong. White people aren’t allowed to say anything wrong. If we say something wrong, then other groups have an excuse to completely ignore us and never try to be friends at all,” reflected Hannah. She continued, “It’s like, ‘Oh, you messed up. Sorry. You no longer have that option,’ because they all know that was your first impression, and it sticks.” While Hannah believed that labels impact other races, it is very sticky for White people to shake.

For Hannah, humor was a tenuous path to cross in multicultural settings and conversations. She said:

> If I’ve got a new group of people, I’m sitting at this table, and I’m cracking jokes and whatever, you don’t know what jokes are okay to crack if it’s a different racial group because they look at you like you’re an idiot if you say the wrong thing. It’s not just offensive things actually. It’s, "Oh, what a White chick," that kind of thing.

Hannah continued, “If you crack that same joke thinking that you’re saying something funny in a group of African American students, and you get dead panned. It’s, ‘Oh, crap. Was something I said offensive?’” Hannah felt judged for her jokes before. She was uncertain if her jokes were inappropriate or just not a funny joke when she is in a mixed group of students.

Defensive. One participant, Elizabeth responded to racial sensitivity with a defensive posture. When media dashes Whiteness, “A strange sort of pride that rears itself and like, ‘How dare you accuse an entire section of the culture, even though it is probably the biggest section of the culture. How dare you stereotype all of them the same way.’” Within Whiteness, there were several shades of White and racist practices.

Practices of Whiteness

Not only did participants feel the weight of Whiteness, they also identified some practices that countered the difficult feelings of Whiteness. Lynn reflected on the persistence required to bear the burden of Whiteness: “I feel it takes a lot of effort to recognize your privilege and like try to, I don’t know, like try to make a difference in the world.” Rose noted how empathy helped her join in the experiences of her minority friends:

> Put ourselves in other people’s perspective has completely changed how I think about things and how I process things. I’m constantly like ... I guess before I never ... Before I came here, I never put myself in their shoes and tried to imagine what that would feel like.

Hallie was aware of her ignorance of Whiteness, “I don’t think a lot of people are aware of our Whiteness. I guess feel a little bit of like entitlement. That’s not really a feeling.” Yet Hallie’s consciousness of Whiteness elevated her ability to be with others, “I learned how to be more aware of my Whiteness and how it affects others or like the things I, my actions and how

that can affect people of different cultures and races." She continued, "I feel like White people are the ones who aren't like seeing the uniqueness and the importance of the difference." Lastly, Ellie monitored her speech, "I usually think before I speak, so it's kind of easy to not say something that I don't mean, but I don't really feel the need to say anything that I think is offensive."

I explored what MU would be like if the students were not so afraid to talk about race, Rose reflected,

> We'd either have chaos of people constantly getting their feelings hurt or there'd be less barriers between people and I, I think people are too. I am too scared and people are too scared to test what that would be like because the chaos is too scary.

From carrying the weight of Whiteness, empathy or using caution when they spoke, participants developed behavior patterns in response to White awareness.

Participants also discussed the awareness of privilege. One participant believed that media influenced perceptions of privilege. Jefferson reflected, "You see a lot in media." Lynn remembered a Facebook video of the step-forward exercise with a youth group: "They all started out a starting line and it was kids of like many different backgrounds or demographics or racial ethnicities and someone would call out something like, take a step forward." Yet, Lynn realized that not every person started with the same amount of privilege, "Kinda like you start at a different, I guess that other people because of things that you have or just because of how you grew up."

Discussing privilege, Chad noticed a form of privilege while traveling in the Virgin Islands. Chad noticed the disparity between his status as a tourist and the poverty that he witnessed: "So I think I don't, I don't know if I attach this so much to race with. It definitely

made me think about, you know, do I have more privilege or special privileges of being White?" At first, Chad was resistant to privilege: "I was uncomfortable at first because it was like, of course I don't, like, I, I've never like, I was just born into this, you know what I mean? It's not like I took advantage of somebody to get here."

Privilege awareness caused Chad to feel stuck: "Like I didn't know what I could do as like a White person that's in college. Like I didn't know what, what I could do to like, you know, put racial stuff aside and to like have an impact." Chad also felt shame and guilt for being White: "So I have initially felt this discomfort because I felt my Whiteness in the context of not Whiteness." Chad was uncertain if he had the permission to feel shame for Whiteness: "Maybe I don't have the right to feel ashamed because that's how many people have been felt in our country and other countries for like decades."

After hearing a Chapel, Chad felt convicted to explore his privilege but did not explore it in depth. He honestly recalled, "I never did [explore my privilege]. And I, part of it was because I was a little afraid that maybe I had been taking advantage of White privileges because I mean, it's human nature." Chad continued talking about privilege with a close friend but in the end, Chad knew that privilege would be difficult to relinquish.

Color-Consciousness or Color-Avoidant

Participants reflected on the reality of color on campus and personally. Participants ranged from color-conscious and color-appreciative to color-avoidance. When describing colorblindness, many participants defined the reality of blindness critically. Many were familiar with the term colorblind and recognized the inadequacy of ignoring race.

Color-conscious. Several participants noted the inadequacy of colorblindness. Lynn believed colorblindness to be negative: "You need to recognize that 'cause I think when you're

looking, when you're colorblind you're looking at everyone as they're White, which I don't think is the right idea." Lynn continued about equality, "I think part of equality is recognizing that they're different, not ignoring it."

Hallie appreciated variety in color. Color was a good idea and part of God's plan for humanity. She reflected, "I love diversity because I think that that's what Heaven will look like." She continued, "I don't think saying, 'I don't see color', I don't think that's very helpful because then I feel like you've taken that away from them, and they already feel like they have a disadvantage kind of." To see color is to see part of the history and value of a person according to Hallie: "You'll see the diversity and you'll see the importance of like what every person brings." In the end, to be colorblind is to ignore part of way that God identified people. Hallie recalled, "I think that it's really beautiful when you can look at all of these different people and know, oh, we're all creating, created in God's image." To see color, for Hallie, was critical.

Hannah understood the intent behind colorblindness but also saw the inadequacy of colorblindness. She recalled, "If you ignore color, usually the next step is you ignore cultural backgrounds, which you can't ignore cultural backgrounds and hope to actually understand a person." She continued, "If you don't understand their background, you can't understand them because you don't know what they've gone through." While colorblind is an attempt to do a good thing, in the end colorblindness caused a different set of issues. Hannah noted:

> So you know the Black Lives Matter movement, there's a counter movement called All Lives Matter and they go on the basis of colorblindness. But it actually is counterproductive because you can't be blind to color completely.

While colorblindness can influence a level playing field for opportunity, Hannah believe that a person's race was critical when accounting for the opportunities given to each person. Race is not something that a person can "hop over."

Color-avoidant. Several participants noted that color should not be part of the judgement of others. Jefferson reflected on a hypothetical group of friends with similar interests: "We all like the same thing except we come from a different country and our skin color is different. But like, I don't think that should be the primary thing to judge people on." Catherine noted that color "shouldn't factor into how we love people."

Triangle was desensitized to skin color. He recalled, "Don't notice the difference between people." Ellie shared a similar thought, "Everybody is treated equal here. It's like nobody even has a color." She continued, "It's just we're all the same."

Elizabeth believed that the color of our skin was insignificant to God: "We are all human beings made in the image of God and therefore it does not matter what color our skin is or what ethnicity we come from because we are all His children and we are all equal before Him." For Elizabeth, skin color was insignificant to God.

Whiteness and Faith

The fourth primary theme for the participant reflections revolved around the relationship between Whiteness and faith. Using Whiteness as a framework of experience, participants discussed the influence of Whiteness on Christianity and personal faith. All of the participants identified as Christian and White. Midwestern University encourages students to develop personal faith and grow into greater Christlikeness. Christian discipleship is a critical element of MU's campus ethos. For the final theme, Whiteness and faith, participants reflected on

Whiteness and Christianity, perceptions of Whiteness and Christianity, and the influence of Whiteness on belief and practice.

Whiteness and Christianity

When the participants discussed the influence of Whiteness and Christianity, participants noted that all pictures of Jesus Christ were White. Rose reflected, “Like every picture of Jesus is White. When he probably was not White and every angel is White. Every like every like spiritual thing that I’ve seen in Christianity has been White.” Lynn recalled a similar experience: “I grew up seeing a picture of Jesus that was like White or something. And, I think that you can easily be stuck in White Christianity and not overarching Christianity.” White Jesus was familiar. Rae also remembered a White Jesus: “It’s just something that I grew up with.” When discussing Whiteness and Jesus, Ellie responded, “Well, I’ve seen it. It’s all around. I mean, I believe that. I mean, I don’t really have any other sources of information to tell me otherwise.” For many participants, White Jesus was the default Jesus.

Not only was Jesus White but other images in the Bible reflected White identity. Rose noted, “All the images of Holy figures or people in the church, the church fathers and stuff like that, they’re always White.” She continued, “I very rarely see any people of color in those images or even just like recently with the nativity scenes being out, they’re all White nativity scenes and stuff like that.” Chad reflected on the identity of the saints: “If you go into like a Catholic mass, like all the saints, I mean the saints are White because you know they were White.” Chad was uncertain about the Virgin Mary: “Like she’s White but I don’t know, that wasn’t necessarily true like factually. But we never lived then and it doesn’t say really like race skin color and the Bible that I can think of right now.” However, Chad recognized the difficulty

in assuming that all the people in the Bible were White is not the best. “But like that’s what I grew up with,” recalled Chad and other participants.

Rose noted the reason for White Jesus was likely White artists. She recalled, “The majority of people that do those things are White. And, because like paint those things or create those things because it started off like that when there was discrimination.” However, Rose believed that even though we know more about the Bible, White Jesus would remain common: “If there are now people of color painting those things or doing those things or creating those things that that image of like a recognizable image of Jesus is always White.” Lynn noted that different cultures adapt Jesus to their images: “Other all cultures kind of apply Jesus or religion to their society. So if you go around the world, Jesus looks different in pictures.” Chad discussed the perceived safety of White Christianity for others:

> It’s almost assuming that something is White and Christianity is like almost safe, but as soon as you attach a different race or a different background to something in Christianity, for example, Black Jesus, like it’s almost like, “No, no, no, we can’t do that.”

Chad continued, “We don’t know if Jesus was actually White or not.” Regarding Adam and Eve, Chad reflected, “I’ve heard rumors and theories that Adam and Eve were like actually, like the Garden of Eden somewhere in Africa. So, Adam and Eve weren’t like, I always thought they were White.” Rae echoed this sentiment: “I feel like growing up when I watched movies about just Bible stories or stuff, like there’s just like White people. It was like everybody was White.” Black or Brown Jesus, Black or Brown Adam and Eve was simply out of the ordinary compared to White Jesus, White Adam, and White Eve.

Perceptions of White Christianity

Grace perceived Black church and White church services differently. She reflected, "Sometimes I feel like White people see Christianity differently, not really differently, but they express it in a different way than other races do." For Grace, church music was different: "We've all heard stories of the gospel worship; the Black people and all the praise and worship and the baptisms style, stuff like that." She continued, "I feel like if they are more vocal sometimes; even their pastor or expressions of worship and stuff like that." During a trip to Haiti, Grace participated in a church service. She recalled, "There was a lot more like expression in worship and there was like long drawn out prayer, praying out loud." Marie echoed a perception of Southern Baptist churches: "The robes and that choir and like they're all really singing and stuff." Enthusiasm in worship divided Black churches from White churches.

Chad mentioned a close friend that attended a "typical Black church." However, Chad recognized the preconceived association with the phrase. He reflected, "Just using the word 'typical Black church' that kind of, you know, already insinuates like certain things like, or race does like have an effect in faith." For Chad, Marie and Grace, White church experiences were vastly different from experienced or perceptions of Black churches.

Rose reflected on contemporary worship music in the White church. Like the music played in Chapel and MU, music in White churches is similar to White Christian radio stations: "The genre of music that we play in most church services is very kind of like contemporary Christian. There's not a lot of gospel music or like things like that." Rose continued, "I can go to 10 churches in the city and they're all going to be pretty much the same. They'll probably play at least one song that I've heard before and sounds like every other song that we do." The culture of Whiteness permeated church music for Rose.

Treatment of one another varied between two participants. Ellie recalled, “I feel like everybody is treated equally here. I just thought it was relevant to where I go here that everybody seems loved, at least to me.” Catherine echoed this sentiment: “I think that we’re called to love everybody and like I said, like it shouldn’t really matter. Like that shouldn’t be a factor in how we love others.” However, Triangle reflected on the church’s historic prohibition of interracial dating: “There’s a scripture and I can’t think of it where people are talking about interracial relationships and they think the scripture has to do with interracial relationships when it actually has to do with not mixing inter-religious relationships.” He continued, “Some churches or some forms of Christianity use this scripture to deny interracial relationships that deny equity in general, but yeah, also especially interracial relationships.” Whiteness framed how persons in the church interacted with one another.

Rose was disappointed in the role of the White church and the pervasiveness of racism. She reflected, “I feel like Christians could do more, they can do way more than they’re doing to make people feel supported. And to kind of end the racism and the disadvantage that those people have.” She continued, “[I’m] disappointed and frustrated because it’s still happening and it shouldn’t be.” Rose recognized that racism persisted because Christians failed to live up to Christian ideals: “Because sometimes a lot of the times actually, they are the ones that are probably racist or discriminate or they are holding up like the Confederate flags or they have it on their truck or like things like that.” In fact, Rose believed that some conservative people simply assumed that racism was not a problem to confront.

Influence on Belief and Practice

Within Christianity, persons follow some moral and religious guidelines that demonstrate a follower of Christ from someone who is not purposefully following Christ. The transformative

work of becoming more like Christ is often referred to as "discipleship." Willard (1988) referred to this work as becoming "like Christ in character and in power and thus realize our highest ideals of well-being and well-doing" (p. ix). As a follower of Christ, all of a person's identity and purpose should be influenced by the life-changing work of Christ. So as followers of Christ, this research asked participants to reflect on the influence of Whiteness on personal belief and practice or the influence of personal belief and practice on personal Whiteness. In doing so, participants reflected on God's creative work of diversity, the church should be a diverse place, celebrating diversity, and beliefs about the influence of race on the Christian faith.

Several participants noted the value of diversity to God. If God intended race, God must have liked it. Triangle reflected, "God says that every nation, tongue and tribe will sing together and have a choir. And there's just the mere thought that God made it, he must've liked it. 'Cause if he didn't like it, he wouldn't have made that." Elizabeth remembered, "No matter what this person did to offend me and to other people, they were created in the image of God by God, and therefore are deserving of the same love and respect that I would show to any other human." Rose noted, "I think of the fact that we were all created equally and God doesn't have favorites and he treats us all the same. He loves us all equally." Equal treatment and equal love reflect God's appreciation for uniqueness and diversity.

Elijah shared this idea with an additional nuance: "My faith and Whiteness don't actually go together. I think that it's just you're a Christian and you can be White, you can be Black, you can be anything under the sun." Elijah continued, "I don't think Jesus cared who was sitting at his feet when he was given his sermon." Whiteness should not influence who is open to the Christian faith.

Hallie celebrated this belief regarding the image or individual fingerprint of God in each person: “I do think it is really important to have the diversity and be able to see all of the differences that everyone has and relating it to faith, like we’re all created in God’s image.” She continued, “I think that it’s really beautiful when you can look at all of these different people and know, oh, we’re all creating, created in God’s image.” Elijah appreciated God’s “liking” of diversity but he improved the term to “celebrate:”

> Elijah: Well, I don’t know, just the wording of, "He must’ve liked it." Like, he celebrates it. He created it to, you know, I don’t know.
>
> Researcher: No, go ahead.
>
> Elijah: I think He celebrates, I think He, that’s part of He, when it says in I think it’s Genesis, the potter’s wheel and creating humans, like that seems like, so when a potter goes to a wheel and he creates that, he’s not just all using red clay. He’s using all kinds of different techniques.

For Elijah, celebration better describes God’s creative work because God created so many varieties of identity.

As several participants reflected on the created diversity, they expressed additional beliefs. Elizabeth believed, “I think there’s a lot of people that forget to acknowledge that we’re all sinners in need of grace. And it doesn’t matter what color your skin is, always do your thing.” Marie believed that Whiteness and Christianity were pressured together: “If you’re White then, oh, you either have to be Baptist, Catholic or like Protestant of some sort. So like I feel like it’s a stereotype of like, oh, you’re White, so like you’re a Christian.” Ellie believed in everyone’s equality: “I don’t think that I’m superior to anybody else or any other race” and the world is filled with a lot of goodness.

Hannah believed that living in the Midwest made religion easier to adopt personally. Additionally, Hallie believed in the equality of all people. She reflected:

> The Bible definitely doesn't tell you to be racist. I mean it clearly does not tell you that White people are better. If anything, it would be the other way around because there's really not that many White people in the Bible.

For Hannah, superiority influenced a missionary culture that required all people of color to be saved: "We've got to convert them." However not only did missionaries convert people, but they also assimilated culture into Whiteness.

For two participants, Whiteness did not influence personal faith. Catherine reflected:

> It's not something that I think about 'cause that's another thing. It's like I've said previously, it's just like I don't really know why it matters that much as far as like it doesn't really change anything about my faith or how I live my life.

Additionally, Catherine reflected, "No one knows what race Jesus is or you know, like does God really have a race if he's not really like a part of it. So it's like that doesn't really affect me or matter to me." Hallie responded similarly, "I don't really think that my Whiteness has that much of effect, like have an effect on my faith." Since all persons were made in God's image, "Whiteness has nothing to do anything with my relationship with God," according to Hallie. Grace concluded, "Like as far as my individual faith, I don't think it changes what I believe or anything." For some participants, they could not see the influence of Whiteness on personal faith.

Aspirational Influence of Faith on Whiteness

The final theme of the participant reflections reflected on the aspirational influence of faith and Whiteness. As a follower of Christ, personal actions should reflect the actions of Christ.

As participants reflected on Whiteness and personal faith and actions, three sub-themes emerged including Christianity *should* make a positive influence for good, Whiteness and Christianity influences followers to be respectful, and "faithful Whiteness."

Christianity Should Make a Positive Influence Good

Christianity calls followers to influence change. Lynn believed that Whiteness should influence Christians to make a change. She witnessed racism and discrimination that discouraged her. However, Lynn noted: "The Bible often tells us that you should kind of stand up for people who don't have a voice or you should be helpful to them." Lynn wanted to do her part to influence or good: "I think that like, who better to help this problem and create a solution then the people who started it, you know." Elizabeth described it this way, "Faith influencing how we can fix problems."

Christian faith influences Whiteness through advocating for others. For Rose, she looked back through her life and thought, "I've like felt like God has been calling me to advocate for others or be there for others or help others or assist others. And so social work just seemed like the best way to do so." Rose continued:

> It makes me want to stand up for like justice and advocate for other people, support other people, things that aren't White. And it makes me want to educate White people on how they should also be treating people that are not White.

Grace wanted to speak up more often but was cautious to do so: "I guess there are things I would be willing to defend but wouldn't be super strong about it vocally. Um, because of being White, I guess. With just certain topics, but I don't know." Reflecting further, Grace was unable to discern what issues or topics required her voice or participation.

Christianity Influences Followers to be Respectful

Multiple participants noted that Whiteness influenced actions by speaking cautiously. Catherine recalled situations when she was a minority: “I tend to be a little bit more reserved because I don’t want people to think that I’m offensive or I think that maybe, I don’t feel like as aware as I need to be to interact with them.” Not only does Catherine not want to embarrass herself around people of color, she also thinks harder about what she is and is not going to say.

Marie echoed Catherine’s caution: “I’m just more conscious about Black individuals and more aware of the things that I’m saying towards them and just being more courteous to them and more inclusive.” Kathleen also spoke of her caution: “I am cautious about talking to other Blacks and having that filter of making sure that I’m not saying something that might perceived as racist.” Kathleen and Marie did not want to appear racist or insensitive, so they actively monitored their speech.

Some participants noticed discomfort with Whiteness and chose to engage community in new ways. Elijah noticed that he shied away from poor or Black neighborhoods. He recalled, “If you had asked me a year ago, I would, would’ve like, there are certain parts of [Centertown] or I’m not going to go near there, just ’cause I know that they’re impoverished in there.” Whereas Elijah would not choose to live in “certain parts of a town,” but now, he would not object. Marie was more “laid back” with relationships with students of color than previously, “So it’s like looking past that and instead of being like, ‘Oh, they’re Black.’ Just being like, ‘They’re my friend.’”

Chad admitted to likely using White privilege unknowingly. As he gained awareness of his privilege, Chad recognized the tendency to say, “I’m White so I don’t have to like really know anything about other cultures. Like, you know, I can just do me and be fine.” Chad

recognized how this harmful type of thinking affected others. As a result, he asked a close friend, “I’m not seeing it the same way as you. So tell me what that is for you.” Recognizing his singular lens, Chad wanted to understand how friends experienced life.

Hannah described a similar reflective experience that she called, “monitoring herself.” Hannah described internal dialogues while walking down the street in her hometown. As she approached a Black person on the street, her internal narrative told her, “Don’t look at him. He’s probably a druggie.” She called these “panic reactions.” In her first hometown, Hannah was familiar with many different cultures. After moving away to a rural part of town, she became “rusty with people of other cultures.” Now she has to tell herself, “Stop it. Like, just stop it. They’re probably fine like I or I’m okay, hold on, look further.” She continued, “Get your head screwed on straight.” When Hannah monitors herself, she challenges internal negative dialogues about people of color. When she does not monitor herself, “I fall back into that because it’s become nature for me to like be nervous there.” Hannah described her internal dialogue similarly to learning a new language: “If you don’t practice the language, you forget it. It’s the same with people. Like, I’d forgotten how to be around people who weren’t exactly like me.” Hannah seemed to be actively challenging her Whiteness and perspectives of others.

Two participants noted that Christian faith influenced Whiteness by encouraging people to learn from differing identities. Chad recalled, “There’s a certain certain wisdom that you gain by talking to all different kinds of people.” Even more so on a Christian campus, Chad believed:

> I think understanding people, if we are to serve people, you know, if like God calls us to serve people, which he, he calls us all to serve people. I think in order to like serve people the best and to the best of our ability, like you have to understand them.

To see the world through another perspective was infinitely better for Chad than remaining in his confined understanding. Elizabeth echoed Chad's belief: "Gaining wisdom by talking with diverse people, that's just a principle that I try to live by. I mean other people have different experiences than I do and therefore they will know different things." Elizabeth learned from others through a variety of Chapel speakers. To learn from another person increased Chad and Elizabeth's experience with new perspectives.

Faithful Whiteness

During the interviews with the participants, I explored the relationship between personal faith, systemic inequity, and Whiteness in a critically conscious and critically active way. Could participants recognize privilege embedded in identity? Did participants reflect upon personal freedoms available because of Whiteness? Upon reflecting on Whiteness, did any participant change behavior towards greater service to others? Did a participant recognize unmerited creditability and reflect, "What would Jesus do with privilege? What would Jesus do if he were White in America in 2020?" During the interviews, I termed the overlap of critical consciousness, critical action, and Christian faithfulness as "faithful Whiteness." Not surprisingly, most of the participants had not heard of the term. Moreover, most believed "faithful Whiteness" to maintain White supremacy.

Most participants did not have a framework of Whiteness and Christian faithfulness. Jefferson reflected, "Just sticking to the stereotypes that people might have to White people." He continued, "Just making sure you stick to your culture or being a faithful Whiteness." Hannah echoed this idea: "I would think it meant something like your typical like stereotypical White Christian I guess. Or I guess it could mean like people who are purposefully, I guess

purposefully White." Rose said, "staying true, being White," and later added, "pumpkin-spiced lattes and leggings." Faithful Whiteness meant remaining stereotypically White.

Several participants reacted strongly to "faithful Whiteness." Catherine noted, "My mind automatically went to someone who's racist and only wants to be faithful to White people." Marie said, "It makes me cringe." She continued, "It doesn't sound like something good. I mean like I'm sure it is good but I don't know." Chad reflected on the term: "That it's hard to unpack because I, that to me seems like White being is like tried and true almost like so like faithful Whiteness. It's like loyal. Like you can't go wrong with being White." Triangle reflected on carrying the Gospel or "good news" to everyone, which is a key tenet of Evangelicalism. Many participants did not want to partake in faithful Whiteness.

Additionally, a few participants did not see the term in a completely negative light but did not take a redeemed view of Whiteness. Elijah reflected, "I think for me I would hold onto my relationship with Christ as number one, everything else I identify with can go away." Ellie reflected, "Being on top to help people. To get the word out that we can be positive and help the world. I'm using Christianity or your faith to like spread that positivity." Ellie recognized her advantage of Whiteness but still missed the mark.

A handful of participants took faithful Whiteness a step further. Lynn recalled, "It's like spiritually grounded." She continued, "I think you'd really have to study Jesus's words and sometimes take them literally." Chad recognized that being faithfully White meant that others may not like you. He recalled, "When you're doing something for Jesus, it's gonna ruffle some feathers." Chad noted that others may resist someone who is trying to be both faithful to Jesus and White but when you are doing the work of Jesus, you may need to model it. Hannah noted that remaining faithful to Whiteness meant "purposefully staying ignorant about other cultures,

purposefully removing other stuff from their field of vision." For Hannah, faithful Whiteness did not mean isolating ourselves in Whiteness.

A final response from Rose came the closest to the intersection of critical reflection and critical action. From all of the interviews, Rose captured the closest description of what I hoped "faithful Whiteness" looked like. For Rose, it was to be faithful in a real Jesus way: "Being faithful to how he created us to interact with others and be supportive to others and be empathetic and things like that." Within Rose's vagueness and uncertainty were grains of critical reflection and critical action. Recognizing that we are wired to interact with one another, we also need to support one another. We must have empathy in order to support one another. If that was not enough, we needed to do other "things like that." Interacting, supporting, and showing empathy all demonstrate a faithfulness beyond isolation, superiority, and indifference.

Summary

The current chapter outlined the five major themes that emerged from the data including (a) observed Whiteness (b) awareness of Whiteness; (c) responses to Whiteness; (d) Whiteness influence on Christianity and personal faith, and; (e) faithful Whiteness. In each major theme, excerpts and echoes demonstrated the phenomenological sub-themes within the participant interviews. In chapter six, I will outline an interpretive analysis of the themes through the lens of Freire (1973), Tatum (2017), the interplay between Christian Evangelical faith and Whiteness (Emerson & Smith, 2000; Yancey, 2010) colorblindness (Cabrera et al., 2017), White privilege (McIntosh, 1997), White identity (Helms, 1990a) and White fragility (DiAngelo, 2016, 2018).

CHAPTER 6

INTERPRETATION

Chapter 6 is an interpretive analysis of the data included in Chapters 4 and 5. Some essential literature guided this analysis. Paulo Freire (1973) introduced the concept of critical consciousness as *conscientização,* which is the interaction between critical reflection and critical action. I was curious to assess the awareness and actions associated with Whiteness within White students attending a Christian college in the Midwest: *How aware of Whiteness were the participants? How did the participants define Whiteness? What influence did Whiteness have in daily actions? How did Midwestern's college experience influence Whiteness? What role did Whiteness have in personal or collective faith experience? What role did personal or collective faith experience have in Whiteness?* Essentially, were participants aware of Whiteness? If so, did awareness lead participants to change their behavior?

In addition to Freire (1973), the interplay between Christian Evangelical faith and Whiteness (Emerson & Smith, 2000; Yancey, 2010) influenced the analysis. Research associated with colorblindness, epistemologies of ignorance, ontological expansiveness, Whiteness as property, and assumed racial comfort (Cabrera et al., 2017). White privilege (McIntosh, 1997), White identity (Helms, 1990a), and White fragility (DiAngelo, 2016, 2018) also influenced the analysis. Lastly, my own positionality influenced the analysis. As a White, Evangelical, male, heterosexual, able-bodied, affluent, educated product and employee of Christian Colleges since

1993, my own identity influenced this analysis. As a "well-meaning and woke White person," I am still capable of overlooking Whiteness and White supremacy.

In Beverly Daniel-Tatum's (2017) germinal book, *"Why Are All of the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?" And Other Conversations About Race,* Tatum described the ongoing cycle of racism as a moving walkway:

> I sometimes visualize the ongoing cycle of racism as a moving walkway at the airport. Active racist behavior is equivalent to walking fast on the conveyor belt. The person engaged in active racist behavior has identified with the ideology of our White supremacist system and is moving with it. Passive racist behavior is equivalent to standing still on the walkway. No overt effort is being made, but the conveyor belt moves the bystanders along to the same destination as those who are actively walking. But unless they are walking actively in the opposite direction at a speed faster than the conveyor belt—unless they are actively anti-racist—they will find themselves carried along with the others. (p. 91)

White college students tend to live in racially White environments and experience minimal awareness of personal race or racism (Cabrera, 2014). While Christian colleges desire to increase racial diversity (Cross & Slater, 2004; Paredes-Collins, 2009), the incentive to change is often not greater than the homogeneous moving walkway of Whiteness. Using Tatum's (2017) walkway metaphor, the data were framed within five movements. This research resulted in participants sharing personal experiences of race, Whiteness or being White. In doing so, they shared incidents where Whiteness, White identity, or race was evident. Given the work of Emerson and Smith (2000), many Christians view racism as single or isolated incidents. While incidents are singular in time, a pattern begins to develop over time as behaviors become

consistent. Like a scatter plot graph, a person or institution's conduct becomes apparent as they reflect back over their actions. Actions crystalize in a trajectory or arc. No longer are isolated incidents isolated but part of a human or institutional story. In the movements below, to actively move against Whiteness, a person or institution must have a patterned life of critical reflection and action.

Five Movements of Whiteness

Active Whiteness: Participants consciously walk forward along the walkway and actively participate in White normativity or superiority.

White Maintenance: Participants stand still but are carried forward on the moving walkway. Participants participate in White normativity without conscious awareness.

White Awareness: Participants on the walkway notice the passing Whiteness yet remain uncritical regarding the impact on their lives or communities.

White Critical Consciousness: Participants finally criticize the influence and reality of Whiteness. On the walkway, they even turn around in the opposite direction. However, participants remain pulled along by the momentum of White normativity. The critical awareness discerned in movement four provides courage and strategy to oppose Whiteness.

White Critical Action: On the walkway, participants finally move in a direction opposite of the momentum.

Active Whiteness

The first movement of Whiteness is active Whiteness. Within the cycles of Whiteness, active Whiteness involves propagating White superiority and normativity. Active Whiteness can be purposeful or accidental. In Tatum's (2017) moving walkway image, she defined these persons as actively walking forward on the walkway. Few participants reflected on personal

experiences of racists acts. It was rare that participants noted personal insensitive acts. Participants discussed White superiority primarily as a purposefully racist action. However, some participants reflected on the maintenance of supremacy through colorblindness.

Elijah shared an early childhood incident where he and a family member were driving through town in a truck. While driving, the family member threw an object at a Middle Eastern woman walking along the street. As a child, Elijah did not realize the implications of the family member's actions in a post September 11, 2001, world. Elijah also observed that older generations held "us versus them" beliefs regarding race. While Elijah was familiar with this viewpoint, he recognized how his views expanded by coming to college.

During Kathleen's interview, she referenced "colored" people or "colored" friends eight times. Using the term was natural to Kathleen. During our interview, I had the door open because the room was stuffy and the hallway was empty of foot traffic. However, after the fourth or fifth time that Kathleen used the term "colored," I shut the door so that no one would overhear our conversation. Kathleen also mentioned some familial discomfort around Black persons.

Catherine also shared about her family discomfort between a White family member and a Black fiancé. Catherine was primarily concerned that the fiancé treat Catherine's family member right. Being kind was all that mattered to Catherine, but several family members were uncomfortable with a marriage between a White family member and Black fiancé. Triangle's family also viewed poorly on Blacks and Whites dating. Triangle experienced this personally when he dated a Black woman.

Catherine heard about "White supremacy" before but was not sure what the term meant. Lynn defined supremacy as "thinking that you're better or the best, or kind of like divine intervention." Triangle shared a story of supremacy that he experienced in a church service that

echoed Lynn's definition. While preaching, the pastor shared, "Do you know why Detroit is having all these problems right now? It's because there were so many Black people there." Triangle was shocked to hear this from a pulpit. Rather than projecting the love of God, the pastor was projecting supremacy.

While participants shared incidents related to family, friends or others, the accounts above demonstrate an active participation in Active Whiteness. There is a continuum of behaviors within Active Whiteness. Not all behaviors are purposefully violent or filled with hatred. Some behaviors may be exhibited with little ill intent. However, the actions outlined above including throwing objects at people, using insensitive terminology repeatedly, and examples of subordinate perceptions of Black persons all perpetuate Whiteness. A common response to Whiteness is colorblindness. This is also included in Active Whiteness.

Within literature, Helms (2008) noted this type of White identity as contact. However, many of the participants lacked significant contact until Midwestern University. Referring to White racial consciousness, Rowe et al. (1994) labeled this behavior as *dominative* and referred to ethnocentric, stereotypical and racially superior behaviors. These behaviors can either be active or passive. Active behaviors demonstrate violence, racial slurs and discrimination while passive behaviors demonstrate avoidance and denial of racism.

Colorblindness

Not only was Whiteness weightless, color was insignificant for several participants. Jefferson reflected, "I don't think that should be the primary thing to judge people on." Catherine noted that color, "Shouldn't factor into how we love people." Triangle was desensitized to skin color. He recalled, "Don't notice the difference between people." Ellie shared a similar thought, "I think everybody is treated equal here. It's like nobody even has a color." She continued, "It's

just we're all the same." Elizabeth believed that the color of our skin was insignificant to God: "We are all human beings made in the image of God and therefore it does not matter what color our skin is or what ethnicity we come from because we are all His children and we are all equal before Him." For Elizabeth, skin color was insignificant to God.

Interlude: The Inevitability of Whiteness

The mechanics of the walkway move towards Whiteness. The momentum moves towards Whiteness. The gears, surface, momentum and jostling of the crowd move us towards Whiteness. Keeping Whiteness as only a skin color, Whiteness as an elevated status or pre-set, privilege, assumed Whiteness, White comfort, majority status, racial ignorance, racial weightlessness, White persons in many leadership roles, student programming, unfamiliarity with different cultures, color-avoidant attitudes, apprehension, defensiveness, fragility, weariness, lack interracial conversations, White Jesus, and White Christianity all maintain White normativity. Ignoring the positionality of Whiteness perpetuates Whiteness. All White persons participate consciously and subconsciously in Whiteness. All White persons benefit from White supremacy.

Most White persons do not qualify the above examples of active Whiteness. Minimal contact with other ethnicities throughout childhood, discomfort with Black persons, or colorblindness are not associated with active Whiteness or moving forward on the walkway. Moving forward and participating in a system based upon White supremacy is reserved for aggressive, torch-carrying, mask-wearing men and women associated with Alt-Right activities. Walking forward is Rebel flags in the back of pick-up trucks, swastikas and vitriol. Minimal contact, discomfort, and naivety is insignificant compared with swastikas and hate. While the difference between a person walking and a person running on the walkway is intention, we must

recognize that most White persons perpetuate Whiteness with and without purposeful intention. While lack of intention is noted, White persons must recognize the inevitability of Whiteness.

One of the challenges of Whiteness is the degree in which a person *believes* to be racist. Belief is a conscious intention to think in a certain way. Yet, one can participate in a White system without purposeful racist intent. This is a challenge for White persons and a primary cause of defensiveness, fragility, or shame. However, in order for a White person to recognize the weight of Whiteness, a person must recognize the inevitability of Whiteness while actively moving against it.

An additional challenge to Whiteness is the perceived benefit of Whiteness. Many White persons understand benefit or privilege with Whiteness as "get out of jail free" card, felt-superior status, or moving to the front of the line in all situations. They reflect, "If Whiteness is privileged, I must feel that privilege." The conclusion, then, is that since a person cannot feel a privilege, they do not have privilege: "My Whiteness never moved me to the front of the line or gave me any real benefit. Therefore, Whiteness is not privileged." However, because a person does not subjectively feel the influence of a system does not mean that the system does not benefit them in some fashion. At Midwestern University, being White was beneficial because of the normalcy of Whiteness. To be White is to be part of the status quo. Common skin color, comfort, majority status, racial weightlessness, leadership opportunities, student programming, color-avoidant attitudes, and White worship music are beneficial to White students because White students easily identify with White expressions. The *positionality* of Whiteness is centered at MU. The centrality of Whiteness is beneficial for White students.

According to previous literature (Bergerson, 2003; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Helms, 2008), minimizing the significance of skin color is colorblindness which requires equal

assessment of all people regardless of race. With a primary goal of the Civil Rights movement to judge people "not by the color of their skin but the content of their character" (Bergerson, 2003, p. 53), giving too much credence to skin color seemed to oppose Dr. King's future vision of American culture. However, colorblindness remains to judge people primarily and unconsciously through a color-framed lens. Helms (2008) rejected the idea of a colorblind society as an equitable society. In a colorblind society, recognition of racial group membership is associated with racism or prejudice. Furthermore, colorblindness affirms the myth of White normative experiences, meritocracy for all races, and White racial comfort. Only minoritized groups have a skin tone and race.

White Maintenance

In the second movement of Whiteness, participants remain motionless yet are carried forward through the momentum of the walkway. Participants participate in White normativity without conscious awareness. Whiteness was weightless. Participants reflected on the minimal influence of Whiteness either personally or institutionally.

White Weightlessness: Personal

The majority of participant comments that reflected White maintenance revolved around White weightlessness. In Tatum's (2017) walkway example, participants described maintaining Whiteness through simply standing still on the walkway. While not walking forward, participants described passivity or inattention to Whiteness. The weightlessness or inexperience of personal or institutional Whiteness passively propagated the system of advantage based upon Whiteness. Colorblindness also propagated Whiteness.

Prior to reflecting on Whiteness as a system or personal identity, several participants reflected minimally on race as a reality. Participants rarely experienced the burdens or reflected

on the benefits of race in American society. Race was mostly insignificant for White persons. Whether personal racial identity or systemic race, participants nominally experienced race personally. Race was weightless and a reality for other people. Participants observed race but rarely felt the weight of race personally or structurally. Race identified Black, Brown, or other racial identities.

White as a personal and defining characteristic was insignificant in comparison to other identity characteristics. During the classroom exercise, Lynn did not identify as White during the reflective identity exercise. Ellie could not define Whiteness, recall an experience of Whiteness, or see how race influenced her experience: “I don't think I've been influenced by my race at all.” Grace reflected, “I've never really thought about it before, but Whiteness, I just, I don't really know. I'd like to think that there's no difference between, you know, different groups of people because like based on their skin color.” Grace continued, “I've never really sat down and thought, ‘What does it mean to be White?’” Chad never considered himself as White: “I've just thought of myself as a person.” For Chad, Whiteness was “weightless.” Several participants did not realize that Whiteness was a research topic. When participants considered Whiteness, it often referred singularly to skin tone.

According to the literature, participants in White maintenance displayed behaviors consistent with Rowe et al. (1994) *dependent* or *dissonant* attitudes. Dependent attitudes demonstrate a superficial understanding of White consciousness. Usually these attitudes remain until meaningful reflection occurs. With dissonant attitudes, participants demonstrate uncertainty about Whiteness or persons of color.

White Weightlessness: Institutional

Reflecting on Midwestern University's campus, Whiteness was weightless as a community or campus identity for a number of participants. Whiteness was invisible, yet it formed a barrier protecting MU's campus from outside influence of problematic race. Ellie noted, "Here I think, since this is like a Christian college, I think that it's not really something that people have to worry about." When asked about discussing Whiteness on campus, Kathleen responded:

> I can't say I have. It's just not something you really think about often. I mean, you're aware of it, but it's just like everybody's aware of it. So you don't really have, need to feel the need to talk about it all the time.

Race was minimally significant for White students because it primarily affected "other people." Additionally, Whiteness was weightless and invisible. While Whiteness affected White students and the community they navigated, White students were primarily unaware of the burden or benefit of Whiteness.

Literature aligns with limited racial understanding and racial awareness as noted in Cabrera et al.'s (2017) epistemologies of ignorance and DiAngelo's (2016) White normativity. Ignorance of personal race or systemic race is required for White maintenance. White persons are free from burden or stress associated with race. Essentially, it is easier to ignore or remain unaware of the influence of race in American society. In comparison to students of color, White students can often exist without consideration of personal racial background or the pressing influence of Whiteness in a community. College is often the first time for White students to interact purposefully with students from different identities or backgrounds (Cabrera et al., 2017). Without a conscious recognition of race or Whiteness, race is a path that only students of

color walk. DiAngelo (2016) noted that racial ignorance perpetuates blissfulness towards race. A student's identity is a combination of identity, reference group, and ascribed identity reflections. However, his or her identity evolves with respect to the weight given to each of these reference points. With limited weight placed upon racial identity, White students remain unaware of the psychological and social implications of Whiteness.

Participants also echoed Helms's (2008) first schema of White identity. Within Helms's (2008) research, Whiteness permeated identities and culture as a smog. Systemic race was invisible within the smog. Some White persons lived entire lives without attention to Whiteness or contact with minoritized groups. This echoed the experience of some of the participants in this study. Limited exposure to minoritized groups, friends, or cultures resulted in insulated identities for White participants. In Helms's first stage of contact, participants experience race as a reality through exposure or friendships. However, until contact occurred, participants seemed blind to race or Whiteness. While Helms's first schema is contact, several participants in this research admitted to limited or no contact. It seemed that some participants were in "pre-contact" schema.

Within Christian theology, a bulwark of racial homogeneity sustains Whiteness. Throughout history, many Christians ignored systemic oppression and maintained segregated relationships and congregations. Emerson and Smith (2000) noted that contemporary Christians reject the impact of structural systems of power and oppression and focus primarily on the significance of personal relationships. Emerson and Smith also noted that Christians defend freewill determinism and meritocracy. Individualism is a primary barrier to well-meaning White people. DiAngelo (2016) echoed, "As long as I don't see myself as personally engaged in acts of racism, I am exempt from it" (p. 195). White theology prefers individuality over community identity. Because of the historic roots of Whiteness in Christian colleges, leadership and

enrollment, Christian college campuses often serve as incubators of Whiteness (P. L. Porter, 2011; Yancey, 2010).

White Awareness

Using Tatum's (2017) moving walking image, a third group of participant comments demonstrated an awareness of Whiteness. These participants are described as standing still but looking around at the passing Whiteness. These comments described some mindfulness but without criticism and revolved around several themes including Blackness as a framework to see Whiteness, advantages of Whiteness, White institutional presence, feelings of Whiteness, and Black and White church perceptions.

Blackness as a Framework to See Whiteness

During the interviews, participants reflected upon Blackness as framework before referring to Whiteness as an identity within the societal construction of race. While no participant reflected, "Because you / they are Black, I / we are White," Black was the baseline paradigm through which participants reflected racial identities. Chad was exposed to Whiteness through social media coverage of the Black Lives Matter movement: "There's a lot of talk about race from the perspective of Black Lives Matter, that whole movement and what it means to be Black." On a trip to Haiti, Grace experienced minority status for the first time. Later in a trip to the continent of Africa, Grace realized that she was White in comparison to Black.

Rose saw her Whiteness in comparison to color: "I don't think about being White until I think about someone else not being White and how that affects them negatively and how my being Whiteness affects me positively." Lynn concluded that Black identity was partially defined through Black identity solidarity: "I guess there's more community and identity in that when you're a racial minority because I feel like you probably have to like stick together in a way." In

the opposite, Whiteness lacked identity for Lynn: “I guess like sometimes I think of Whiteness as like the absence of an identity in that way because you don't use that to define yourself.” Lack of shared identity was a disadvantage of Whiteness. Hallie discerned personal Whiteness while navigating an extended experience in Africa. Whiteness existed only as a contrast to Blackness or perceived Black shared identity.

Within the literature, Gallagher noted, “Some described their sense of Whiteness as being partially veiled, becoming visible and salient only when they felt they were a racial minority” (Gallagher, 1997, p. 7). This was evident for many participants. Departing the country and experiencing race within an international context elevated the significance of race and identity. Navigating as a racial minority, participants were confronted with race in unprecedented ways. Race could not be ignored internationally in comparison to domestic experiences. Even within domestic comparison to Blackness, Lynn assumed that White identity carried less weight than Black identity. Terlouw (2011) referred to this idea as “thin” or “thick” regional identities. Thick identities were “traditional and historical rooted well-established regional identities;” whereas thin regional identities were “more transitory and focus more on economic competitiveness” (p. 707). For Lynn, Whiteness was brief or fleeting while Blackness was grounding and shared.

Advantages of Whiteness

Most participants noted advantages or benefits of Whiteness and described as a pre-set, elevated status, entitlement, or a normative template. Whiteness protected them from persecution and nasty looks at the grocery store. Whiteness provided a “leg up” on others. Whiteness granted competence and credibility with strangers. Whiteness eased interactions with law enforcement. Whiteness was safe. Whiteness was non-threatening. Whiteness offered more job opportunities and blessings. Whiteness was unchallenged throughout United States history. It is more

comfortable to be White. At Midwestern University and in all of the places that the participants lived, Whiteness was the majority. As the majority, Whiteness made the rules. In the worst forms of privilege, Whiteness was superior and hostile.

Rae summarized White privilege with the following statements: “Sometimes I think being White is easier because like all I have to do is like wake up and like if I go to work, people are like, “Oh, it's a White person. Like no big.’” She continued, “It's also like easier for us to get things. I mean like it's easier for us to get things and to earn things and to like move up in the world as where like I believe it's harder for those who are not White.” Tatum affirmed college experiences or racial incidents captured through social media often burst the bubble protecting bigotry. Feelings of guilt, shame, or anger accompany increased awareness of racism. Tatum (2017) noted as the White belief system is contradicted, “the cognitive dissonance that results is part of the discomfort that is experienced at this point in the process of development” (p. 192). Disintegration challenges epistemologies of ignorance. Challenging Whiteness requires discomfort with the status quo. Rowe et al. (1994) labelled this attitude as reactive where the White person understands race-based privileges. Some White persons may care about dismantling privilege yet make no active movements towards meaningful change.

White Institutional Presence

Campus leadership and programming were additional community identities of Whiteness. Jefferson, Rae, and Lynn all noted that most of the student leadership roles on campus were primarily filled with White students. No one noted whether or not this was representative of the campus population but the perception was one of Whiteness. Whiteness was also prevalent for many sports programs. While sports may not be viewed as a student leadership role, the public nature of sports at MU highlighted normative Whiteness on the playing fields and courts. Within

student programming, Whiteness was evident for Lynn, Rae and Triangle, who referenced all programming as “White people things.”

Dining hall and Chapel are community gathering spaces at Midwestern University. The dining hall is the collective dining room table for the campus community. The dining hall is the place where everyone is welcomed, meals are shared, stories are told, and relationships are developed. All academic majors, sports teams, program groups, and other group identities are present in the dining hall. Several residence hall floors wait for each other and depart for dinner together. In Chapel, students also sit with their residence hall floors or sports teams. Chapel is the largest room on campus. At Midwestern University, collective worship is not only a symbolic gesture of Christian community but a community development exercise through worship and teaching. MU is similar to other Evangelical Christian colleges in that Chapel is a space for the most significant campus ideas are discussed. Because of the symbolic and actual reality of the dining hall and Chapel, it is not surprising to find that participants experienced race and Whiteness in both locations.

The dining hall and chapel were primary spaces of race and Whiteness. Elijah, Marie, and Kathleen all noted the homogeneity of dining hall tables. Mixtures of White and Black students seemed rare during meal times. Meals on campus were often silos of similarity. Hannah, Hallie, Rose, Lynn, Rae, and Catherine all mentioned Chapel as a place of Whiteness. Whiteness influenced the worship music, style, and worship team leadership. The majority of the music was “White people worship” led by White people. When asked about choosing a different style of worship music, one leader noted that changing styles would be personally inauthentic and an attempt to please people rather than God. Rose noted that this line of thinking caused many minoritized students to be overlooked in Chapel. The participants may or may not accurately

describe the experiences of students of color, but it is important to note that Chapel music was at least perceived as White. Participants may have assumed that students of color identified with Gospel music or rejected the common Chapel music.

Chapel speakers brought a different element of race to the conversation on campus. Participants were pleased at the variety of speakers in Chapel. For some participants, Chapel was a great exposure to diverse ideas and preaching. As a primary large group gathering, Chapel was a tremendous influence on student exposure and experience to race. However, the required nature of Chapel often ignited student resistance.

Participants noted the difference between White speakers and Black speakers. For Hannah, this was initially noticed with the Chaplain's divergent enthusiasm for Black speakers over White speakers. While the quality of sermon was not different for Hannah, the manner of introduction was markedly more enthusiastic for a Black speaker. Visiting Black chapel speakers also often noted the racial make-up of the chapel audience. For some participants, this elevated the consciousness of Whiteness in chapel. Catherine reflected, "Even today, it was evident in chapel. There was a pastor, and he introduced himself as a pastor of a Black church and he was like, 'I look out here and I just see a lot of White people.'" During this Chapel message, the speaker encouraged students to respond with "Yes" or "Amen." However, Catherine did not respond to Chapel messages in this way but preferred to listen attentively and take notes. A Black friend close to Hallie had a more acute experience from some Chapel speakers: "She feels like a lot of our chapel speakers come in and are like targeting the White students and not like everyone as a whole." For Catherine, Chapel sometimes made her feel "looked down upon" because she did not match the speaker's enthusiasm. While it may not specifically elevate or

highlight Whiteness, Chapel is a place where race-related observations and experiences occur at Midwestern University.

Campus racial climate and White institutional presence were referenced within the literature related to race and Whiteness. Campus culture was defined in numerous ways including beliefs, rituals, and ceremonies (Swidler, 1986) and the actual or aspirational character of an organization (Manning, 2014). Culture is a collection of actions that draws people together. Culture also includes gossip, daily patterns, worldviews, or stories that perpetuate institutional traditions. Turner (1994) defined campus climate as:

> the ambient, affective character of a place—the conditions that evoke feelings, either positive or negative, from the people in the organization. Climate is to the affective aspect of human beings in an organization what air is to the physical aspect. Climate is an organization's emotional atmosphere. People breathe it. (p. 355)

Sustaining a culture predicated on Whiteness maintains systemic preference for White students and White ideas. College campuses often have a culture predicated upon Whiteness.

According to Hurtado et al. (1998) four dimensions defined a campus climate including (a) historic legacy of inclusion or exclusion of racial or ethnic groups; (b) structural diversity or the numerical representation of various racial and ethnic groups (including staff, faculty and students); (c) perceptions and attitudes between and among groups define the psychological climate of an institution; and (d) behavioral climate of campus intergroup relations. Minoritized groups are pushed to the margins when campus climate is predicated upon Whiteness.

In Chapel, Whiteness seems to take center stage regarding worship songs and worship song leadership. Whether or not this is purposeful or accidental, according to the participants, Whiteness is superior regarding Chapel music. Minoritized voices and experiences are either

overlooked or pushed to the side. Participants recognized the diversity in speakers and appreciated the variety of voices. Some participants, however, were frustrated when the speakers highlighted the primary White racial make-up of the audience too many times.

Turner's (1994) research indicated that many minoritized students do not find a positive level of comfort on many university campuses (p. 356). In fact, one participant described the campus climate as exclusive: "We feel that we're a guest in someone else's house, that we can never relax and put our feet up on the table" (Turner, 1994, p. 356). Furthermore, guests stay in a guest room, have little to no family history, remain on their best behavior, and are neither recognized in the photographs nor the scents of the house (Turner, 1994). Students interpreted the physical and organizational dimensions of the campus environment including objects like mascots, buildings, artwork, and building names through a majority White lens (Cabrera et al., 2016). While Cabrera et al. (2016) did not mention worship or Chapel experiences, it was the sense of the participants that Chapel elevated Whiteness.

Feelings of Whiteness

Participants discussed many feelings associated with interactions with students of color, conversations with racial undertones and sharing thoughts about race. Few participants described comfortable and frequent interactions with peers of color. Hallie, Kathleen, Ellie, and Rose all described strong apprehension or fear when discussing matters of race and interacting with students of color. It was easier to avoid all threats of offending someone or hurting someone's feelings by remaining silent. Conversations about race seemed like delicate minefields with legitimate hazards.

The four women did not want to offend, say the wrong things, speak for a student of color, or say something out of line. Offending someone in a race-related way, while likely to be

accidental, was irrecoverable. Rose also noted that if I as the researcher was not a White person, she would not speak openly to me about her experiences: “If you are not White and I was talking to you about this, I would not be as open about things because I feel uncomfortable that I would say something wrong.” Hallie continued, “I think a big part of it is that we don't really think we're doing anything wrong, and so we don't really want to be told that.” Added to their uncertainty, several participants did not know when to use or not use common terms such as African-American. In the end, Elijah gauges what to say based upon the relationship while Catherine chose to keep her mouth closed.

Hannah shared experiences of feeling defeated. She shared that once a person is labeled “racist,” it is difficult to recover from that label. “It's like I can't say anything wrong,” she reflected. While Hannah believed that labels impact other races, it is very sticky for White people to shake. This often occurred in settings when she made a joke. Hannah continued, “If you crack that same joke thinking that you're saying something funny in a group of African American students, and you get dead panned. It's, ‘Oh, crap. Was something I said offensive?’” Hannah felt criticized for her jokes before. She was uncertain if her jokes were inappropriate or just not a funny joke when she is in a mixed group of students.

DiAngelo (2016) defined resistance to conversations about race, multicultural training sessions, or emotional resistance to Whiteness as White fragility. DiAngelo discerned that minimal amounts of racial stress were intolerable and caused Whites to strongly argue, turn silent, or physically depart the racialized situation. However, what the participants described above may not clearly be defined as fragility. Some participants were willing to engage in the conversation about race or with students of color but were apprehensive to say something offensive.

Fragility is partially defined through a closed-off posture, mental avoidance, physical departure, or fighting back. Student comments did not reflect fragility as much as apprehension or fatigue. DiAngelo (2016) noted the stamina required for engaging in conversations on race and moving through Whiteness: "[Whites] have not had to build the cognitive or affective skills or develop the stamina that would allow for constructive engagement across racial divides" (p. 248). The participants above may lack the endurance or experience to press through apprehension. However, communities must recognize the perceived high stakes of inappropriate comments or interactions—whether accidental or on purpose—for the participants. Some participants legitimately lack the intuition, sensitivity, or skills for intercultural dialogue while other participants lack the courage to press into the relationship or apologize for hurting someone.

Flynn (2015) offered a different response for White students engaged in racial awareness: White fatigue. For Flynn (2015), White fatigue does not compare to racial battle fatigue or White person fatigue experienced by Minoritized groups interacting with White persons and working in predominantly White spaces. White fatigue

> names the dynamic of White students who intuitively understand or recognize the moral imperative of antiracism (primarily viewed as individual racism); however, they are not yet situated to fully understand the complexity of racism and how it functions as an institutional and systemic phenomenon. (p. 115)

As White students navigated through White racial identity development, students learn that racism is more than individualized racial acts of hatred. Instead, racism is a systemic and structural challenge filled with complexity. Tension occurs when a student moves from individualized racism to structural racism. Without experience examining racism as a systemic

concern, students fatigue at the unsettling reality. This fatigue in no way compares to the fatigue experienced by marginalized persons.

In order to interrupt the normative belief and practice of hegemonic Whiteness, critical consciousness is required. White students attending Christian colleges must examine influence of Whiteness on their identities, beliefs, and activities. Not only should White students critically reflect on beliefs influenced by Whiteness, but White students must also reflect on practices that challenge White normativity. Christian college students must work through Whiteness rather than normalize Whiteness (Cabrera, 2014). Paulo Freire (1973) introduced the concept of critical consciousness as conscientização. Conscientização is the interaction between critical reflection and critical action.

Critical Reflection

The fourth movement within Whiteness is critical reflection. Several participants discussed critical reflection or critical consciousness. In Tatum's (2017) moving walkway example, these students described instances or patterns of turning around on the walkway. While they may not be actively moving in the opposite direction of the walkway, they demonstrated critical reflection on the Whiteness as they experienced it. However, critical awareness may be described as actively moving in opposition to Whiteness. These participants described the inadequacy of colorblindness, critical reflection as a research participant, friendships as a means of critical reflection, Divine value of diversity, and faithful Whiteness.

Inadequacy of Colorblindness

Several participants recognized the inadequacy of colorblindness and appreciated the diversity of Midwestern University. Lynn believed colorblindness was negative because it identified everyone as White, which ignores differences. Hallie appreciated variety in color

because it was part of God's plan for humanity. She reflected, "I love diversity because I think that that's what Heaven will look like." Hallie continued, "I think that it's really beautiful when you can look at all of these different people and know, oh, we're all creating, created in God's image." Hallie also noted that ignoring color disadvantages a person's identity, history, and value of a person: "You'll see the diversity and you'll see the importance of like what every person brings." Hannah echoed the inadequacy of colorblindness and reflected: "If you ignore color, usually the next step is you ignore cultural backgrounds, which you can't ignore cultural backgrounds and hope to actually understand a person." In the end, our skin tone and diverse experiences are the way God identified people. To see color, for Hallie and Hannah was critical. Race should not be ignored or minimized.

Chad, Rose, and Hannah noted that a disadvantage of the Midwestern University community was ignorance of race. All three participants were nestled in a campus environment that promoted ignorance to race. Chad believed that students were not educated on racially relevant topics. Instead, the community ignored the weight of race. In comparison to Chad's experience outside of campus, he travelled extensively which increased his awareness of race and Whiteness. Rose and Hannah echoed Chad's critique of the campus community. Rose rooted her concern in MU students' inability to navigate cross-cultural relationships. Hannah's concerns were even simpler: pronouncing people's names correctly without embarrassment.

Student development theory (Quaye & Baxter-Magolda, 2007; Reason & Evans, 2007) and practice highlights the necessity to recognize the diversity in one another as a form of healthy social and personal development. Student development programs, leadership opportunities and conversations with peers provide opportunities to challenge White identity or develop a more multicultural perspective. Quaye and Baxter-Magolda (2007) used intercultural

maturity as a framework to understand students' developmental levels in cross-racial dialogues. The authors illustrated how the Learning Partnerships Model (LPM) enables educators to promote racial self-understanding and intercultural maturity among students through intergroup dialogue and listening partners (Quaye & Baxter-Magolda, 2007). Whiteness was challenged through interpersonal relationships and listening to peers discuss diverse life experiences and cultures.

Critical Reflection as a Participant

Several students admitted to participating in the research study as an exercise in critical reflection. Participants were open to reflection, self-criticism, and exploring a previously unexplored topic. Jefferson noted, "I just wanted to like see what questions you were going to ask and like have some like introspection of like what does it mean to be White on a Christian campus?" Hallie chose to participate in the study because Whiteness was an unexplored personal topic: "I think that the topic and concept of it is really interesting because I don't think that we're asked these questions very often." Elizabeth, who also defended colorblindness above, also hoped the interview would be interesting: "Somebody who's doing a study on Whiteness in the middle of the Midwest where the population is predominantly White, I guess it was just unusual enough that it kind of caught my interest." Catherine felt similarly, about reflecting on Whiteness: "I've never heard anybody study Whiteness before. I thought that was really cool. That kind of made me want to do the interview." For Rae, the research required reflection on Whiteness. Specifically, Rae was curious about, "What advantages do I really have for being White and for being Christian and for being on this campus? So that's, that's really why I wanted to do it 'cause I just wanted to like figure it out." Figuring out Whiteness piqued the curiosity of several participants.

Freire (1973) noted that in order to engage in liberatory praxis, people "must perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform" (p. 49). To critically reflect and explore a person's identity, positionality and experience is necessary for critical consciousness. For the participants above, they may not have explored Whiteness thoroughly, this research project offered new paths and guiding questions of self-discovery. Cabrera (2012) described this form of reflection as dissonance or White racial agitation. In order to prevent the continued normalization of Whiteness and racial oppression, Whiteness is redeemed through personal reflection and confrontation. According to Leonardo (2002), White racial agitation requires students come to terms with a reconstructed identity that re-articulates Whiteness.

Reflection is required for students to *work through Whiteness* (Cabrera, 2012). In doing so, students become aware of racial privileges and develop the agency and dedication to struggle against normative Whiteness. Working through Whiteness requires consistent question consideration of, "How do my actions reinforce or challenge Whiteness (Cabrera, 2012)? White racial comfort glosses over racial realities for many students of color and awakening to Whiteness moves students from apathy to understanding. Cabrera et al. (2016) called for "an assertive pedagogy of racial agitation . . . .The challenge therefore becomes making the invisible visible, while creating campus structures that foster targeted and intentional racial discomfort for White students as a means of promoting both individual growth and racial justice" (p. 132). Racial agitation may not be comfortable but it is necessary for the growth process. Helms (2008) noted that people in the fifth schema of White Identity Development, *immersion / emersion* sought out discussion groups (or research projects) to better understand Whiteness and criticizing Whiteness.

Friendships as a Means of Critical Reflection

Living in a diverse learning environment and developing friendships were a primary mechanism of consciousness and conversation for several participants. Elijah, Rose, Hallie, Elizabeth, and Chad all noted friendships as influential in awareness of race and Whiteness. The proximity of a close friend willing to discuss race and Whiteness or a roommate from a minority experience raised awareness of race and Whiteness because of the counter-experience to the White participants. Elijah found his roommate to be gracious enough to teach Elijah about his Middle Eastern home culture. This friendship developed to the point that Elijah confronted a peer regarding insensitive comments towards a shared Minority friend. Without the friendship with his roommate, Elijah may not have been aware or comfortable enough to confront insensitive comments.

Rose was initially apprehensive to discuss race when she arrived at Midwestern University. As Rose asked questions to close friends like, “What do you want me to call you?” Rose appreciated opportunities to sit and talk. Several friends told her, “Ask me whatever you want.” After spending time on campus, Rose felt less apprehension to talk about race.

Two participants shared about increased empathy through friendships with students of color. Elizabeth shared about a friend who does not speak English as a first language: “It's really hard to have to speak English all the time.” Elizabeth reflected, “I'd never be able to speak their mother tongue.” Chad experienced a similar reflection. As he noticed his privilege in comparison to peers on campus: “I've been able see that where I come from is not necessarily what the world is.” Chad is open to the reality that not everyone comes from similar access and opportunities.

Literature supports the role of a multicultural educational environment and learning from diverse identities. However, this multicultural educational environment must not centralize

Whiteness. Multicultural education must not exist to educate the White students of matters of race and identity. Emerson and Yancey (2011) stressed mutual obligation as a means to integrate diverse cultures and resolve tensions within church communities, but this concept is applicable to higher education. More than giving orders or mandated sensitivity training, mutually obligated organizations grow through respect and are created through collaborative efforts. Smothered cultural distinctives will not address multicultural concerns. Integration requires active listening to develop strategies to address concerns for all identities.

When a diverse learning environment is present, multicultural education influences multicultural understanding in all students but especially in White students (Cabrera, 2012; Ortiz & Rhoads, 2000). Whether students focus on self-awareness, cultural humility, eagerness to learn about diverse cultures, desire to make relational connections, or development of an increased multicultural outlook, students need opportunities to engage diverse cultures and experiences and be more aware of systemic privileges and disadvantages.

Cabrera et al. (2016) found that structured guidelines are necessary for healthy multicultural education. Ground rules include the open exchange of ideas, resist racism, and acknowledge that periods and feelings of frustration are normal. Unlearning socialized racism requires persistence and perseverance. While safe spaces are critical for conversation, this does not entitle participants to racial comfort (Cabrera et al., 2016). Experiences that develop racial awareness are cross-racial interactions, a humanizing teaching and learning, and minoritized-affirming experiences. Whites not only become aware of realities of students of color but also become aware of their own racial backgrounds.

Student development theory and practice also focuses on the relational and social elements of personal development. Programs and conversations often provide opportunities to

challenge White identity or develop a more multicultural perspective. Quaye and Baxter-Magolda (2007) used intercultural maturity as a framework for understanding students' developmental levels in cross-racial dialogues. Whiteness could be challenged through interpersonal relationships and genuinely listening to the experiences of peers.

Divine Value of Diversity

Within Christianity, persons follow moral and religious guidelines that demonstrate a follower of Christ from someone who is not purposefully following Christ. The transformative work of becoming more like Jesus is called "discipleship." Willard (1988) referred to this work as becoming "like Christ in character and in power and thus realize our highest ideals of well-being and well-doing" (p. ix). As a follower of Christ, someone's entire identity and purpose should be influenced by the life-changing work of Christ. This research asked participants to reflect on the influence of Whiteness on personal belief and practice. This research also asked participants about the influence of personal belief and practice on personal Whiteness. In doing so, participants reflected God's creative work of diversity, the church should be a diverse place, celebrating diversity, and beliefs about the influence of race on the Christian faith.

Regarding the influence of Whiteness and Christianity, participants noted an overarching influence of Whiteness yet offered minimal awareness of the actual impact of Whiteness. Most if not all pictures of Jesus were White, Bible characters were White, saints and historic Christian figures were all White. Rose noted that this was likely the influence of European or White artists. Chad, however, noted that Jesus was likely not White and Adam and Eve likely lived on the continent of Africa and assumed to be Black. Participants had limited to no exposure to Christianity outside of a White identity.

Grace, Chad, Marie, and Rose all reflected on the perceived differences between Black churches and White churches. The primary differences included worship style, worship music and preaching style. Participants assumed that Black churches were more enthusiastic while singing and listening to the preacher. Only Grace shared a personal experience of a Black church while on a trip to Haiti. Chad mentioned a close friend who attended a Black church. This echoes the literature surrounding Evangelical church participation. Whites primarily attend White homogeneous churches. White church growth experts follow cultural separation norms. The homogeneous unit growth principle maintained primarily White churches throughout the latter half of the 20th century into the present day (DeYoung et al., 2003). Within church growth movements, segregation on Sunday morning is a strategy for growth rather than a statement of conviction.

Triangle, Elizabeth, Rose, and Elijah all reflected on the value of diversity to God. All noted that God created living creatures different because God liked diversity. Elijah believed that God celebrated diversity instead of simply "liking" it. Hallie referred to God's creative work in humans as carrying the Divine Image, which expresses a portion of God's totality. The Divine Image in each of us also resulted in equality between one another. No one person or collection of people are greater than the other persons. However, the Divine Image in everyone did not prevent missionaries from requiring converts to not only accept Christ but also assimilate to White culture, Hannah reflected.

Elizabeth noted that Whiteness did not matter with regard to personal sinfulness. "We are all sinners in need of grace," she reflected. Marie believed that Whiteness and Christianity were inseparable. Elijah offered an opposing nuance and recognized that Whiteness and Elijah's personal faith do not actually go together. Whiteness was not required to be a Christian.

Triangle, Lynn, Elizabeth, Rose, and Grace believed that Christianity should influence for the greater good instead of maintaining racism. Triangle criticized the White church's long-standing prohibition of interracial dating. Triangle experienced shame for interracial dating and recognized the flimsy Biblical defense for same-race relationships. Triangle recognized how historic Biblical interpretation limited healthy personal relationships. Rose, also, was disappointed in the White church's lack of action to mitigate racism. Christians have the capacity to do more to end racism and support marginalized persons. Instead, Rose believed that White Christians often perpetuated racist attitudes and actions or did not see racism as a problem to confront.

Literature aligned with Rose and Triangle's concerns. Personal salvation is an essential element of Evangelical faith (Bebbington, 2005). Not only is personal conversion essential but Emerson and Smith (2000); Emerson et al. (1999); and Hinojosa and Park (2004) noted that White Evangelicals hold three additional beliefs referred to as "Religio-Cultural Tools in the White Evangelical Kit." The tools are accountable freewill individualism, relationalism that centralizes one-on-one interactions and a relationship with Jesus, and antistructuralism or the rejection of systemic structural influences.

Applying this framework, Rose or Triangle can work out their salvation through focusing on personal piety and good relationships with one another. Societal issues such as racism or poverty are the result of poor personal choices, broken relationships, or a fallen world. Liberal media exaggerate systemic issues. Persons stirring the race problem elevate racism. A White Christian only need to focus on right attitudes, singular relationships, personal talents, intelligence, work ethic, moral character, and personal motivation. Within a larger church gathering, the homogeneous unit growth principle maintains separate Sunday morning worship

experiences. Believers do not cross racial, ethnic, or class barriers when entering the sanctuary. Congregants are more comfortable, programs are unified, and growth is possible because of niche evangelism and discipleship. Rather than viewing race and diversity as God's creativity and required for a full expression of God's work in this world, diversity is a challenge to overcome.

Critical Action

The final movement of Whiteness is critical action. Within this research, few participants shared experiences of actively moving against the walkway of White normativity. While participants demonstrated some criticism and reflection within the critical reflection movement, most participants did not "know what to do about Whiteness." Not knowing what to do about Whiteness is developmentally appropriate for many White students. Several participants noted that MU was the most diverse place they have ever lived. It is not uncommon for a White student to experience increased diversity for the first time at college even if that college is primarily White. Helms (2008) noted the beginning schema as contact. Several participants may be experiencing contact for the first time at MU. Few participants connected critical reflection to a changed behavior. Aspirationally, several participants reflected on the overlap of faith and Whiteness.

Lynn believed that Christians are called to stand up for others, especially persons without a voice. Rose believed in advocacy, which is partially why she chose to enter the field of social work. Grace knew that she needed to speak up more often but did not know the best way to do so. Minimally, participants noted that Christianity influenced Whiteness through respectful conversations, avoiding offending others, and monitoring self-talk about "certain parts of town" or Black persons in public. Hannah described, "monitoring herself" as she dialogued internally

about cross-racial interactions. Recognizing the tension of "panic reactions" and "having her head on straight." Hannah described this as learning a new language that required practice.

Responding to the idea of "faithful Whiteness," the notion sounded racist and mostly foreign. While I recognized an authentic expression of Christian influence over all of a person's identity, including Whiteness, most participants did not have a framework to explore Whiteness and Christian faithfulness. Jefferson, Hannah, and Rose noted that faithful Whiteness sounded stereotypically White or maintaining Whiteness at all costs. Catherine believed the term to be racist because it required faithfulness to only White people. Triangle wondered if it was a term of conversion. For these participants, the emphasis lay in *Whiteness* rather than *faithful*. Whiteness superseded faithfulness.

Elijah and Ellie discerned faithful Whiteness in a more positive light. Elijah believed that Christ's identity superseded all other identities, including Whiteness. "Everything else I identify with can go away," he reflected. Ellie believed that faithful Whiteness referred to "being on top to help people." While Elijah was correct in the supremacy of Christ's identity for the believer, the present reality is still influenced by Whiteness. Ellie recognized her advantages but still missed the mark. Lynn and Chad noted that faithful Whiteness was a form of spiritual groundedness. If a follower of Christ took Christ's words to heart, they would live out faithful Whiteness. Chad recognized that being faithfully White meant that others may resist the good work of redemption.

A final response from Rose came the closest to the intersection of critical reflection and critical action. From all of the interviews, Rose captured the closest description of what I hoped "faithful Whiteness" looked like. For Rose, it was to be faithful in a real Jesus way: "Being faithful to how he created us to interact with others and be supportive to others and be

empathetic and things like that." Within Rose's vagueness and uncertainty were grains of critical reflection and critical action. Recognizing that we are wired to interact with one another. We also need to support one another. We must have empathy in order to support one another. If that was not enough, we needed to do other "things like that." Interacting, supporting, and showing empathy all demonstrate a faithfulness beyond isolation, superiority, and indifference.

Summary

Chapter six was an interpretive analysis of the data included in chapters four and five. Using Paulo Freire's (1973) concept of *conscientização*, which is the interaction between critical reflection and critical action, I was curious to assess the awareness and actions associated with Whiteness within White students attending a Christian college in the Midwest. Were research participants aware of Whiteness? If so, did awareness lead participants to change their behavior? In addition to Freire, Tatum's (2017) germinal book, the ongoing cycle of racism as a moving walkway seemed to be a valuable image to frame the five movements of Whiteness. Many participants shared experiences within the first few movements of Active Whiteness, White Maintenance, and White Awareness. A minority of the participants demonstrated the final two frames: White Critical Consciousness and White Critical Action. The next chapter will outline some implications and applications for higher education. Additionally, the next chapter will share some ideas for future research, limitations, and a few metaphors to capture normative Whiteness and strategies to move in opposition to normative Whiteness.

CHAPTER 7

IMPLICATIONS

As stated in the introduction, the normative position of Whiteness in Christian higher education is similar to the normative position of right-handedness in America. While right-handed technology and historic preference for right-handedness is not exclusive in all contexts, it demonstrates a preference for right-handed performance, epistemology, and normalcy. To perform correctly is to perform right-handed. To think correctly is to think as a right-handed engineer thinks. To fit into the culture, one must fit in right-handedly. To perform, think or assume normalcy outside of right-handedness is foreign at best and historically punishable at worst. This often leads to left-handed accommodation. Left-handed musicians, students, athletes, and skilled workers must develop left-handed habits to accommodate right-handed technology and training. Left-handed persons must transpose and translate right-handedness into left-handedness. As an institution of both education and reflection, Midwestern University is well situated to introduce and reflect on Whiteness with MU students. Christian higher education institutions often perform, think, and define normalcy through a White lens just as American culture prefers right-handedness .

Implications for Students

Many participants experienced Whiteness as weightless or invisible. Most participants minimally reflected on the influence of Whiteness on day-to-day experiences. Helms (2008)

noted this type of White identity as contact and common for college-aged persons. When perceived, participants viewed Whiteness as a singular and isolated element of identity. Participants in this study primarily viewed Whiteness as an individual reality. The implications of weightless and invisible Whiteness for an individual is maintenance of White normativity. Without critical reflection and critical action, a White person moves subconsciously on the walkway of Whiteness. Several strategies including working through Whiteness, developing a critically reflective identity group and interpreting Whiteness through Christian faith can assist in increasing critical consciousness and critical action.

Work Through Whiteness

White students must individually *work through* Whiteness rather than normalize Whiteness (Cabrera, 2014). Critical interrogation moves students from ignorance and defenders of the status quo to respectful relationships, with preference for one another, and commitment to equity. In working through Whiteness, students exert personal effort to develop a non-racist identity. White students cannot simply rely on peers of color or change at the expense of students of color. White students must read, reflect, and experience the critical work needed for identity development.

Helms's White identity model (1990a, 1990b, & 2008) serves four purposes for White people: (a) accept proper responsibility and actions to challenge oppression and racism, (b) discern the impact of racism on Whites and minoritized groups, (c) analyze racism through a model of White racial identity development, and (d) learn alternate ways of being and doing within a multi-racial context. Helms (2008) noted, "The way to overcome aversive racism is to make explicit one's biases and then actively attempt to counteract them" (p. 28). Helms (2008) developed a two-phase process of identity development: the internalization of racism and

evolution of a non-racist White identity. White students must move from internalized racism to an equitable view of our inter-relatedness. No longer can White students perceive their experience as the normative or singular experience.

Cabrera (2012) noted that students working through Whiteness are not only aware of their racial privileges, but they also develop the agency and dedication to struggle against Whiteness. Working through racism means constantly asking the question: *How do my actions reinforce or challenge racism?* (Cabrera, 2012). White racial comfort glosses over racial realities for many students of color. Awakening requires dissonance to move from apathy to understanding. Cabrera et al. (2016) called for "an assertive pedagogy of racial agitation . . .. The challenge therefore becomes making the invisible visible, while creating campus structures that foster targeted and intentional racial discomfort for White students as a means of promoting both individual growth and racial justice" (p. 132). Challenging Whiteness requires discomfort with the status quo.

Students can be exposed to Whiteness through extracurricular programs. Campus experiences and conversations such as films (Dean-Ruzicka, 2013; Movies Recommended by White Privilege Conference, 2013; Wortham, 2019), lectures (*Tim Wise on White Privilege: Racism, White Denial & the Costs of Inequality*, 2008), book discussions, art shows (The Kitchen, n.d.), and Chapel messages can create opportunities to increase awareness of Whiteness.

McCready (2004) noted many challenges of de-centralizing Whiteness in an academic setting. One recommendation is to assess the identity make-up of clubs and organizations. This provided locations of Whiteness and other shared identities prominent within segments of the

academic community. The Whiteness Project (Whiteness Project, n.d.) provides valuable community conversations regarding Whiteness.

Critically Reflective Identity Group

Just as the institution must raise awareness of Whiteness, students must also raise awareness of Whiteness with one another. For many participants in this research, Whiteness was hidden and non-consequential. One strategy to raise awareness and discuss creative solutions is to create a critically reflective identity group. Blitz and Kohl (2012) noted that, "Race-based caucusing can be an effective method for social service agencies to highlight race as they address cultural responsiveness. Caucusing can function to promote antiracist practice, advance organizational change, and support the personal and professional growth of the group members" (p. 482). Participants in this research noted the tremendous apprehension about discussing race or discussing the influence of race. In a structured discussion group, White students can have more freedom to speak openly and receive feedback from peers. The purpose is to practice awareness of Whiteness and race in order to engage Whiteness and race outside of the group. Not all students need a secluded space to discuss Whiteness, but many students may feel more comfortable in an isolated group. Resources including Helsel (2017), DiAngelo (2016), or Fernando (2016) can serve as discussion guides.

As with the institution-wide assessment of Whiteness, MU can create collaborative student conversations to assess Whiteness. Student leaders, alumni, and key faculty and student development professionals can reflect and identify the White campus ethos. Fernando (2016) and Freire (1973) stressed the significance of humility when discussing identities and experiences. White college students may not share many similar experiences of racism or lack of privilege that many college peers experience. To assume a shared experience or minimizing a difficult

experience for a student of color, White students often dehumanize the racism experienced by peers. Authentic dialogue cannot exist without humility (Freire, 1973). A collaborative student group can explore Whiteness on campus through the following questions: *Where is Whiteness evident? Where is Whiteness hidden? Where do students of color resonate with the campus ethos? Where is the campus climate "chilly" towards students of color? Where is the campus climate "warm" towards Whiteness? Where is Whiteness addressed within the curriculum and programs? Where is Whiteness normative within the curriculum and programs? What does a mutually obligatory campus look like for all students?*

Persevering Through White Fatigue

Persevering through fatigue can help a student to determine a new course of action rooted in equality and sensitivity. Fatigue can ease a student back into an insensitive racialized reality where Whiteness remains supreme. For Helms (2008), perseverance is required to develop a non-racist White identity, which begins with exploring the internalized racism that overcomes the tendency to be oblivious or neutral toward racial issues, protects a privileged status, and maintains the status quo of a racialized society. The evolution of a non-racist White identity (pseudo-independence, immersion/emersion, and autonomy) requires challenging racial socialization norms, taking a realistic self-appraisal, and considering opportunities to confront racism and oppression. As students become aware of the weight of Whiteness, the inevitability of White privilege and the system of advantage based upon Whiteness, students may lack the courage to persist. *Is anything good about being White? Should I keep learning about Whiteness? Am I an inevitable racist? Am I an inevitable oppressor?* The barrage of questions may result in paralyzation.

While researching *Ubuntu*, the South African notion of "I am because we are" at the University of Pretoria, South Africa, autoethnographers Muller and Trahar (2016) studied the influence of Whiteness on research subjectivity. Both identify as White but come from different epistemological points of view. One participant approaches research with a history of colonialism while the other participant is rooted in a history of apartheid. As a research methodology, autoethnography connects "self with others, self with the social, and self with the context" (Njunjuri et al., 2010, p. 3). Muller and Trahar (2016) concluded that a person's identity is better understood as "the intersecting and ever-changing dynamics of society and context" (p. 6). Identity is a fluid process of intersecting realities such as privilege and access in comparison to burden and baggage. We simultaneously oppress and reject oppression. In other words, *we are in a constant state of becoming and unbecoming*: "In this circular process, we sometimes make progress but at other times also fall again into the moulds of oppressive systems" (p. 6). In a circular process, White people are *recovering* from Whiteness and *becoming* White.

Whiteness and Personal Faith

As with institutional assessment of Whiteness and theology, it is critical that White students attending a Christian college reflect on the influence of Whiteness on personal faith. With faith as an all-encompassing guide to contemplation and action for the Christian, faith must influence a Christian's identity. Recognizing the inadequacy of colorblindness, choosing to participate in discussions to critically reflect on Whiteness, purposefully developing friendships to raise awareness of diversity and challenge Whiteness, recognizing the Divine value of diversity not just Whiteness, monitoring self-talk, interacting respectfully with others, and empathy all describe the overlap of Christian faith and Whiteness. Additional movements from isolation to community, from toxic certainty to dialogue, from arrogance to repentance, and from

indifference to love demonstrate Whiteness informed by faith. Lamenting the past, seeking forgiveness, and discerning methods of reconciliation will all reveal a life influenced by faith instead of Whiteness.

Repentant Whiteness

During the interviews, I discussed "faithful Whiteness" with the participants. As noted in the results, many students viewed this term in a negative light. Participants believed that faithful Whiteness referred to remaining faithful to the tenets of Whiteness rather that Christian tenets superseding Whiteness. Throughout this research, I moved from faithful Whiteness to "redeemed Whiteness." Redeemed Whiteness is the influence of Christianity *over* Whiteness. In redeemed Whiteness, Christianity *supersedes* Whiteness. A redeemed White person exhibits a personal faith, community identity, and acts in a manner that promotes equality and rejects inequality. However, I believe that this term falls short of my hope. The burden and barriers associated with Whiteness cannot be redeemed nor is there a "faithful" version of Whiteness. Whiteness as systemic preference for White culture, epistemology, and faith cannot be redeemed. We can only *repent* of Whiteness. To repent is to move in the opposite direction.

In the Old Testament Scriptures, the most common word for repent is *sub* and is commonly translated as "turn" or "return" (Dunnett, 1997). In the New Testament of the Scriptures, the common term is *metanoia* which often referred to "change of mind" or "regret / remorse" (Dunnett, 1997). The prophet Ezekiel called the people of Israel to "Repent! Turn from your idols and renounce your detestable practices" (Ezekiel 14:6). Here, the prophet called people to repent *from* or to *change direction* away from evil. In the book of Acts, two instances (3:19 and 26:20) of *metanoia* included *eipistrepho* which altered the meaning to include repentance that leads to conversion and "deeds consistent with repentance." Here, we see the

behaviors of critical reflection and critical action as constant patterns of behavior. Vigilantly checking our motives, thoughts, feelings, presuppositions, attitudes, actions, postures, spending, jokes, media consumption, and words is the only way to live a repentant life. We must demonstrate a life *moving away from* the barriers and burdens of Whiteness.

To repent may also mean to start completely over. Tisby (2019) noted the number of changes that modern seminaries made to incorporate diversity including scholarships for students of color, changing course offerings and readings to better reflect diverse voices and adding faculty of color. However, some institutions may be so thoroughly shaped by Whiteness that they are unable to untangle the theology, academics, and program from Whiteness. Starting fresh with a new board of trustees, faculty, staff and curriculum gives an institution the opportunity to embed racial equality into the total identity of the University.

What does Repentant Whiteness look like for the individual? Repentant Whiteness is thoroughly Christian and recognizes the personal and systemic redemptive work required of all followers of Christ. Repentant Whiteness follows the example of Jesus Christ who laid aside privilege to serve humanity (Philippians 4). Repentant Whiteness recognizes inevitable privilege and utilizes it in a redemptive way that serves others. Repentant Whiteness does not hoard seats at the table, decision-making roles, history or collective epistemology. Repentant Whiteness is mutually obligatory with differing identities. Repentant Whiteness seeks out opportunities to learn and grow from diverse identities. Repentant Whiteness recognizes the daily diligent work needed to dismantle the system of advantage based upon race.

Repentant Whiteness also looks like engagement with racism in the here and now. During the Spring of 2020, the United States was burning in every major city across because of the murders of Aumaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd. Previous incidents where the

lives of Natasha McKenna, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Walter Scott, Alton Sterling, Philando Castile, Alberta Spruill, Rekia Boyd, Shantel Davis, Shelley Frey, Kayla Moore, Kyam Livingston, Miriam Carey, Michelle Cusseaux, and Tanisha Anderson were taken by the hands of police and anti-Black violence. Repentant Whiteness cannot pass on the other side of the street while Black lives are murdered. Passing on the other side of the street is a luxury for White folks. Repentant Whiteness cannot be silent to injustice. Silence is a luxury for White folks. Repentant Whiteness recognizes that Black Lives Matter because many Black lives have been extinguished easily and with the protection of local authorities. Repentant Whiteness grieves the loss of Black lives.

Alschuler (1986) applied Paulo Freire's theory to create a world in which it is easier to love. His application offers a path forward with repentant Whiteness. Alschuler's (1986) work referenced Freire's stages of creating loving situations. The first stage is magical conforming where persons view problems as inevitable or unchangeable facts of reality. Insisting that the problem remains requires magical explanation such as, "That's the way it's always been." Oftentimes, persons feel hopeless because nothing can be done to remedy the problem. Alschuler (1986) noted that inaction and passive collusion was common during this stage.

The second stage is naïve reforming. Persons in this stage either blame themselves or others for the problems. This leads to either shame or blame and fails to recognize that while a person may change, the structure remains the same. It is naïve to assume that changing the persons in the system will result in a total change in the system. According to Alschuler, participants host the system internally.

The final stage is critical transforming. Here, participants exercise critical thinking to identify the rules and roles of unequal power. In a collaborative effort, groups analyze "the ways

in which they have naively played host and victimized themselves by their active collusion in supporting the conflict-producing rules and roles" (p. 493). As acts of solidarity, the collaborative group transforms the system from oppressive to reflective, restless and conversational. Alschuler's (1986) application of Freire's work offers a path forward with redemptive Whiteness through creating organizations based upon love and collaboration.

Implications for Higher Education Institutions

As an institution of both education and reflection, Midwestern University is well situated to introduce and reflect on Whiteness with MU students. Christian higher education institutions often perform, think, and define normalcy through a White lens just as American culture prefers right-handedness. De-centering Whiteness at Midwestern University and similar institutions will not occur on accident nor will it occur without strategic vision. The reflections of the participants of this study shared about the classroom, Chapel, enrollment, and student leadership. Additionally, participants discussed personal experiences of Whiteness and lack of awareness. Given my own 27 years of experience as a student, graduate student, or employee at Christian higher education institutions, my own reflections resonate with many of the participants.

No singular idea, program, person, office, Chapel message, course, or revised mission statement will de-center Whiteness at Midwestern University. No simple strategies exist. Only through the strategic, collaborative, winding road of successes and failures, critical reflection and critical action will a campus community reflect the diverse identities on campus. Several reflective and active strategies can influence systemic Whiteness at Midwestern University and include: (a) developing a leadership team to guide the de-centralization of Whiteness, (b) develop a vision for equitable multicultural education, (c) develop a mutually obligatory campus, (d) prepare for resistance, and (e) increase awareness of institutional Whiteness in the

curriculum, employment practices, enrollment, theology, and Chapel program. The strategies below provide some institutional guidance to de-centralize Whiteness.

Develop a Leadership Team

Develop a diverse leadership team of on-campus and off-campus constituents to assess the campus experience of Whiteness. This collection of persons must come from multiple identities. If the institution is unable to include multiple identities, the institution can purposefully reach out to local and regional alumni, professionals, and clergy to share in the leadership effort. The institution often reaches out to off-campus experts in the field of business, technology, and research. Seeking collaboration for assessing the campus ethos is similar and creates additional opportunities for off-campus partnerships.

White persons must begin and continue the critical reflection and critical action in order to make a more loving and equitable academic environment. While White persons must get feedback from our colleagues and students of color, White professionals must NOT do the work of de-centering Whiteness on the backs of Minoritized people. White persons are discerning enough to strategize critical decisions regarding finances, recruitment and programming, and must use similar discernment to understand the centrality of Whiteness in higher education. Because Whiteness influences campus leadership, de-centering Whiteness begins through the effort of White professionals. Critical feedback from professionals and colleagues of color provide critical feedback throughout the collaborative process.

Develop a Vision for Equitable Multicultural Education

To de-centralize Whiteness, institutions can begin with a definition of equitable multicultural education. The statement can reflect the value of all voices and identities within a community like Midwestern University. The statement must be written from a diverse-identity

perspective rather than a White perspective. Multicultural education does not exist for the benefit of White students at the expense of students of color. When a diverse learning environment is present, multicultural education influences multicultural understanding in all students (Cabrera, 2012; Ortiz & Rhoads, 2000). Cabrera et al. (2016) found that structured guidelines are necessary for healthy multicultural education. Facilitators must set ground rules that (a) establish the environment as a space for an open exchange of ideas, (b) leave no room for racism, and (c) acknowledge that periods and feelings of frustration are normal. While safe spaces are critical for conversation, this does not entitle participants to racial comfort (Cabrera et al., 2016). A primary framework for multicultural education focuses on multicultural competency as the "awareness, knowledge and skills that are needed to work effectively across cultural groups and to work with complex diversity issues" (Pope et al., 2004, p. xiv). Multiculturalism must be woven into all aspects of the university experience, including pedagogy, evaluation, recruitment, retention, programs, and enrollment.

Develop a Mutually Obligatory Campus

A mutually obligatory (Emerson & Yancey, 2011) campus is flexible and defers to the multiple identities of the campus community. The community and community members *mutually oblige* to one another out of respect and service to one another. Here, Whiteness must defer and oblige significantly. Using a mutually obligatory approach, an institution can integrate diverse cultures and resolve tensions. The first step defines the racial concern critically and carefully. Solutions that benefit some persons at the expense of other persons will not suffice. The second step requires identification of the common core and vision while recognizing cultural differences at work. Smothered cultural distinctives will not address multicultural concerns. Integration

requires active listening to develop strategies to address concerns for all identities (Emerson & Yancey, 2011).

Tatum (2017) found that Helms's White racial identity development increases effectiveness in multi-racial settings, respects the identity struggles of minoritized groups and White people, develops mutually respectful relationships, and strengthens coalitions for authentic cultural transformation. Putnam and Campbell (2012) also noted that competitive, coerced, or unequal obligation does not improve interracial connections. Relationships based upon mutuality, cooperation, egalitarianism, and intimacy develop a social context whereby true friendship unfolds.

A mutually obligatory campus will have student programs, Chapel expressions, dining hall food, and art work that express the diverse cultural values represented in the community currently or aspirationally. The goal is for all students to see themselves, hear themselves and resonate with campus expressions of value. Referring back to the literature based upon campus climate, Parker (2000) defined culture as both verb and noun. As a verb, culture mediates action, achievement, and purpose. As a noun, culture builds consensus, gathers community members together and develops strength. Turner (1994) defined campus climate as

> the ambient, affective character of a place—the conditions that evoke feelings, either positive or negative, from the people in the organization. Climate is to the affective aspect of human beings in an organization what air is to the physical aspect. Climate is an organization's emotional atmosphere. People breathe it. (p. 355)

Sustaining a culture predicated on Whiteness maintains systemic preference for White students and White ideas. College campuses must reflect the diverse identities and create an equitable learning environment reflective of all students.

Prepare for Resistance

Courageous and discerning leadership is necessary. Seeking feedback about the influence of Whiteness on campus will generate internal and external resistance. Courage is needed to continue assessment and change in the face of opposition. Evangelicals resist the idea of systemic social concerns (Emerson & Smith, 2000). Assessing Whiteness may be viewed as a "liberal agenda" or "influenced by the media." The goal of equitable multicultural education requires the de-centralization of Whiteness. De-centralizing traditions, ethos, influence, and leadership roles will result in defensiveness and frustration but a vision of equitable multicultural education can provide a goal on the horizon.

Resistance may come in the form of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1962). Here a person is confronted with two or more ideas that are inconsistent with one another. When confronted by ideas A and B, they must balance the ledger of consistency by changing a personal belief, changing their behavior, or they can be distorting the information. When someone changes the new information in order to restore cognitive harmony, Festinger (1962) called this "dissonance-reducing changes" (p. 93). Reducing or minimizing an idea is associated with charges of "fake news." Conversely, when confronted with a new idea that is inconsistent with a current belief, the new idea must be "more attractive" than the currently-held belief in order to adopt the new belief. Applying this idea to Whiteness, persons reject the presence and influence of Whiteness because of the dissonant information in comparison to their personal experiences.

Resistance may also come in the form of rationalization. "Why would a Black faculty member want to live in ____? We are in the middle of nowhere." "Why would a Latina faculty member want to come to ____? There are no other Latina faculty here." Courageous leadership must persist through rationalization. University leadership must make the institution the kind of

institution that an African American faculty candidate or Latina faculty candidate *wants* to work at. Be excellent in scholarship, teaching and service but also be excellent at multicultural education and shaping the culture to reflect the identities of the membership. If the institution does not have another Black faculty member, how can the institution creatively inform the Black candidate about the work and scholarship environment? If the faculty member worships at a Spanish speaking church, seek out persons from nearby Spanish speaking churches to meet with the candidate. Leadership must be creative in persisting through the resistance from the outside and apathy from within.

Increase Awareness of Institutional Whiteness

From the responses of the participants, Whiteness was evident in the classroom, leadership, enrollment, and Chapel. Whiteness seeped into theology through understandings of Jesus, perceptions of churches, and separation of races within the church. These systemic realities maintained the momentum of Whiteness on the walkway. Focused effort on each of these systems will shift the campus ethos into an equitable direction counter to White normativity. Below are strategies to assess and mitigate Whiteness systemically.

Curriculum

Within academic programs, critical research on Whiteness can influence the curriculum (O'Rourke, 2016), journalism (Alemán, 2014), teacher education (Hughes, 2016; Pearce, 2012; Sleeter, 2001), graduate counseling (Paone et al., 2015), kinesiology (Douglas & Halas, 2013) and occupational therapy (Trentham et al., 2007). Within courses using the Charlestown Syllabus (Williams et al., 2016), Critical Whiteness Pedagogy (Matias & Mackey, 2015), or Whiteness as the class subject (Bunker & Scully, n.d.; Engles, 2006; Gardiner, 2015; Galonnier, n.d.; Sajnani,

n.d.; Schmidt, n.d.), students can explore the history, influence, and privileges of Whiteness through a classroom setting.

Brunsma et al. (2012) offered numerous recommendations for classroom disruption of Whiteness including personal narratives of racial oppression, infusing knowledge of social movements that highlight disparity such as integration or affirmative action, and infusing the global history of race. Additionally, racial simulations, field research exercises, analysis of US census data to stimulate discussions of racial categorization, segregation, income inequality, and using multiple-identified photographs to stimulate critical thinking on social construction of race. Brunsma et al. (2012) also noted that ethnic studies programs have a place in disrupting Whiteness but often have an unintended consequence of isolating the material, faculty, and students out of the general education. While ethnic studies programs are needed, general education is also critical through orientation programs and core curriculum.

Employment

Regarding personnel, research is available to guide institutions to a more diverse faculty and staff (Drew, 2002; Fraser & Hunt, 2011; Gasman et al., 2011; Mason, 2008; McMurtrie, 2016; Moody, 2011; Tuitt et al., 2007; Turner, 2002). Providing additional decision-makers and mentors who identify outside of Whiteness is critical to changing a campus community and supporting students. Additionally, supporting colleagues of color with additional colleagues of color can diminish racial battle fatigue for students and employees at Primary White Campuses (Anthym & Tuitt, 2019; Harris, 2017; Smith et al., 2016).

Swidler (1986) defined culture as “symbolic vehicles of meaning, including beliefs, ritual practices, art forms, and ceremonies” (p. 273). Culture also includes gossip, daily patterns, worldviews, or stories that perpetuate institutional traditions. Manning (2014) defined culture as

actual or aspirational character of an organization. In order to shape the actual or aspirational character of a Christian higher education institution, administration, faculty and staff must reflect a diverse learning environment.

Enrollment

Similar to employment, Hurtado et al. (1998) noted that structural diversity or the numerical representation of various racial and ethnic groups influenced the campus climate. Numerical representation includes staff, faculty, administrators, and students. Since a high concentration of one identity or experience influences the campus climate, students outside of that identity or experience feel excluded. Turner (1994) noted one student experience: "We feel that we're a guest in someone else's house, that we can never relax and put our feet up on the table" (p. 356). *All* students need to feel at home on the Christian college campus.

Within Christian higher education, Evangelical undergraduate applicant pools have declined because of the overall Evangelical population decline (Menjares, 2017). In turn, historically underserved or minoritized populations increased during this same time. Since 2004, the proportion of minoritized students attending Christian universities increased from 19% of the total enrollment to 28% in 2014 (Menjares, 2017). According to Yancey (2010), the racial make-up of Christian colleges mirrors the racial make-up of Christian churches. Lack of racial diversity within Christian colleges may be the result of racially homogeneous churches, lack of concern for contemporary racism, or general lack of awareness of minoritized challenges (Yancey, 2010).

Christian colleges want to diversify their campus enrollment and experience (Cross & Slater, 2004; Paredes-Collins, 2009). However, diversity in enrollment is a matter of institutional survival rather than an interest in greater multiculturalism (Menjares, 2017). Without strong

support from a web of campus leadership, diversity efforts often remain stagnant (Kezar et al., 2007). The Leadership Team can be essential in strategic diversity efforts. Guidance and relationships from local and regional professionals, clergy, and alumni can provide partnerships, scholarships, internships, and increase credibility with new communities.

Theology

White Christians occupy a unique location for race-related awareness and work. DeYoung et al. (2003) noted the Christian church is an inclusive table for all nations and identities. Yet Emerson and Smith (2000) noted that the Christian religion often legitimized the world as it was rather than served as a revolutionary force of redemption. Core theological concepts such as living peaceably with one another, perseverance through struggle, social justice, seeking justice, recognizing systemic issues, and depending upon the Divine influence to change hearts and minds motivated countless persons to align actions with theological beliefs (DeYoung, 1997; Emerson & Smith, 2000; Glynn, 1998). Christian churches focused on mutual obligation and service to one another and created vibrant multi-ethnic laboratories of multi-identified faith (Becker, 1998; Emerson & Kim, 2003; Emerson & Woo, 2006; Salter-McNeil, 2015; Shelton & Emerson, 2012). Discerning a theology where the Gospel message is de-centered from the collective experiences of White theologians can create a more authentic Christian faith and expression.

Several Christian authors have focused on Whiteness and White privilege. Harris and Schaupp (2004) explored the place of Whiteness in a multiethnic world. Wytsma (2017) researched the history and influence of Whiteness and privilege, Hill (2017) shared his awakening story of White consciousness and action, and Fernando (2016) offered a deeper understanding of Whiteness, race, and faith. While most Christians reject White supremacy,

many Christians do not critically reflect on the influence of Whiteness and privilege. Through critical reflection and critical action, Christians ought to engage the deconstruction of racism and White supremacy. However, Cassidy (2012) noted, “It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a [White person] to enter the kingdom of God” (p. 49). For the Christian, Whiteness is a problem to confront. Only when Christians overturn oppressive structures can faithful followers disrupt racism. J. Harvey (2012) challenged Whites to acknowledge and refuse Whiteness simultaneously. Faithfulness requires persons to identify with Whiteness while strategically disrupting social processes and systems that promote Whiteness. As with other impacts of Whiteness, a strategically diverse leadership group of pastors, parishioners and theologians can shape a reimagined theology outside of primary Western and White identities.

Chapel Program

Participants in this study remarked that Chapel worship was a primary form of Whiteness at Midwestern University. Songs performed during weekly Chapels resonated with the experiences of most White students. Participants noted that students of color did not harmonize with the music selections. Whether or not the participants accurately reflected the experiences of students of color or other White student, the participants perceived Chapel music as a primary White expression.

Chapel is a central program for Midwestern University. Using Turner’s (1994) understanding of campus climate, Chapel is an integral part of the campus experience. Enrollment material, campus visits, student attendance requirement, campus ethos, weekly dedicated times, and resources all communicate the centrality of Chapel at Midwestern University. Like other Christian higher education institutions, Chapel is a key expression of Midwestern University’s identity. If Midwestern University can de-centralize Whiteness in

Chapel, the "ambient, affective character" (Turner, 1994, p. 355) of MU would change. Chapel messages about privilege and Whiteness, frequent and diverse expressions of music, White voices speaking about Whiteness and diversity, diverse Chapel music leadership, and diverse Chapel stage presence can all aid in a reimagined Chapel experience for MU students.

Further Research

Further research is needed to determine if the Five Movements of Whiteness can serve as a developmental theory. As someone moves from Active Whiteness, through White Maintenance, White Awareness and into Critical Reflection and Critical Action, this seems to demonstrate a patterned life moving against the momentum of Whiteness.

As I conducted interviews and analyzed the data, additional future research projects came to mind. This study occurred in a Midwestern Christian institution. It would be valuable to focus on additional Christian institutions to widen the research base. Additional institutions may include Midwestern denominational, Midwestern inter-denominational, U.S. denominational, or U.S. inter-denominational. Midwestern University is the only academic institution in the denomination. Christian denominations such as the Assemblies of God or Nazarene can replicate this study to see how Whiteness influences the denomination's academic institutions, religious instruction, and theology. Additional experiences of Whiteness exist outside of Midwestern University. Additional data can provide new discoveries between the relationship of Whiteness and faith for Christian college students.

As a phenomenological research study, the interviews mined the reflective experiences of 15 unique participants. This prompts an additional path of research. While each participant was distinct, deeper reflection is possible for the participants. Exploring Whiteness over extended time may stimulate deeper reflection. It may also yield additional insights. Elijah would be an

ideal participant for this type of research. Elijah reflected on his upbringing in a racially-isolated hometown. He witnessed a racially-hostile encounter with a family member yet also described the meaningful relationships developed at MU. Elijah purposefully reached out to students of color to learn about their experiences. Additionally, Elijah was exposed to systemic injustice through his coursework in international development. Elijah's awakening to Whiteness, criticism of Whiteness, and movements against Whiteness illustrate a participant cognizant of the walkway.

Pairing the work of Jemal (2017) with phenomenological research, White awareness in college students is an additional idea for future research. Jemal (2017) continued Freire's work on critical consciousness through developing a framework of Transformative Potential (TP). TP is defined as "levels of consciousness and action that produce potential for change at one or more socio-economic levels" (Jemal, 2017, p. 603). A person with high levels of TP critically reflects on the oppressive structures of a present reality and actively seeks to remedy the problematic conditions. TP encompasses transformative consciousness and transformative action.

Additional research may be conducted with students of color at Midwestern University. Students of color may identify similar or additional influences of Whiteness at MU. As members consciously influenced by Whiteness, students of color can reflect on leadership, enrollment, theology, Chapel, and classroom experiences. Researching a broader experience of Chapel, MU can get a greater understanding of the influence of Whiteness within the signature Chapel program.

Lastly, additional research questions could include: Describe how your home community influenced your experience of race. Describe how your home church influenced your experience of race. In what ways should the church interact with race in America?

Limitations

For many of the participants, reflecting on Whiteness was challenging. Reflecting on a subject that is largely invisible or weightless was difficult. For several participants, the interview was the initial introduction to Whiteness. Whiteness was a foreign idea. While some participants reflected ahead of time and during the interview, some participants did not experience Whiteness enough to reflect before the interview. Personal experience of Whiteness was shallow.

Along with a limited understanding of Whiteness, participants did not have baseline information of Whiteness. Outside of White supremacist activity, Whiteness was not discussed openly. Participants did not identify with racists or supremacists but could not identify with Whiteness as a cultural or individual identity. Participants lacked a White exemplar or someone working through Whiteness as a model. Participants did not have a vision for redeemed Whiteness nor did they have someone to identify with to follow. Given the reluctance of Evangelical Christians to explore systematic issues and overlook the influence of Whiteness, it was not surprising that participants were unable to notice Whiteness in their experience.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to explore the awareness of Whiteness in Christian college students. As a student and employee of Christian college for 27 years, I witnessed and maintained White status quo and overlooked the experiences and epistemologies of students and colleagues of color. Additionally, I experienced White maintenance under the guise of Christian faith systemically and personally. This research demonstrated a limited awareness and criticism of Whiteness within the Christian college culture. Without increased awareness, little action can occur to change the momentum of Whiteness.

Through talking with colleagues at other Christian colleges, I have heard similar stories. Given my exposure with other campuses and conversations with professionals, it is evident that White students navigate Christian college campuses with greater ease than students of color. Additionally, White students are often unaware of their status or privilege associated with Whiteness. *Genuine Christian faith rejects arrogance, indifference, power, and privilege. Genuine Christian faith emphasizes service to others, respectful relationships, and a commitment to equity*.

In conclusion, I offer an image to illustrate a path forward. In the final book of the Bible, the Revelation of John, the author shares many images of the future Heavenly glory. The book of Revelation is often confusing and cryptic to readers. The author uses a wide range of imagery including scrolls, horses and trumpets. Interpretations abound to the varying meanings and implications. However, one image that the author describes in Chapter 7 seems simple and direct. The image is a large choir singing before God:

> After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. (Revelation 7:9, NIV)

The author of Revelation offers several descriptors of this Heavenly choir including too many to count, from every tribe, every people, and every language. It seems that the author means to include every group of people. *Every* group of people regardless of tribe, identity, or language is present in Heaven. Either the choir members will learn a new language or sing in their earthly dialect. Hearing a choir that is too numerous to count and singing in their native tongue will be possible only in a place like Heaven. Think of the discordant tones and languages

all working in *harmony* with one another. It is the ultimate example of diversity working in harmony. For those of us who believe in Heaven, singing in a diverse and innumerable choir will be part of our experience in Heaven.

However, we can learn from this example. Imagine the choir as an example of your institution, State University. You are a nationally recognized choir. You recruit top students and faculty. You write brilliant arrangements. You perform classic arrangements. You perform annually at recognized events. Your practice rooms, performance halls, and equipment are state-of-the-art. Your performances and selections have a distinct tone often referred to as "The State Way." It is important to keep "The State Way the State Way."

However, new and different groups of students begin enrolling at State University. Through creative partnerships, scholarships and programs, new and diverse *voices* begin enrolling. The new voices are familiar with The State Way. Many of the new voices love The State Way after hearing the choir in high school, camps and churches. Yet as the new voices grow in number, the ethos of the practice room begins to change. New songs play through headphones. Diverse harmonies resonate on bus rides. Requests for diverse rhythms are constant in the choir director's office. The choir begins to diversify. Instead of forcing all of the new voices into The State Way, The State Way begins to reflect the diversity within the choir community. A *New* State Way is shaping. The campus buzzes with new songs, new melodies and new ways to express music. The choir director researches new music. The musicians pick up new instruments. Additional stops of the summer concert tour are added. New donors begin supporting the choir. Not only so, State begins recruiting voices that are under-represented in the choir (or left-handed). Organically and strategically, State University changes to reflect the identities of the students. In the end, State University defines a New Way that incorporates the

unity and diversity of genuine *harmony*. If you believe in a choir in Heaven made up of every tribe, every tongue, and every language, it is important that we learn to work in harmony now.

EPILOGUE

Introduction

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" [26] "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" [27] He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" [28] "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." [29] But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" [30] In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. [31] A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. [32] So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. [33] But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. [34] He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. [35] The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' [36] "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" [37] The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise." (Luke 10:25-37)

The Ground Gave Away

Let's begin with a story about the ground giving away.

On August 8, 1914, Ernest Shackleton and his crew began their voyage from England across the southern tip of the world aboard the *Endurance.* Prior to Shackleton's voyage, explorer Roald Amundsen explored the South Pole in December, 1911. Shackleton's quest included crossing through the South Pole. In a newspaper advertisement that cannot be found in any archive, Shackleton requested applications for the daring crew:

> MEN WANTED: FOR HAZARDOUS JOURNEY. SMALL WAGES, BITTER COLD, LONG MONTHS OF COMPLETE DARKNESS, CONSTANT DANGER, SAFE RETURN DOUBTFUL. HONOUR AND RECOGNITION IN CASE OF SUCCESS.

Shackleton received countless requests to join the exhibition and finally selected a crew of 27 men from across Europe.

On August 3, 1914, the Endurance departed from British waters and on On December 7, 1914, the *Endurance* entered the pack ice of the Weddell Sea. By January 18, 1915, the *Endurance* was trapped within sheets of ice. For most of 1915, the *Endurance* and crew remained wedged between grinding ice floes. Ice was expected. The Endurance was built to withstand the pounding of the ship against the ice. When cracks appeared in the ice floes, the crew worked diligently to increase the crack and move the ship forward. With chisels and picks, the men attempted to free the ship from floe to floe. By February, the temperatures dropped into the single digits. The only hope was a Spring thaw. The other option was much worse: The ice would shift back and forth around the *Endurance* eventually grinding the ship apart. From January to October, 1915, the ice slowly moved and unsettled the *Endurance.* Shackleton captured the slow grinding of the ice in his diary:

> The ice is rafting up to a height of 10 or 15 ft. in places, the opposing floes are moving against one another at the rate of about 200 yds. per hour. The noise resembles the roar of heavy, distant surf. Standing on the stirring ice one can imagine it is disturbed by the breathing and tossing of a mighty giant below. (Shackleton, 2015, p. 47)

Again, Shackleton reflected,

> Late on the night of the 31st (of August) the ice began to work ahead of the ship and along the port side. Creaking and groaning of timbers, accompanied by loud snapping sounds fore and aft, told their story of strain. The pressure continued during the following day, beams and deck planks occasionally buckling to the strain. The ponderous floes were grinding against each other under the influence of wind and current, and our ship seemed to occupy for the time being an undesirable positon near the centere of the disturbance. (Shackleton, 2015, p. 52)

We will return to the *Endurance* later but I want to focus on the present day. When I read accounts of Aumaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd this summer, I also read Shakleton's voyage through the South Pole. When I read about the grinding ice floes, I could not help but think about ground beneath us grinding our cities and Black lives apart. The ponderous floes of police aggression and anti-Black violence, the currents of frustration in cities across the U.S. who are angry about mistreatment and systemic oppression, and the winds of courageous hope rising in the masked voices of men and women all place the bodies of Black men and women in the center of the disturbance.

The Spring of 2020 was tumultuous. It seemed that the very ground that we all stood upon was filled with Black bodies, tear gas, marching feet and raised fists. Cities from coast to coast lit up with fires of destruction and winds of change. How could Ahmaud Arbery be killed

while jogging on a Sunday afternoon? How could Breonna Taylor be killed while sleeping in her own bed? How does George Floyd suffocate to death under the knee of a police office while other police officers look on? What is the back story? What is the front story? Who is right? Who is wrong? Can I go jogging? Can I sleep in my house? Why does this keep happening? Why didn't he stop resisting? How many more Black lives must be taken before we wake up? What are Black men and women doing to deserve death? Do Black lives matter? Do all lives matter? Where is Jesus in all of this? Where is the Church? Where are the Christians?

Let's return to passage of the Good Samaritan. For too long, I have witnessed Black lives lost. Tamir Rice, Tamir Rice, Philando Castille, Michael Brown and Eric Garner all lay dead on the side of the road. As I approached them, I passed along the other side. I was too busy. Their lives were too distant from mine. Honestly, I didn't want to get caught up on the grief of their deaths. I didn't have the courage to *see* them. I didn't have the stomach to watch the videos. I felt powerless to do anything about it. Their lives were taken and taken and taken and taken and taken. I didn't have the courage to keep track of the death toll. I didn't even notice Natasha McKenna, Walter Scott, Alton Sterling, Alberta Spruill, Rekia Boyd, Shantel Davis, Shelley Frey, Kayla Moore, Kyam Livingston, Miriam Carey, Michelle Cusseaux, and Tanisha Anderson. I was too busy. Or worse, I was asleep. Business was my privilege. Sleep was my privilege.

Awakening

Then one day, I looked into Ahmaud Arbery's face. On the Jericho road, Ahmaud Arbery lay shot by vigilante men because he was *suspicious*. Ahmaud did not fit into the neighborhood. As a truck boxed Ahmaud in, Ahmaud defended himself. In the struggle, Travis McMichael shot Ahmaud twice. What if there was no video to capture this assault?

Then I looked into the face of Breonna Taylor. On the Jericho road, she was lying in her bed, not even on the road. After the police used a battering ram to enter the house after midnight, Breonna's boyfriend, Kenneth Walker, fired his gun at the incoming attackers. Police returned fire and killed Breonna. Police believed that Breonna's house was a location known to receive drugs. After the confrontation, no drugs were found in the apartment.

Then I looked into the face of George Floyd. On the Jericho road, his life was choked out. How could I look away? I saw his face captured in video. I heard his pleas for air. I heard his cries for his mother. I saw his final breaths. I also looked at the face of Derek Chauvin who murdered Floyd in cool indifference while officers Thomas Lane, J. Alexander Keung, and Tou Thao aided in Floyd's murder by standing still. Lane, Keung, and Thao walked to the other side of the road. The world watched the murder of George Floyd for 8 minutes and 46 seconds over and over and over again.

All across the United States, people took to the streets and demonstrated for justice and equality. Aumaud, Breonna and George should all be alive. Each one should still be running through the neighborhood, eating dinner with a loved one or spending time with family. Seeing the murders of Breonna, George and Aumaud shook my conscious awake. The privileged ground that held me up swelled and roiled. The blocks of Whiteness that absorbed shock and kept me asleep began crashing into one another.

The Spring and Summer of 2020 laid bare the converging floes of racism and privilege in my own life. What does this have to do with Whiteness? With Whiteness, I can ignore the plight of others. I do not need to carry any racial burden. I can disengage because it is uncomfortable. I can remain asleep because racial discrimination and violence are not part of my identity experience. Yet the disruptive floes of Aumaud Aubrey, George Floyd and Breonna Taylor

splintered my privilege. The swelling and crashing of consciousness was too great to remain asleep. I had two choices: Continue ignoring the plight of my Black brothers and sisters or abandon ship.

On October 27, 1915, the *Endurance* was finally abandoned. Shackleton and the crew took items one by one from the splintering ship. For three weeks, the crew lived neither completely on the Endurance nor the frozen ground. On November 21, 1915, the *Endurance* broke apart and sank into the Weddell Sea. The vessel designed to navigate the frozen sea slowly splintered from the colliding pressures and gradually disappeared beneath the ice. As I reflect upon the application of the research in this dissertation, I hope that many White students abandon the ship of privilege. As the converging floes of anti-Black violence, police aggression and systemic racism shook my own conscience, my prayer is that White students also awakened to a new way of engagement.

Do Black Lives Matter to Me?

When Trayvon Martin was fatally shot by George Zimmerman on February 12, 2012, Zimmerman was charged with murder. After Zimmerman's acquittal, the #BlackLivesMatter movement began. Focused on eradicating White supremacy, empowering local communities to resist violence directed towards Black lives and promoting Black imagination (Home, 2020), the BlackLivesMatter movement forced us to consider the question, "Do Black lives matter?" Given the experience of Trayvon Martin and other Black persons victimized by state or vigilante injustice, Black lives seem to matter less.

How do I know if Black lives matter to me? If Black lives mattered to me, my life would bear the necessary fruit. Let's look at the open passage above to see how the Good Samaritan demonstrated mattering. Please keep in mind that this is not a story about a Samaritan savior

interacting with a helpless man. It is the story about a person overlooked and injured and an admonition to act merciful. The identities of the characters can easily be switched around.

The expert in the law responded to Jesus with the correct answer, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” Jesus further admonished the man, “Do this and you will live.” However, that was insufficient for the expert. He wanted a technical answer or a box to check. He wanted to know who *was* a neighbor and who *was not* a neighbor. Who is in and who is out? Who is good enough to love as he loved himself is who is insufficient to love to that degree?

Jesus starts with poor examples, the priest and the Levite. These were professional followers of the Law. Priests and Levites were responsible for the facilitation of worship and consecration of the Temple. These professions were set apart with divine responsibilities to bring worshippers into the very presence of God and the forgiveness of sin. According the passage, at least the priest was *going down* from Jerusalem to Jericho. Jerusalem sat upon a high place approximately 2,500 feet *above* sea level while Jericho sat approximately 1,200 feet *below* sea level. The distance between Jerusalem to Jericho was about 17 miles. Psalm 24:3-5 refers to Jerusalem as “the hill of the Lord.” As you can imagine, the priest may have just completed his responsibilities at the Temple in Jerusalem and was travelling home.

Both the priest and the Levite *see* the man who was attacked by robbers. However, rather than stopping to assist the man, each of them *pass over* to the other side of the road. One explanation to ignore the injured man is that according to the Law, contact with a corpse defiled priests for seven days (Leviticus 21:1-4). This rule did not apply to the Levite, however. The text does not communicate either the motive of the Levite or the priest. Only their respective actions

were noted. Nor does the text define the man's injuries except that he appeared "half dead." Perhaps the priest and Levite believed that the man deserved what happened to him. In the small book of Hosea, the writer communicated God's admonition, "What I want is mercy rather than sacrifice" (Hosea 6:6). Rather than living according to the rule of mercy, the priest and Levite chose sacrifice over mercy.

We do not know from what direction the Samaritan came from except that he arrived where the man was. The Samaritan also saw the wounded man but rather than passing along on the other side, he was moved by compassion for the man. The Samaritan is an unlikely protagonist in this story because Samaritans were second class citizens in Jewish society. Few stories included a Samaritan as an exemplar. Yet Jesus highlighted the marginalized Samaritan by using his actions as an example to follow. According to the Samaritan, the wounded man mattered. The wounded man matter so much that it cost the Samaritan compassion, time and finances. The wounded man mattered enough to be invested in. What matters to us costs us. What matters to us cannot be overlooked.

What matters to you? If you do not know, here are some questions to answer: What keeps you up at night? What costs you time? What do you tell your friends and family about? What angers you? What do you sacrifice for? What do you spend your resources on? Who influences you? If Black lives matter to you, your actions will prove it. You will lose sleep over the systemic violence. You will make time to be in relationship with people. You will be influenced by Black lives and voices. You will believe Black lives and voices.

Do Black Lives Matter on Campus?

Let's apply a similar thinking to Christian college campuses. Do we see Black lives on campus? Do Black lives have space and place on campus? We must see and believe the students

and colleagues on our campus. In Fernando's (2016) book, the author opens the conversation about privilege with an appeal to cultural humility. Rather than focusing on cultural competency, Fernando challenges her readers to recognize how little we know about other cultures, identities and experiences. When I overlook another person's experience of pain or discrimination, it is often because I assume that my experience is normative. I assume that the other person has similar experiences walking in a strange neighborhood, jogging through a park, driving the down the street or buying groceries.

Years ago, my family went for a walk at Salamonie Reservoir. After we parked, we began walking down a steep grassy hill towards the trail. My wife slipped on the wet grass. As she slipped, she threw her hands to the side and screamed. In my husbandly wisdom, I thought that she over-reacted. She was not in actual danger. Why did she need to scream so loudly? Unfortunately, those questions left my mouth, "That was a bit of an over-reaction! You weren't going to die!" My wife stopped walking, pointed her finger at me and said, "You have no right to tell me how to respond when I am falling!" She was correct. I had no right to critique how she responded to danger.

I have often heard stories from friends who described looks at the grocery store, slights in meetings, and dismissals in personal conversations. My friends all attributed these actions to the color of their skin or personal identity. It was easy for me to dismiss the experience of my friends. However, Fernando (2016) challenges us to develop cultural humility. Instead of responding, "Did that really happen?" or "I don't think they really meant *that*." Or simply not believing them, Fernando provided an alternative response, "I'm so sorry this hurts you. How can I walk alongside you in this?" or "What do I need to learn?" Often the best response is simply, "Tell me more about what happened." Rather than overlooking the experience of our

friend, believe them. Assume that what occurred actually occurred just as your friend experienced it. When your friend is afraid, believe her.

Not only do we need to listen to the experience of Black lives on campuses, we need to defer to their experience and expertise. In the research, students noted that many spaces on campus were particularly White including the classroom, enrollment, Chapel and leadership team. While recommendations to change the identity of these spaces are included in the research above, it is critical to increase the voice of many voices on the Christian college campus. Not only do voices need to increase but White voices need to defer.

Get Engaged

Not only do we need to listen and increase the voices of Black and Brown students and colleagues on campus but we must also engage in the racial awakening in the United States. Few participants in this research described comfortable and frequent interactions with peers of color. Many participants described strong apprehension or fear when discussing matters of race and interacting with students of color. It was easier to avoid all threats of offending someone or hurting someone's feelings by remaining silent. Conversations about race seemed like delicate minefields with legitimate hazards.

DiAngelo (2016) defined resistance to conversations about race, multicultural training sessions, or emotional resistance to Whiteness as White fragility. DiAngelo discerned that minimal amounts of racial stress were intolerable and caused Whites to strongly argue, turn silent, or physically depart the racialized situation. While some folks assume a defensive posture to conversations about Whiteness or race, some people simply lack the stamina or skill to navigate Whiteness.

Flynn (2015) offered a different response for White students engaged in racial awareness: White fatigue. For Flynn (2015), White fatigue

> names the dynamic of White students who intuitively understand or recognize the moral imperative of antiracism (primarily viewed as individual racism); however, they are not yet situated to fully understand the complexity of racism and how it functions as an institutional and systemic phenomenon. (p. 115)

As we learn more about Whiteness, we also learn that racism is more than individualized racial acts of hatred. Instead, racism is a systemic and structural challenge filled with complexity and challenges. Tension occurs when someone moves from individualized understanding of racism to structural racism of racism. This is where reflection and conversations are so critical. Fatigue, fragility and fear all create friction in working through Whiteness. Friction may be too great for a person. As a result, a person may freeze. However, friction can also generate heat and change. Exposure to new identities and experiences can increase our persistence. Growth requires dissonance and discomfort. With so much sudden disruption in our foundations, it can be difficult to resettle to a new reality but a new reality is required. We cannot be silent to the pain that our brothers and sisters experience, we cannot look the other way nor can we pass by on the other side of the street. We must engage. I recommend leaning on and believing your friends and colleagues when they share stories. Listening to friends is an act of persistence.

Lament Racial Injustice

An additional step to engage in racial consciousness is to lament racial injustice. As you believe the stories of your friends and colleagues or believe the accounts of Black men and women dying at the hands of vigilantes or un-restrained police officers, you will see a long

history of marginalization at best and racial terrorism at worst. The historic racial hierarchy that created slavery and segregation adapted to contemporary racial terrorism.

In her book *Healing Racial Trauma: The Road to Resilience*, Sheila Wise Rowe (2020) describes the paths forward to heal systemic oppression and racial trauma that impairs the lives and families of people of color. She defined resilience as "the capacity to recover quickly" (p. 4). Resilience in racism requires the person to "persevere and maintain a positive sense of self when faced with omnipresent racial discrimination." Rowe described the types of racism to include interpersonal, systemic, public space, spatial, environmental, White privilege, internalized, and defensive othering. She described the types of trauma to include historical, transgenerational, personal, physical, vicarious, microaggressions and racial gaslighting. Responding to trauma came in several forms including fatigue, silence, rage, fear, lament, shame and addiction. While each of these responses seem natural, I want to introduce lament as a response to racial trauma and Whiteness.

Lamenting is not easy for me. I would much rather move on, get over it or just dismiss frustrating circumstances. Personally, I cannot identify with race-based trauma because I have not personally experienced trauma as a result of my White identity. However, inexperience of racial trauma does not give me permission to ignore the trauma experienced by friends, colleagues or strangers.

Yet, the Christian faith has within it a built-in response for frustration with the fallen world: Lament. Rowe (2020) described the lament process as expressed outrage and anger. Lament is a protest directed at God. Lament is a cry for help and a declaration of pain. Lament is wrestling with God within the ruins of pain. We do not hold back but instead, weep, complain and even scream out to God. Again, I do not deny the reality that screaming at God seems like a

crazy idea. God is God. I am not God. God will work it out, I hope. I cannot see how justice will prevail. Yet, God permits us to be frustrated at what happens to our brothers and sisters. God is OK with our frustration with what occurs to our own bodies. I even believe that God is frustrated, also. God is OK with our truthfulness and honesty.

To lament racial injustice, we *join with our sisters and brothers* who experience suffering because of systemic racism. While we may not personally experience the fear, regret and trauma, we come alongside of friends and colleagues who suffer. In lamenting, we have the privilege to sit with someone in grief. We have the privilege to experience the broken heartedness of murder and violence. In lamenting, we can *micro-align* ourselves with friends and colleagues instead of *micro-aggressing* friends and colleagues. In redeeming our Whiteness, we can join the grief of others. We can provide a safe place to grieve and cry. Believe your friends then grieve with your friends.

Find Co-Conspirators Working Racial Consciousness

In this research, I was keenly aware that the participants did not have a model of racial consciousness. What exemplars in politics, religion, athletics or media reflect a repentant White identity or a Christian's response to racism? As I reflected on my own journey of Whiteness, many friends and colleagues participated along the way. Some common characteristics of my fellow redemption-seeking travelers is that each one recognized that race and Whiteness influenced all elements of American culture, including the Church. Rather than responding defensively to Whiteness in the Church, redemption-seeking travelers engaged the conversation and sought change. Secondly, fellow travelers recognized that we participate in a racist policies or practices without racist intention. We can unintentionally commit a racist act. Thirdly, even unintentionally racist actions hurt others. No matter my intention or lack of intention, I can hurt

others with my words or actions. This may result in loss of trust. It is my responsibility, therefore, to regain that trust. Fourthly, fellow travelers seek to understand the experiences of others and do not assume that White experience is the shared experience.

Late in this dissertation process, Felicia, a former colleague of mine at Taylor University introduced me to the concept of co-conspirator. I was familiar with the term "ally." Crimston and Hornsey (2018) defined allyship as "people's willingness to fight and die in support of entities not bound by biological markers or ancestral kinship." Regarding allyship with LGBT community members, Russell and Bohan (2016) noted that either personal relationships with LGBT persons or motivations rooted in fundamental values such as justice or religious ideals motivated allies to work alongside of the LGBT community. Bettina Love (2019) expanded the term "co-conspirator" when she recalled the story of Bree Newsome's removal of the Confederate flag from the South Caroline State House. Nine days prior to Newsome's climb, Dylann Roof entered Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina and murdered nine churchgoers. Days after the murder, it was discovered that Roof posted a picture of himself holding a gun and Confederate flag while posting hateful messages online. Newsome was not only protesting the hate of Roof towards the members of Mother Emanuel AME Church, she was also protesting the hate incited by the Confederate flag.

On June 27, 2015, Newsome began her ascent of the flagpole outside of the South Caroline State House. At the bottom of the pole was her co-conspirator, James Tyson. Tyson was a White man. Newsome and Tyson were both from Charlotte, North Carolina and met during a meeting of local activists. Waiting also at the bottom of the pole were authorities waiting to arrest Newsome. As Love (2019) described the events that morning, the authorities had one additional alternative to get Newsome down from the pole: tase the flagpole. According to Love

(2019), Tyson was aware of this alternate strategy and wrapped his arms around the pole. If the authorities were going to tase the flagpole, he would also be tased.

Newsome descended the flagpole. She and Tyson were arrested for defacing a monument. Within 45 minutes of Newsome descent, the Confederate flag returned to the top of the pole. For Love (2019), Tyson could have simply been an ally. While working toward mutually beneficial outcomes, "Allies do not need to love dark people, question their privilege, decenter their voice, build meaningful relationships with folx working in the struggle, take risks, or be in solidarity with others" (p. 117). An ally can know all of the right words to say and the right voices to emulate. However, until Tyson recognized the intersection of privilege, personal leverage and support, he was unable to truly stand in solidarity and confront Whiteness. According to Love (2019), Tyson recognized that the chances of an authority tasing a Black woman *through* the body of a White man holding onto a flagpole would be far less than if Tyson was outside of the fence. "A coconspirator functions as a verb not a noun" (p. 118), wrote Love (2019).

Love (2019) described the characteristics of a coconspirator in the following ways. Coconspirators enter a life-long journey of understanding privilege and unlearning habits that protect privilege, developing authentic relationships based upon mutuality, honestly acknowledging the imbalances to create authentic relationships, collaboration and a personal interior journey of silence linked with the outer work of social change. In order to talk about race and racism, coconspirators need to reflect on Whiteness.

Conclusion

The Spring and Summer of 2020 awakened me and many people in our nation to a greater racial consciousness. Silence and disengagement are rooted in White privilege which

soothes White consciences from acting. However the killings of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and Aumaud Aubery shook the foundations of my racial consciousness. No longer could I float along in White racial comfort because I no longer reconciled their deaths with my personal in-activity. The floes crushed my privileged boat. As a Samaritan, I must stop and engage with wounded soul on the side of the road.

If Black lives mattered, my actions need to prove it. I cannot be silent when I see injustice. I cannot look away when lives are taken or mistreated. I cannot ignore the systemic racism that exists in my home, my church, my work and my community. I must engage and remain engage. I must also change my Christian college campus and defer to voices of color. I must invite and include absent voices within my areas of responsibility. I must challenge the White-filled systems of my office, my department, my program and my campus and demonstrate that Black voices matter. I must listen to my colleagues and students of color and grieve when they experience pain. Finally, I must proceed with co-conspirators in racial justice. I must recruit and influence others along their racial journey. I must also follow exemplars in racial consciousness and learn from their journey.

The work of justice is the work of the follower of Christ. In the story of the Good Samaritan, we see the Good Samaritan attending a wounded man. It was easier to overlook the man and continue on the journey for the Samaritan. Yet the Samaritan saw the man and engaged in the care required of a good neighbor. In this story, it would have been assumed that the priest and Levite knew more about what the Law required about neighborliness. In the end, it was an unexpected turn of events when the outsider Samaritan served as the exemplar for Jesus's teaching.

We should go and do likewise.

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APPENDIX A: E-MAIL INITIATING CONTACT WITH GATEKEEPER

Dear Midwestern University Gatekeeper,

My name is Jesse Brown, and I am a doctoral candidate at Indiana State University in the higher education leadership administration program. I am conducting research on critical consciousness of Whiteness in Christian college students for my dissertation. My goal is to examine the relationship between Whiteness and Christian college students. More specifically, this research seeks to answer the following question: In what ways are White, Midwestern, Christian college students critically conscious of Whiteness?

My study is qualitative in nature, using semi-structured interviews to collect data. I am interested in conducting one-on-one interviews with women and men during the fall 2019 semester. Interviews will ask questions about one's consciousness of Whiteness. Interviews will take place on your campus, last between 60-75 minutes, and be scheduled at the participant's convenience.

If you feel this is a worthwhile study, I would appreciate your assistance. Can I visit one of your classes to present the research topic and recruit participants? The presentation and recruitment will take 5 minutes. If you have any questions, please contact me at jbrown228@sycamores.indstate.edu or (260) 224-1408. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Jesse M. Brown
Doctoral Student, Higher Education Leadership Administration
Indiana State University

APPENDIX B: RESEARCH SUMMARY FOR PARTICIPANTS

Dear Potential Participant,

My name is Jesse Brown, and I am a doctoral candidate at Indiana State University in the higher education leadership administration program. I am conducting research on critical consciousness of Whiteness in Christian college students for my dissertation. My goal is to examine the relationship between Whiteness and Christian college students. More specifically, this research seeks to answer the following question: In what ways are White, Midwestern, Christian college students critically conscious of Whiteness?

I am interested in conducting one-on-one interviews with women and men during the spring 2019 semester. Interviews will ask questions about one's consciousness of Whiteness. Interviews will take place on your campus, last between 60-75 minutes, and be scheduled at the participant's convenience.

If you feel this is a worthwhile study, I would appreciate your participation. If you are interested and available to participate in this research, please contact me at jbrown228@sycamores.indstate.edu or (260) 224-1408. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Jesse M. Brown
Doctoral Student, Higher Education Leadership Administration
Indiana State University

APPENDIX C: FOLLOW-UP E-MAIL TO PARTICIPANT

DATE

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your interest and availability to participate in this research on critical consciousness of Whiteness in Christian college students for my dissertation. My goal is to examine the relationship between Whiteness and Christian college students and answer the following question: In what ways are White, Midwestern, Christian college students critically conscious of Whiteness?

I will be on your campus during the following days: ___, ___, and ___. I will use the online scheduling system ___ to schedule interviews. Please visit ___, create an account, and select an available interview time. Interviews will take place in the ___ on campus and last between 60-75 minutes.

Attached to this e-mail is a Consent to Participate and Participant Demographic Survey for you to review. If you consent to participate, I will bring a paper copy to the interview for you to sign. If you have any questions about the purpose or procedures of this research, please do not hesitate to contact me at jbrown228@sycamores.indstate.edu or (260) 224-1408.

Sincerely,

Jesse M. Brown
Doctoral Student, Higher Education Leadership Administration
Indiana State University

APPENDIX D: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Research on Critical Consciousness of Whiteness in Midwestern, Christian College Students

You are invited to participate in a research study investigating how Midwestern, Christian College students reflect and respond to Whiteness. This research is conducted by Jesse Brown (Principal Investigator) and Dr. Mary Howard-Hamilton (Faculty Sponsor), from the Department of Educational Leadership at Indiana State University.

This research is being conducted as part of a doctoral dissertation. You were selected to participate in this research as a possible participant because you meet the following criteria:

1. You are an undergraduate student at a Midwestern, Christian college.
2. You identify as a White person as defined by the physical characteristics, genetic origin, and perception of a shared White European heritage (Helms, 1990a).

If you do not identify with the above criteria, you should not sign this consent form and decline to participate.

PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH

Currently there is limited research within higher education on the intersection of Whiteness, Christianity, and college students. This research intends to add to the gaps in the literature and perspectives of White students who attend Christian colleges. The purpose of this research is to explore critical consciousness of Whiteness in the lived experiences of White students attending a Midwestern, Christian college.

PROCEDURES

If you agree to this research, I will conduct a face-to-face interview with you on your campus. The interview will include questions related to Whiteness, Christian faith, and identity. The interview will take between 60-75 minutes. You will select a pseudonym and share personal information as you feel comfortable. The interview will be recorded. Transcription will occur after the interview.

After the data analysis begins, you will be invited to participate in a 30-minute follow-up interview to review the research findings and interpretations. Participants willing to meet will to provide critical observations and clarifications about the preliminary analysis consisting of themes and descriptions.

There are no costs associated with participating in this research. The information that you provide will be published in a doctoral dissertation.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Research records including demographic information, this consent form, interview notes, audio recordings, and transcriptions will remain confidential. You will select a pseudonym and share personal information as you feel comfortable. The interview will be recorded and saved to a password-protected personal computer and cloud-based file. The recording will be uploaded to Rev.com for transcription. The transcription will be deleted from Rev.com after I download it to a password-protected personal computer. The transcription will be uploaded to Dedoose for data management. No personal descriptors will be used in the name of any cloud-based file, Rev.com, Dedoose, or personal computer files. Only I will have access to the username and passwords for cloud-based file, Rev.com, Dedoose, or personal computer. This research will be published and will not include any information that will make it possible for you to be identified.

RISKS AND BENEFITS

The risks associated with this research are minimal. The psychological discomfort may be similar to what you may experience in a classroom setting if you were asked to reflect on the subject. If you have not considered Whiteness or the impact of Whiteness on your identity, you may experience some dissonance. If you experience discomfort from this research, you are encouraged to set up a counseling appointment with the Midwestern University Counseling Center at (123) 456-7890. The Counseling Center is located in Midwestern's Student Center, Room #123.

The benefit for participating in this research is the focused opportunity to reflect on the impact of Whiteness on your identity, Christian faith, and practices within community. The interview may motivate you to align your belief and practice with a faith-filled perspective of Whiteness. Additionally, your interview can provide additional voices on the literature in the field of higher education where the interactions between Whiteness, Christian faith, and college students is lacking. Finally, your participation can influence student development and faculty on engaging critical consciousness of Whiteness on Christian college campuses.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether or not to participate in this research. If you participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences or loss of benefit. You may also decline to respond any of the interview questions. There is no penalty if you withdraw from the study and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

COMPENSATION

You will receive a $10 Amazon gift card for participating in this research.

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions about this research, please contact Jesse Brown (Principal Investigator), 236 W. Reade Avenue, Upland, IN 46989, (260) 224-1408,

jbrown228@sycamores.indstate.edu or Dr. Mary Howard-Hamilton (Faculty Sponsor), Indiana State University, Department Chair, Educational Leadership, Terre Haute, IN 47809, (812) 237-2902, Mary.Howard-Hamilton@indstate.edu.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject or if you think that you incurred unreasonable risk, you may contact the Indiana State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) by mail at Indiana State University, Office of Sponsored Programs, Terre Haute, IN 47809, by phone at (812) 237-3088, or by e-mail at research@indstate.edu.

By signing this document, you are agreeing to participate in this research. Participation is voluntary and you can rescind your participation at any time. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The original copy will remain with me.

I agree to participate in this research.

_____ _____

Signature Date

I agree to be audio-recorded as part of this research.

_____ _____

Signature Date

Jesse M. Brown
236 W. Reade Avenue
Upland, IN 46989
(260) 224-1408
jbrown228@sycamores.indstate.edu

APPENDIX E: E-MAIL TO GATEKEEPER FOR ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS

Dear Midwestern University Gatekeeper,

Thank you for working with me to recruit research participants. At this point, I have ___ participants. For initial saturation, I am hoping for a minimum of 12 participants. Can you please forward the e-mail below to your courses requesting additional participants?

Subject: Research on Whiteness

My name is Jesse Brown. I am a doctoral student at Indiana State University. I am researching a unique topic regarding Whiteness and Christian college students. I attended your course recently to discuss the details of this research. I am looking for participants to explore the relationship between Whiteness and Christian college students. More specifically, this research seeks to answer the following question: In what ways are White, Midwestern, Christian college students critically conscious of Whiteness?

I am interested in conducting one-on-one interviews with women and men during the spring 2019 semester. Interviews will ask questions about one's consciousness of Whiteness. Interviews will take place on your campus, last between 60-75 minutes, and be scheduled at the participant's convenience.

If you feel this is a worthwhile study, I would appreciate your participation. If you are interested and available to participate in this research, please contact me at jbrown228@sycamores.indstate.edu or (260) 224-1408. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Jesse M. Brown
Doctoral Student, Higher Education Leadership Administration
Indiana State University

APPENDIX F: E-MAIL TO MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Dear Midwestern University Librarian,

My name is Jesse Brown, and I am a doctoral candidate at Indiana State University in the higher education leadership administration program. I am conducting research on critical consciousness of Whiteness in Christian college students for my dissertation. My goal is to examine the relationship between Whiteness and Christian college students.

My study is qualitative in nature, using semi-structured interviews to collect data. I am interested in conducting one-on-one interviews with women and men during the spring 2019 semester. Can I reserve a study room in the library to conduct at least 12 interviews lasting between 60-75 minutes?

If you feel this is a worthwhile study, I would appreciate your assistance. If you have any questions, please contact me at jbrown228@sycamores.indstate.edu or (260) 224-1408. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Jesse M. Brown
Doctoral Student, Higher Education Leadership Administration
Indiana State University

APPENDIX G: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

Date / Time: _____

Initials: _____

Pseudonym: _____

Are you:

A full time student	Yes	No
Identified as White	Yes	No

APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Introduction:

- Welcome and greeting
- Informed consent- nature and purpose of the study, interview procedures, confidentiality (digital recording, transcription via Rev.com, data analysis via Dedoose), freedom to withdraw, questions regarding the study, and sign consent form.
- Participant pseudonym

Open-ended questions re: Whiteness

1. Please describe your racial background.
2. Tell me about your racial journey.
3. What is Whiteness? Can you please provide an example?
4. Tell me how you have experienced Whiteness.
5. What situations influenced or affected your experience of Whiteness?
6. What does Whiteness mean to you?
7. What feelings are associated with Whiteness?
8. Describe how you have seen or experienced Whiteness during your time at MU?
9. What experiences elevated your awareness of Whiteness?
10. How have your views on Whiteness changed since coming to MU?
11. If your views on Whiteness changed, what caused the change?
12. Can you talk about a time that your awareness of Whiteness caused you to change your behavior?
13. Can you describe an experience where it was an advantage to be White? What about a disadvantage to being White?
14. Can you describe an experience where you observed a disadvantage to being non-White?
15. What does it mean to be colorblind?
16. What does it mean to be racist?
17. How do you respond to the term “White privilege”?
18. How does Whiteness influence your personal faith?
19. How does your personal faith influence Whiteness?
20. In what ways does Whiteness influence Christianity?
21. In what ways does Christianity influence Whiteness?
22. How do you respond to the term “faithful Whiteness”?

APPENDIX I: PARTICIPANT FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW REQUEST

Thank you for your participation in the research project exploring critical consciousness of Whiteness in Christian college students at a Midwestern University. As the analysis of the interviews unfolded, I would like to get your reflections on some of the initial findings. Are you interested and available to meet for a 30-minute review of the initial themes?

I will be on your campus during the following days: ___, ___, and ___. I will use the online scheduling system ___ to schedule interviews. Please visit ___ and select an available interview time. Interviews will take place in the ___ on campus and last 30-minutes.

If you have any questions about the purpose or procedures of this research, please do not hesitate to contact me at jbrown228@sycamores.indstate.edu or (260) 224-1408.

I look forward to hearing about your experiences.

Sincerely,

Jesse M. Brown
Doctoral Student, Higher Education Leadership Administration
Indiana State University

APPENDIX J: PRELIMINARY FINDING REVIEW PROTOCOL

Introduction:

Welcome and greeting

Informed consent- nature and purpose of the study, interview procedures, confidentiality (digital recording, transcription via Rev.com, data analysis via Dedoose), freedom to withdraw, questions regarding the study, and sign consent form.

Review of preliminary findings:

1. Based upon __ interviews, here are some of the preliminary themes: _____, _____, _____, and _____. Do these themes accurately capture the essence of your interview?
2. Which themes seem most significant?
3. Which themes are missing?
4. Have you considered additional elements of Whiteness since your interview that you would like to share?