

Luther Seminary

## Digital Commons @ Luther Seminary

---

MA Capstone Papers

Student Papers

---

5-2021

### Public Church Framework as Process for Antiracism: Integrating Racial Identity Development Models and Theological Commitments

Amanda Vetsch  
avetsch001@luthersem.edu

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.luthersem.edu/ma\\_papers](https://digitalcommons.luthersem.edu/ma_papers)



Part of the [Civic and Community Engagement Commons](#), [Practical Theology Commons](#), [Race and Ethnicity Commons](#), and the [Social Justice Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Vetsch, Amanda, "Public Church Framework as Process for Antiracism: Integrating Racial Identity Development Models and Theological Commitments" (2021). *MA Capstone Papers*. 3.  
[https://digitalcommons.luthersem.edu/ma\\_papers/3](https://digitalcommons.luthersem.edu/ma_papers/3)

This Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Papers at Digital Commons @ Luther Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in MA Capstone Papers by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Luther Seminary. For more information, please contact [tracy.iwaskow@gmail.com](mailto:tracy.iwaskow@gmail.com), [mteske@luthersem.edu](mailto:mteske@luthersem.edu).

PUBLIC CHURCH FRAMEWORK AS PROCESS FOR ANTIRACISM:  
INTEGRATING RACIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT MODELS AND  
THEOLOGICAL COMMITMENTS

by

AMANDA VETSCH

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of

Luther Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment of

The Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

THESIS ADVISER: DR. MARY E. HESS

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

2021

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS .....	iii
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
2. THEOLOGICAL COMMITMENT TO DISMANTLING RACISM .....	7
Church is Called and Equipped .....	7
Vocation .....	10
<i>Simul justus et peccator</i> .....	11
Diversity as God’s Loving Design .....	12
3. WHITE RACIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS .....	15
Introduction .....	15
Frameworks .....	16
Helms: White Racial Identity Development .....	16
Rowe et al.: White Racial Consciousness .....	20
Hardiman: White Identity Development Model.....	22
Kellington.....	25
Intercultural Development Inventory .....	26
Pragmatic Applications .....	29
Scaffolded Anti-racist Resource Guide.....	29
Seven Circles of Whiteness - Alishia McCollough.....	33
Eight White Identities - Barnor Hesse.....	35
Key Ingredients .....	37
4. PUBLIC CHURCH FRAMEWORK.....	42
Accompaniment.....	42
Interpretation .....	44
Discernment.....	45
Proclamation.....	47
Critiques .....	49
5. CONCLUSION.....	52

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

### **Tables**

Table 1: Sample Row of Scaffolding Resource Guide .....	30
---	----

### **Figures**

Figure 1. Public Church Framework.....	5
Figure 2: White Racial Identity Development Model.....	17
Figure 3. Rowe et al.'s White Racial Consciousness Model.....	21
Figure 4: A Sample Circle of The Seven Circles of Whiteness.....	34

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

As I write this paper, I sense a tension within myself. I simultaneously feel like there is so much more I need to learn, read, and understand before I can even begin to make claims about race, racial identity development and antiracism, and at the same time, I feel called to proclaim something into this time and place. This first feeling, that there is so much more to learn, is a true sentiment, there will always be more to learn. And yet, the reality that I do not know everything cannot be a barrier that gets in the way of engaging in the work and conversations of dismantling racism and white supremacy. I have learned that I tend to intellectualize what I learn about racism, antiracism and white supremacy. I instinctively move into my head to work things out and understand the theories. This is not a necessarily bad or wrong way to process, but it enables me to remain in a cycle of reflection, without action, or without praxis. As I think of all that I have learned and all that I have yet to learn, I am reminded that the work towards dismantling white supremacy is a long journey, and I will always be developing, learning, and growing. I feel a sense of urgency to arrive at “antiracist” and I am learning that that sensation is a common feeling among people who have been conditioned and socialized within a culture of whiteness or white supremacy.

This urgency is double sided. It is necessary to feel the weight and understand the harmful realities of racism and white supremacy. These realities ought to compel a sense of urgency around the disconnect between what the world is and what the world should be. The other side of urgency is that it can be harmful. The urgency to solve, fix, and eradicate racism can lead white people to dive right into the deep end and then find

themselves unable to sustain that which they originally committed to. The sense of urgency can also lead us to feel like we must move quickly and cannot waste time or energy on people who don't "get it." This is harmful in that we can leave people behind or exclude them from the conversation. If we, as neighbors, family, or colleagues opt out of engaging in these conversations with people who we perceive to not "get it", then there is the potential for that person to continue saying or doing things that unintentionally, or intentionally cause harm to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). Faith Communities that engage in the work of antiracism often have people who are at vastly different places in their journey to understanding and dismantling racism. As many people in the United States are waking or reawaking up to the realities of racism, this diversity of understanding, knowledge, language and experience is evident, especially in faith communities who are engaging in the work to dismantle racism.

These experiences and my work context lead me to wonder: How do we engage in the work of dismantling racism and white supremacy in ways that are developmentally appropriate for where people are at in their journeys? How do our theological commitments inform how we do this work? What resources and tools are available to leaders in faith communities that want to do this? These wonderings and subsequent research lead me to assert that the Public Church Framework can be utilized by predominantly white Christian communities as a guiding process in their antiracism work as it integrates the key ingredients of the White Racial Identity Development frameworks and grounding theological commitments.

I currently work as the Congregational Coordinator for the Riverside Innovation Hub. In this context, I work alongside congregations as they learn and experiment with

what it means to be a Public Church, or a church that is committed to the flourishing of their neighbors and neighborhood. The Riverside Innovation Hub (RIH) is an initiative of the Augsburg University's Christiansen Center for Vocation (CCV). We work with congregations to help them live into "place-based vocational discernment in the public square for the common good."<sup>1</sup> The CCV website breaks that phrase down into its four components. *Place-based* is a claim that the work is and has to be rooted in a particular location. *Vocational discernment* is a way of existing in the world that calls us to be simultaneously listening to our neighbor's stories and God's story. Both of these stories, together, help us wonder and see how we are being called to be, and what we are called to do. It's a spiritual practice and a particular posture or orientation. *Public Square* means that this happens both inside and outside the walls of the church, and outside of our comfort zones. The public nature requires us to be in conversation with our neighbors. *Common Good* means that this orientation is aimed toward mutual human flourishing, especially our neighbors and the common good of the community. The maintenance, growth, or sustainability of the congregation and/or church building is not the priority, the neighbor and neighborhood are. The Public Church Framework is the method through which we develop and deepen the skills, habits, knowledge, and values needed to engage in this work.

We are currently finishing up our time with one learning community of congregations and launching a new learning community. The current learning community is made up of twenty-two faith communities in and around the Twin Cities. All twenty-

---

<sup>1</sup> "Bernhard Christensen Center for Vocation (CCV)," Bernhard Christensen Center for Vocation, accessed March 12, 2021, <https://www.augsburg.edu/ccv/>.

two congregations gather monthly in smaller learning cohorts. I get to facilitate three of those cohorts. My research questions are deeply informed by this context and the congregational partners I get to learn beside. In the summer of 2020, shortly after George Floyd was murdered, the focus of our work with congregations shifted from being about the general intersections and relationships between young adults, church, and neighborhood to explicitly naming dismantling white supremacy and rebuilding the Twin Cities as a priority. The learning cohorts gather around four commitments. The first commitment is to “dismantle white supremacy in our congregation and community and assist in rebuilding the Twin Cities.” The second commitment is to “imagine work that goes beyond the familiar transactional, hierarchical, or programmatic efforts, it will include inward and outward transformation around the realities of racism, and include relational and economic investment in the community.” The third commitment is to “trust and lean on the artforms of the Public Church Framework as method for listening to our communities (accompaniment), thinking theologically about the situation (interpretation), discerning God’s invitation (discernment), and responding/ proclaiming in ways that dismantle white supremacy, create a future for black and brown bodies in our communities, and rebuild our neighborhoods (proclamation).” The fourth commitment is “this work, and these funds, will be managed and led by a team consisting of primarily young adults.”<sup>2</sup>

The congregational partners involved in the Riverside Innovation Hub each have their own particular context, resources, and values. The way that these commitments take

---

<sup>2</sup> Riverside Innovation Hub “RIH June 2020 Covenant,” Google Docs, accessed March 12, 2021, <https://forms.gle/YyXFj24t1csoGzvf8>.

shape varies by congregation. Each month the cohorts gather together to learn, troubleshoot, and support each other. The third commitment is about the Public Church Framework, which is made up of four movements, or artforms.



**Figure 1. Public Church Framework**

The Public Church Framework is a theologically rooted action and reflection model. The first artform is accompaniment, or the movement out into the neighborhood to hear, feel, and see the neighbors' stories, for the neighbors' sake. In this artform we are also invited to hear, see, feel God at work in and around the neighbor/hood. The second artform is interpretation, or the movement into God's story and the congregation's story. In this artform we articulate who we believe God to be, how that shapes our understanding of our neighbor's stories, and how our neighbors' stories shape our theological imagination and values. The third artform is discernment, or the movement between Our Story, God's Story, and Our Neighbor's story. In this artform we learn to hear how God is calling us to be and what God is calling us to. The fourth artform is proclamation. This movement is back into the neighborhood, to proclaim good news that displaces the bad news our neighbors are experiencing. This artform hopefully leads to

more experiences of accompaniment, and back into the movements of interpretation, discernment and proclamation, an iterative process.<sup>3</sup>

My research questions are informed by the learning communities that I am involved in. Most of these learning communities use the Public Church Framework as a guiding framework and most are also explicitly committed to dismantling white supremacy. So then, how can these two guiding commitments engage and inform each other? How can the Faith Communities that have been practicing and experimenting with the Public Church Framework use what they have learned to engage in antiracism work? What other tools and resources are available to understand the various stages of development in becoming an antiracist?

The research driven by these questions leads me to assert that the Public Church Framework can be utilized by predominantly white faith communities as a guiding process in their antiracism work. We begin by naming some key theological commitments of the Lutheran tradition. Followed by a survey of prominent White Racial Identity Development models, and their key ingredients for transformational learning. Then, I conclude with an overview of the Public Church framework and some pragmatic examples of how that framework could function as a guiding process for faith communities committed to antiracism.

---

<sup>3</sup> “Ezekiel and the Public Church: Everything Will Live Where the River Goes - Riverside Innovation Hub - Augsburg University,” *Riverside Innovation Hub* (blog), October 24, 2018, <https://www.augsburg.edu/riversidehub/2018/10/24/ezekiel-and-the-public-church-everything-will-live-where-the-river-goes/>.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEOLOGICAL COMMITMENT TO DISMANTLING RACISM

#### **Church is Called and Equipped**

Often, when white people learn more of the realities of racism and white supremacy, there is a deep desire to eradicate racism. Sometimes the desire to eradicate racism materializes into a desire for a quick-fix or checklist that we can follow to solve it. Much of this tendency can be attributed to the characteristics of white supremacy culture like “urgency”, “only one right way”, and “right to comfort.”<sup>4</sup> How do we combat the urge to make quick fixes? How do we learn to move into and through the discomfort that is often avoided or circumvented at the expense of real, long lasting change? One potential answer to these questions lies within the wisdom of faith communities. Churches are uniquely positioned to respond to the realities of white supremacy and racism because of their community practices, traditions, and theological commitments.

Churches are places where people gather with community to learn and make meaning. There’s a built-in community of practice. This pre-established community means that one does not have to meet new people, and invest the time and energy into developing new, trust-filled relationships. Ideally, those relationships exist within the church community. In the Christian tradition, we gather around a metanarrative that’s centered on the crucifixion and resurrection. We participate in rituals that mark new life, new covenants, and death. We proclaim theological commitments that ground and

---

<sup>4</sup> Tema Okun, “White Supremacy Culture: Characteristics,” Showing Up for Racial Justice - SURJ, accessed March 12, 2021, <https://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/white-supremacy-culture-characteristics.html>.

compel us, like “law and gospel.” Each of these things are examples of conversations and experiences that require courage and vulnerability to engage in, both individually and as a community. Faith communities are therefore equipped with what is required to engage in brave, or vulnerable, conversations. These are the exact kind of conversations and experiences that dismantling racism requires.

Another potential paradox, or tension, for white people in engaging in the work of dismantling white supremacy is that the work happens on multiple scales: individually, interpersonally, and institutionally.<sup>5</sup> On the individual scale, people work to learn, unlearn, and transform their own embodied knowledge and experiences with race and racism. Often this takes the shape of unlearning stereotypes and re-wiring implicit biases. On the interpersonal scale, people work to listen, hear, and engage in relationships in less harmful ways. Often this takes the shape of difficult conversations with friends and relatives, or investing time, energy, and resources into mutual relationships with people of other races, cultures or ethnicities. On the institutional scale, communities, congregations, and other institutions work to eradicate racist policies, systems, and procedures. This often takes the shape of auditing and analyzing data, outcomes, policies and procedures and then reimagining and transforming the structures in place to allow for more equitable and just practices and policies. These three scales are just one way of describing the various interactions required to dismantle white supremacy. Each of the named and unnamed scales are operating simultaneously and informing each of the

---

<sup>5</sup> I do not believe that this understanding of the three scales is unique to me. I believe it’s a synthesis of the ways in which Layla F. Saad, author of *Me and White Supremacy*, and Ibram X. Kendi, author of *Stamped* and *How to be and Antiracist*, articulate the individual and institutional aspects of this work.

others. Church communities are a wonderful example of the intersection of these various scales. Individuals participate in learning and spiritual practices, in community. They practice together in learning and unlearning and expanding their individual capacities, and they commit to this work as part of a community within a larger ecosystem or institution. The institution is made up of people that, in transforming themselves, transform the institution, and in transforming the institution, they are individually and communally transformed. Engaging in the work of dismantling white supremacy in the context of a church community allows people to learn, risk and practice. Then they can pivot to their other spheres of influence, or vocations, to work towards dismantling white supremacy there as well. Working on dismantling racism as a church community allows for this work to be practiced on the individual, interpersonal, and institutional level.

Faith communities are gifted with theological commitments. The theological commitments of the Lutheran tradition particularly, are an excellent example of the grounding truths, or deep wells, it requires to move into the disorienting work of dismantling white supremacy. The theological commitments can function as a grounding truth and a compelling truth. What we believe impacts the way we live our lives. It shows up in the big things like work and personal life decisions, and the smaller, more mundane things, like how we spend our dollars, how we are in relationships, and what we spend our time doing. So, when we say, we believe in a God of love, a God of abundance, a God who can go beyond death, a God who is on the side of the oppressed, our lives mirror those beliefs, both internally and externally. What follows are three examples of theological commitments in the Lutheran tradition, vocation, *simul justus et peccator* and “diversity as God’s loving design,” that can function as grounding and compelling truths.

## Vocation

Vocation, from the lens of the Lutheran theological tradition, refers to God's call to live one's life for the sake of the neighbor's flourishing, from the mundane tasks of daily life to one's role in their collective community and everything in between. Vocation is commonly understood as a choice one makes about their career or family.<sup>6</sup> I assert that the Lutheran understanding of vocation is more mundane and ordinary than that. It includes those things, and it includes the daily, moment by moment things. Vocation is striving to align one's espoused theology with their daily actions and choices, or practical theology. Vocation is particular to each individual and their location. It's place-based.

Vocation has to do with all of the roles, communities, and relationships that one occupies, yet it is not centered on oneself.<sup>7</sup> Vocation is centered on the neighbor and rooted in relational *hesed*, or loving kindness. This relationality is central to who God is, as demonstrated in the *perichoresis* of the Trinity. *Perichoresis* refers to the in-dwelling and fellowship of each person of the Trinity, and the relationship of the whole Triune God, or more simply put, a relationship of mutual giving and receiving.<sup>8</sup> This concept further reveals that relationships are the core of who God is and that these relationships are mutual, not hierarchical.

This lens of viewing one's role in community can ground one into the tradition, and it can sustain the efforts toward dismantling white supremacy, as it reveals that dismantling racism is a long-term commitment to the neighbor in the individual,

---

<sup>6</sup> "Vocation - Google Search," accessed March 12, 2021, [www.google.com/search?q=vocation](http://www.google.com/search?q=vocation)

<sup>7</sup> Martin Luther, "Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount and the Magnificat" (1532) *LW* 21

<sup>8</sup> Rik Van Nieuwenhove, "Trinitarian Indwelling," *The Oxford Handbook of Mystical Theology*, February 25, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198722380.013.20>.

interpersonal, and institutional scales. Viewing dismantling white supremacy through a lens of vocation makes it both urgent and long-term. It grounds us in the collective commitment and compels us to listen to our neighbor and live in a way that brings about mutual flourishing.

*Simul justus et peccator*

The theological claim that humans are “simultaneously saint and sinner” is one of the characteristically paradoxical claims of the Lutheran tradition. A more direct translation of *simul justus et peccator* is “at once justified and a sinner” meaning that we are, at the same time justified by a righteousness outside of ourselves, and a sinner, incapable of perfection.<sup>9</sup> This claim, on face value, may be discouraging, though I believe it’s freeing. We are freed in that we are justified by God in Jesus, and do not have to spend our time and energy consumed by worrying and working towards salvation. The knowledge that perfection is impossible is freeing because we do not need to fret over the “one right way.”<sup>10</sup> We also do not need to be overly concerned that in our attempts to dismantle white supremacy we end up saying or doing the wrong thing because it’s inevitable. We will fail and the impact may inadvertently be harmful, even though the effort was well intentioned.<sup>11</sup>

It is common in “communities of practice” to regularly name the grounding truths of the community. Wegner and Trayner define a “community of practice” as “a group of

---

<sup>9</sup> “Simul Justus et Peccator,” *The Episcopal Church* (blog), accessed March 12, 2021, <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/glossary/simul-justus-et-peccator/>.

<sup>10</sup> Tema Okun, *Characteristics of White Supremacy Culture* (2001)

<sup>11</sup> Augie Fleras, “Theorizing Micro-Aggressions as Racism 3.0: Shifting the Discourse,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 48, no. 2 (May 2016): 3, <https://doi.org/10.1353/ces.2016.0011>.

people who share a concern or a passion for something they do, and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. This definition reflects the fundamentally social nature of human learning.”<sup>12</sup> Often a group that is gathering around a commitment to dismantle racism or white body supremacy will name the grounding truths out loud at the beginning of the time together. Rachel Martin, the convener and facilitator of Cultural Coherence, names two of the groups grounding truths as “all white bodies move and speak in ways that re-wound bodies of culture” and “all bodies are fundamentally good and lovable.”<sup>13</sup> The theological claim of *Simul justus et peccator* has similar, if not the same, sentiments as the grounding truths. This unique and characteristically Lutheran claim can function as both a grounding and compelling truth in that we are justified and freed to spend our time and energy for the sake of the neighbor, specifically towards dismantling white supremacy and knowing that we will never achieve perfection frees us up to “sin boldly.”<sup>14</sup>

### **Diversity as God’s Loving Design**

Diversity is a gift and God’s loving design for this world. Diversity, as a word, has been used in many varying functions, often with unspoken implications. Sometimes, for white people, diversity is a word that carries connotations of difference and brings with it the feelings of shame and guilt that are associated with inequality and complicity. These

---

<sup>12</sup> Etienne Wenger, “Communities of Practice: Learning as a Social System,” 2008, 10.

<sup>13</sup> Rachel Martin, “our grounding truths,” cultural coherence, accessed March 12, 2021, <https://culturalcoherence.com/>.

<sup>14</sup> Martin Luther wrote “Sin boldly!” in a letter to Philip Melanchton to respond to his despair and struggle with sin. The phrase can be misinterpreted to debate the merits of solo gratias or grace alone, in that it allows people to live too easily. Read within the context of the letter, Luther is encouraging Philip to be truthful and forthright before God. (1517.org/articles/sin-boldy)

associations can lead white people to feel uncomfortable and desire to avoid the topic of diversity. The concept of diversity has also functioned in predominantly white church communities as something to be striving towards. This, in and of itself, is a noble goal. However, many barriers remain in the way of belonging in diverse multicultural and multiethnic faith communities. These two seemingly opposite connotations of the word “diversity” have a similar theme. In both cases, predominantly white institutions may be circumventing the difficult work of dismantling white supremacy to get towards a better, racism-free future. Eric Barreto writes, “In our hope to make racism a relic of the past, we may strive too quickly and move too easily into a mode of forgetfulness or denial. By denying the reality of difference, we may end up only exacerbating the problem of prejudice.”<sup>15</sup>

It’s also important to remember that, although the concept of diversity might stir up feelings of guilt and shame, those feelings are more likely to be connected with the associated concepts of inequality and complicity, not diversity itself. Diversity is good, a gift from God. Ideally, we would all be able to fully participate in the kin-dom of God in the here and now, a just and equitable community that is multicultural, multi-racial, and multiethnic. Barreto writes, “Ethnic and racial differences are not the problem. Prejudice and racism inject our differences with the sinful notion that our difference leads to superiority and inferiority or the distorted belief that our differences are merely cultural

---

<sup>15</sup> Barreto, Eric D. "Negotiating difference: theology and ethnicity in the acts of the apostles." *Word & world* 31, no. 2 (2011): 131.

cues for determining who is in and who is out, rather than emblems of God's gift of diversity."<sup>16</sup>

The gifts of diversity are never-ending, they reveal an even wider and fuller picture of who God is. We can learn more about who God is, who our neighbor is, and who we are when we encounter, listen and learn from perspectives other than our own. Considering diversity as a gift is a grounding and compelling truth in that it reminds us that the kin-dom of God is now and not yet, and we are compelled to continue working towards a community where diversity and multiracial, multicultural, and multiethnic communities can thrive.

Given that these three theological commitments ground and compel us, and that churches are called and equipped, how do we, as white people in faith communities, actually go about learning, unlearning and moving towards an embodied antiracist identity and reality?

---

<sup>16</sup> Barreto, 131.

## CHAPTER THREE

### WHITE RACIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS

#### **Introduction**

Groups and individuals often have a difficult time discerning the next step or the “how-to” of antiracism. There are many potential reasons for this difficulty. The work may be unfamiliar or uncomfortable. It may seem as though the responsibility to lead this work belongs to those that have experienced the most racism. One might fear failure or potentially perpetuating more harm. There may be so many ideas that it’s hard to know which one to follow. To be abundantly clear, I believe the responsibility to dismantle racism and eradicate white supremacy rests on the shoulders of those that have built, maintained, and sustained racism and white supremacy, that is, white people. However, it is common to assume that those who have experienced racism know the most about how to dismantle it.

Often there is a desire for a step-by-step guide with easy to follow instructions that lead to eradicating racism. While I don’t think it’s possible to have a step-by-step guide that fits every community, person, or congregation, there are many frameworks, tools, and resource guides available. Sometimes the mere quantity of resources available can be overwhelming.

The purpose of this section is to present the tools and frameworks that are often used as white people develop their racial identity, to provide exposure for greater understanding of the terrain, and elucidate the key ingredients consistent across each framework. I will present five frameworks, share pragmatic examples, discuss the key

ingredients found in the frameworks, and compare those ingredients to transformational learning theories.

## **Frameworks**

### Helms: White Racial Identity Development

The White Racial Identity Development framework was developed by Janet Helms in 1984.<sup>17</sup> This model is a continuum framework that identified development stages on the way towards an antiracist white identity. There are six stages in this framework: contact, disintegration, reintegration, pseudo-independence, immersion/emersion and autonomy. This model, for White Racial identity is based on the previously existing models of “minority” identity development.<sup>18</sup>

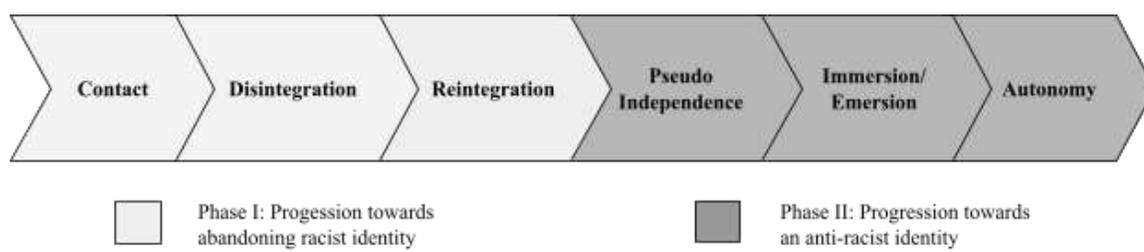
The first stage of the model, contact, is where individuals have little understanding of racism, few experiences with people of color, and a “colorblind” mindset. The second stage is disintegration. As people have new experiences and receive new information their previous beliefs and understandings are challenged. There is a growing awareness of whiteness and white privilege. There can be many emotions involved with this stage, the two most prominent ones are often guilt and shame. The way guilt and shame are processed influences which stage they enter next. If guilt and shame are not able to be processed in a healthy way or if they are repressed, the individual moves

---

<sup>17</sup> Matthew A. Diemer and Adam M. Voight, “White Racial Identity Development,” in *Encyclopedia of Counseling*, ed. Frederick T. L. Leong, Elizabeth M. Altmaier, and Brian D. Johnson, vol. 3, Cross-Cultural Counseling (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2008), 1381, <https://link-gale-com.luthersem.idm.oclc.org/apps/doc/CX3074200478/GVRL?u=mnaluther&sid=GVRL&xid=f2ea1502>.

<sup>18</sup> Wayne Rowe, Sandra K. Bennett, and Donald R. Atkinson. "White racial identity models: A critique and alternative proposal." *The Counseling Psychologist* 22, no. 1 (1994): 131.

into reintegration. In this reintegration, people exhibit a conscious belief of white superiority. They may believe that any privileges white people experience are because they, as a group, are more deserving. Moving out of this stage requires combating those beliefs and feelings and processing the guilt and shame. The next stage is the first stage of positive racial identification called pseudo-independence. People begin to intellectually understand privilege, bias, and discrimination. They then look to People of Color to explain and fix racism. The fifth stage is Immersion/Emersion where people begin to merge their white identity with an antiracist identity, often in collaboration with other white people who are also committed to dismantling racism. The final stage is autonomy, where the person has a healthy understanding of their white identity and is actively pursuing racial justice. They hold a deep knowledge of racial, cultural, and ethnic differences. They are able to accept their complicity in perpetuating racism.<sup>19</sup>



**Figure 2: White Racial Identity Development Model**

This model is most familiar to those in the field of psychology. The assessment tool that corresponds to this model is called the White Racial Identity Attitudes Scale or WRIAS.<sup>20</sup> The assessment tool is a set of questions that one would answer to determine

<sup>19</sup> Jen Willsea and Cynthia Silva Parker, “Summary of Stages of Racial Identity Development,” 3-4.

<sup>20</sup> Matthew A. Diemer and Adam M. Voight, “White Racial Identity Development,” 1382.

which stage they are in. The validity of the model and the scale have been assessed by many researchers, including Tokar and Swanson in 1991 and Helms in 2007.<sup>21,22</sup> The results from the research vary. There is evidence that the WRIAS scale does not correlate with the model and there is evidence that it does.<sup>23</sup> This model became more popularized as it was used in a recently compiled resource guide, Scaffolding Anti-racist Resource Guide that was widely shared on Facebook.<sup>24</sup>

Beyond the validity of the model, the model itself have also experienced critiqued. Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson have five critiques for this model. Their first critique is that it is based on the “assumption that an individual’s identity evolves in response to the oppressive dominant society” and the stereotypes held about them.<sup>25</sup> This comes from the fact that the model was developed based on the previously existing “minority” identity development models, but white racial identity cannot be understood in parallel to the minority identity development because white racial identity functions as the dominant racial identity that is perpetuating the oppression and maintaining the stereotypes of non-dominant identities. Second, “White Racial Identity Development is a misnomer” because the model actually describes how white racial attitudes are developed

---

<sup>21</sup> David M. Tokar and Jane L. Swanson, “An Investigation of the Validity of Helms’s (1984) Model of White Racial Identity Development,” *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 38, no. 3 (1991): 296–301, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.38.3.296>.

<sup>22</sup> Janet E. Helms, “Some Better Practices for Measuring Racial and Ethnic Identity Constructs,” *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 54, no. 3 (2007): 235–46, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.54.3.235>.

<sup>23</sup> Matthew A. Diemer and Adam M. Voight, “White Racial Identity Development,” 1382.

<sup>24</sup> Anna Stamborski,, Nikki Zimmermann, and Bailie Gregory “Scaffolding Anti-Racism Resources” (Google Docs) Accessed March 3, 2021.

<sup>25</sup> Wayne Rowe, et al., "White racial identity models: A critique and alternative proposal." 131.

in response to other racial and ethnic groups, not their own racial identity.<sup>26</sup> Third, “directionality is imposed.”<sup>27</sup> This model assumes that it’s a linear process through stages of development, and those stages have “imposed ethics” with which each stage has a level of desirability or goodness.<sup>28</sup> This is the case with most developmental models, though not overt, and maybe not even intentional, there is an implied ethic. This implied ethic creates the potential for comparison. Fourth, the model is specific to white and Black races, it ignores other racial or ethnic groups.<sup>29</sup> Fifth, and finally, there’s evidence that the White Racial Identity Development Model differs from the White Racial Attitudes Scale, based on the empirical evaluation of Tokar and Swanson.<sup>30</sup> While the particularities of the empirical analysis are outside the scope of this paper, it’s important to note that Helm responded to this critique from Rowe et al. with updates to her model, and this critique, and alternative model, from Rowe et al. was subsequently critiqued by Block and Carter in 1996.<sup>31</sup> These updates and subsequent publications are evidence that the study of Racial Identity development is complex and ongoing.

---

<sup>26</sup> Rowe et al., 131 - 132.

<sup>27</sup> Rowe et al., 132.

<sup>28</sup> Rowe et al., 132.

<sup>29</sup> Rowe et al., 132.

<sup>30</sup> Rowe et al., 133.

<sup>31</sup> Caryn J. Block, and Robert T. Carter. “White Racial Identity Attitude Theories: A Rose by Any Other Name Is Still a Rose.” *The Counseling Psychologist* 24, no. 2 (April 1996): 326–34. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000096242012>.

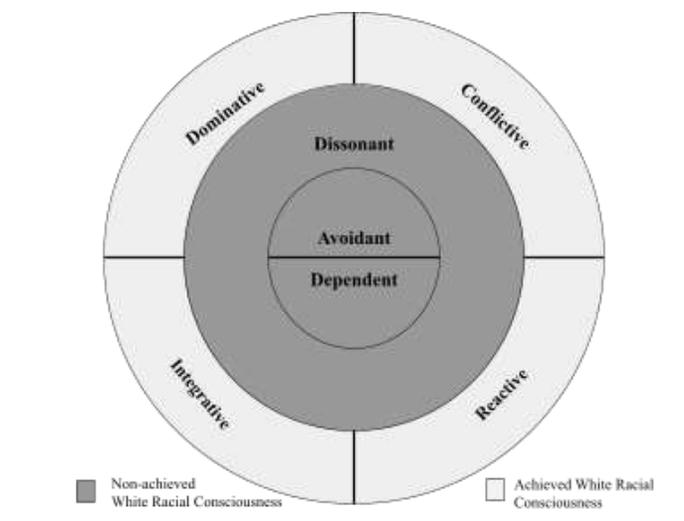
### Rowe et al.: White Racial Consciousness

Rowe et al. presented their critiques alongside an alternative model called White Racial Consciousness. They define white racial consciousness as “one’s awareness of being white and what that implies in relation to those who do not share white group membership.”<sup>32</sup> This model refers to clusters of racial attitudes as “types” rather than developmental stages. Their belief is that “racial attitudes change as a result of experiences that cause dissonance in the person’s cognitive structures or schemas.”<sup>33</sup> This model is separated into two statuses as “unachieved white racial consciousness” and “achieved white racial consciousness.” In the status Unachieved Racial Consciousness, there are three types: avoidant, dependent, and dissonant. Avoidant is characterized as an unawareness of racial issues. If someone in this type does encounter a racial issue, they navigate by ignoring, avoiding, denying, or minimizing it. The Dependent type is characterized by having very few of their own racial attitudes, what attitudes they do hold are almost entirely influenced by the people closest to them, i.e. parents, guardians, or significant others. The third type in the unachieved category is dissonant. In this type, there is conflict between their belief or ideologies and experiences that contradict those beliefs and ideas. This type is transitional, where they might break from their current attitudes depending on the support they are able to receive or the intensity of the conflict.

---

<sup>32</sup> Wayne Rowe, et al., "White racial identity models: A critique and alternative proposal." 133-134.

<sup>33</sup> Rowe et al., 134.



**Figure 3. Rowe et al.'s White Racial Consciousness Model**

The Achieved White Racial Consciousness status contains four types: dominative, conflictive, reactive and integrative. Dominative is characterized by extreme ethnocentrism and white superiority. This type overtly supports discriminations and white supremacist ideologies. The Conflictive type is opposed to direct discrimination, yet they are unable or unwilling to see institutional or systemic racism. This inability or unwillingness to see institutional racism becomes a barrier to transforming systemic racism. Someone in this type believes that most discrimination has already been eradicated and any attempts at structural equity are in fact reverse racism. The Reactive type is aware that racism exists, but unaware of their personal complicity in perpetuating it. This type is characterized by paternalism or overidentifying with a “minority.” The Integrative type is characterized by a multicultural identity with a sense of both their own whiteness and comfort interacting with racial and/or ethnic minorities. See figure 3 for a visual description of this model.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Rowe et al., 136-144.

There are a few important distinctions between this framework, the WRC, and Helm's framework, the WRID. One is that the White Racial Consciousness model is a process, not a linear racial self-actualization, as Rowe believes the WRID implies. The second is that "movement between the statuses and types of white racial consciousness is not necessarily sequential or predictable, but a variable consequence of life experiences."<sup>35</sup> This is most evident in the fact that the WRID model is able to be depicted in a linear shape, while the WRC model is best depicted as concentric circles. A key element to movement through the types is dissonance. There are also some key similarities between the two models, both propose similar characteristics within the varying racial identities or types.

Given that both the WRID and WRC models were developed before 2000, I went searching for more recent publications, assuming that there exists new or updated understandings of White Racial Identity development that have themselves developed over the last few decades. The book "*New Perspectives on Racial Identity Development: integrating emerging frameworks*" was the number one search result. The second edition was published by Charmaine Wijeyesinghe and Bailey W. Jackson in 2012.

#### Hardiman: White Identity Development Model

The section on White Identity development in "New Perspectives" was a description of a qualitative study on white college student's perceptions of whiteness and white identity. The study was conducted by Rita Hardiman and Molly Keehn by interviewing young white college students. The purpose of the study was to get a "fresh look" at how young

---

<sup>35</sup> Rowe et al., 142.

White college students perceive racial identity, privilege, and racism. The themes of the interviews were then compared to Hardiman's White Identity Development Model. Rita Hardiman's model has five distinct phases and four transitional periods between each stage. This model was originally presented as Rita Hardiman's doctoral dissertation in 1982 and in a different publication in 2001.<sup>36,37</sup> While this model would not necessarily be classified as a recent publication, the qualitative study Hardiman and Keehn conducted in 2012 utilizes this model as a lens to understand the results of the study, therefore it is worthwhile to offer a brief description.

The five phases of this White Identity Development Model are Naivete, Acceptance, Resistance, Redefinition and Internalization. This model was based on general principles of social identity development. Hardiman used those principles to understand and characterize the experiences of White Americans into stages, and then illustrated the stages with autobiographical stories from six anti-racist activists. The first stage, naivetes is characterized by an unawareness of racial differences and racism. The second stage, acceptance, is characterized by an unconscious identification with Whiteness and the acceptance of racist behaviors and beliefs. Resistance, the third stage, is when one begins to reject the previously held beliefs of racism. The fourth stage, redefinition, is characterized by the person redefining a new White identity. The final stage is Internalization where the person's new identity is internalized and integrated into their whole person, including their behavior, beliefs, and consciousness. Hardiman also

---

<sup>36</sup> Rita Hardiman, "White Identity Development : A Process Oriented Model for Describing the Racial Consciousness of White Americans.," (1982): 1-243.

<sup>37</sup> Rita Hardiman, "Reflections on White identity development theory." *New perspectives on racial identity development: A theoretical and practical anthology* (2001): 108-128.

explains characteristics of each of the transitions between the stages and shares excerpts from autobiographical works.<sup>38</sup>

Through their qualitative study, Hardiman and Keehn found that the majority of students were in the stages of resistance and redefinition.<sup>39</sup> Some pertinent takeaways from this reading were the concept of “race talk” and the conclusion of “subjectivity.” They wrote, “Racism has not disappeared, it’s become more hidden.”<sup>40</sup> Describing the students, they said, “they used “racetalk” to avoid sounding racist. This “racetalk” enabled participants to avoid directly talking about the racial issues while protecting the racial privileges they have.”<sup>41</sup> The concept of “racetalk” comes from Bonilla-Silva and Forman’s research with college students in the 2000s. They set out to study if self-reporting racial attitudes surveys produce underestimated results. They found a large portion of students held “colorblind” ideologies and that “white respondents appear to be more prejudiced in the interviews than in the survey. They use coded language, or race talk, that covertly refers to raced concepts, and continues to perpetuate prejudiced ideologies without appearing overtly 'racist.’”<sup>42</sup> Examples of racetalk include terms like “urban,” “thug,” and “uppity.”

---

<sup>38</sup> Rita Hardiman, “White Identity Development” 1-243.

<sup>39</sup> Rita Hardiman, and Molly Keehn, “White Identity Development Revisited: Listening to White Students,” in *New perspectives on racial identity development: Integrating emerging frameworks*. eds. Charmaine Wijeyesinghe and Bailey W (Jackson, NYU Press, 2012), 121-137.

<sup>40</sup> Hardiman and Keehn, 132.

<sup>41</sup> Hardiman and Keehn, 133.

<sup>42</sup> Eduardo Bonilla-Silva and Tyrone A. Forman. ““I Am Not a Racist But...”: Mapping White College Students' Racial Ideology in the USA.” *Discourse & society* 11, no. 1 (2000): 50.

The other key takeaway comes at the end of their chapter, in a brief mention of Kellington's research on the subjectivity of racial identity. Hardiman and Keehn reported that the students they interviewed "consistently merged in and out of racial awareness."<sup>43</sup> and this merging aligns closely with Kellington's research on White Women's Identities.

### Kellington

Kellington asserts that it's better to research "White subjectivities rather than white identities, because whiteness is not a concrete thing, and it's constantly changing."<sup>44</sup> The use of subjective theory also allows for the relational nature of whiteness to be understood; "Being white has often been defined not in terms of what whites actually are, but rather by what Others are and what whites by implication are not."<sup>45</sup> She utilized a Q study to better understand the discourses that young white women were using to shape the "spaces of their racialized lives and experiences."<sup>46</sup> The Q study was conducted by providing the women with 50 statements and having them rank them. The analysis of the study provided themes, which Kellington interpreted as discourses. There were three consistent discourses across her study sample. Discourse One was Individualism or holding "A normative view of whiteness." The second Discourse was "Anti Racist Racial

---

<sup>43</sup> Hardiman and Keehn, 135.

<sup>44</sup> Stephanie Kellington. "Looking at the invisible: A Q-methodological investigation of young white women's constructions of whiteness." *Working through whiteness: International perspectives* (2002): 157.

<sup>45</sup> Kellington, 157.

<sup>46</sup> Kellington, 158.

Consciousness” and the third discourse was “Defensive Whiteness.”<sup>47</sup> The discourses function as multiple frames of reference, that can be held simultaneously.

These discourses illustrate that whiteness is not one particular thing or identity, but a multitude of things and many subjectivities. “As individual women engage in the process of making meaning of their whiteness, they both create and perpetuate the boundaries of racial discourses at the same time that they are created and made into white women within them.”<sup>48</sup> A key takeaway from this study is that, because whiteness is a social construct, it’s possible for the discourse to shift and the subjectivities to include healthy understanding of whiteness.

### Intercultural Development Inventory

The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) is the development tool that many faith community leaders are familiar with. The IDI is a popular assessment tool that’s utilized internationally by corporations, businesses, universities, and non-profit organizations.<sup>49</sup> It is purported to be an effective assessment tool across cultures. This framework is not actually a racial identity development model, though many use it in that way. It is specific to culture and one’s competence in intercultural engagements. The framework is a continuum of orientations from monocultural mindset to an intercultural mindset with

---

<sup>47</sup> Kellington, 153-177.

<sup>48</sup> Kellington, 170.

<sup>49</sup> “Who Uses the IDI,” Intercultural Development Inventory | IDI, LLC, August 23, 2013, <https://idiinventory.com/generalinformation/who-uses-the-idi/>.

five orientations: denial, polarization, minimization, acceptance, and adaptation.<sup>50</sup> There are four key pieces to the IDI process. First, the assessment where individuals take a 50-item questionnaire that assesses their intercultural competence. Second, the group profile where the group of people that have each taken the assessment gather to learn more about the Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC) and receive a group profile report, which is a composite of everyone's assessment results. The third step is to meet with a Qualified Administrator to go over the individual assessment results and the Individual Development Plan (IDP). The individual assessment results include their perceived orientation (PO), or where they think they are on the continuum, and their Developmental Orientation (DO), or where the assessment indicates they are actually at. The orientation stage indicates the perspective that someone is most likely to use in situations with cultural differences. The IDP is an action plan based on the results of the IDI assessment. The fourth step is to work through the IDP, some groups also continue to meet in smaller groups to work their plans together.<sup>51</sup>

It's important to become familiar with this framework because it is widely used among churches and faith-based organizations. For example, Luther Seminary requires students to complete the IDI Assessment in their coursework for Christian Public Leader II: Being Public Leaders in a Public Church. Augsburg University requires all staff and faculty to complete the Diversity and Inclusion certificate program, with the IDI being one of the seven requirements. The Minneapolis Area Synod has the IDI listed as one of

---

<sup>50</sup> "The Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC™)," Intercultural Development Inventory | IDI, LLC, August 23, 2013, <https://idiinventory.com/generalinformation/the-intercultural-development-continuum-idc/>.

<sup>51</sup> "Intercultural Development Inventory | IDI, LLC," accessed March 13, 2021, <https://idiinventory.com/>.

their tools for Racial Justice Development where congregations can work with the trained staff to work through the IDI process. The Center for Leadership and Neighborhood Engagement offers the IDI as one of the ways they engage congregations. Regardless of the limitations of this framework, organizations are utilizing it, therefore it is necessary to become conversational, if not fluent, in the language and process of the framework.

A strength of this tool is that it includes both a group profile and individual profile. Congregations can see the range of orientations present in their community and use this information to discern developmentally appropriate next steps. An additional strength of this tool is that it is an assessment. For many people, assessments are a familiar tool that allow them to engage in this potentially difficult conversation in a method that is familiar and therefore less anxiety inducing. The IDP can also be considered a strength in that it offers clear, developmentally applicable next steps. The final, and most important strength of this assessment is that it names the gap between someone's perceived orientation and their actual orientation. It's an intellectual way of naming that you are not as interculturally competent as you may have assumed yourself to be and there is still work to do.

There are also many limitations to this particular assessment. Firstly, it is an assessment of cultural competency, not racial competency or racial identity. Whiteness is a race and the dominant culture in the U.S. so for many of the people who utilize this tool, the concepts of culture and race tend to be interchangeable. For any nonwhite participant, this is not necessarily the case. They likely have a clearer understanding of the differences between race and culture. Therefore, this assessment may not be as effective for people who are able to see and name distinctions between race, ethnicity and

culture. A second critique of this tool, is that it is yet another training and assessment that could easily allow solely intellectual participation. It would be easy to follow the predetermined steps and check the box saying one has completed the assessment, without actually committing to or experiencing transformation or growth. For some, it could be a display of performative allyship, or mandatory participation, rather than a deep transformational experience. For these reasons, the IDI should be considered as one of the tools in the toolbox, and not the only tool in the entire antiracism toolbox.

### **Pragmatic Applications**

The previously discussed Racial Identity Development Models and Intercultural Development Inventory offer an overview of the ways that whiteness is understood through a developmental perspective. Each of these theories can offer greater understanding about racial identity and development. They can also help illustrate how one's understanding of their own identity influences how they act and communicate with others, especially in racialized conversations and situations. As each of these frameworks can offer greater understanding, they can also offer more confusion or potentially create hierarchy in communities working towards antiracism. The previous theories have pragmatic applications. I offer three examples, A Scaffolding Anti-Racist Resource Guide, Seven Circles of Whiteness, and Eight White Identities. Each of these pragmatic applications have recently been popularized, shared and re-shared on social media.

#### **Scaffolded Anti-racist Resource Guide**

The scaffolded antiracist resource guide was developed by Anna Stamborski, M. Div Candidate (2022), Nikki Zimmermann, M. Div candidate (2021), and Bailie Gregory, M.

Div, M.S. Ed and shared widely on Facebook following the murder of George Floyd and subsequent racial uprising. This resource guide is based on Janet Helm’s White Racial Identity Development Model and offers a variety of resources for each of the stages of development.

The guide offers additional resources at the end that are specific to faith traditions or other facets of identity, such as parents, youth, young adults, or educators. The guide is in a table format with three different columns. The first is titled “Stage of white identity development (Helms) and their corresponding beliefs/thoughts/actions” and the five rows below that each have a stage from the model and a brief description. The middle column is labeled, “resources” and each of the rows includes a variety of resources such as activities, podcasts, videos, books, etc. The third column is labeled, “What to do next?” and offers a direction or next step to take for each row.<sup>52</sup> Rather than describing the entire guide, we’ll look at one stage as an example.

**Table 1: Sample Row of Scaffolding Resource Guide**

<p><b>PSEUDO-INDEPENDENCE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “How can I be white and anti-racist?”</li> <li>• Belief that privilege is not based on merit, but on bias &amp; racism.</li> <li>• Rely on BIPOC to address racism.</li> <li>• Might affirm or seek to comfort the BIPOC who</li> </ul>	<p><i>Podcasts:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">"A Decade on Watching Black People Die"</a> (Code Switch)</li> <li>2. <a href="#">"How to Be an Antiracist"</a> (Brené Brown + Ibram X. Kendi)</li> </ol> <p><i>Books:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">So You Want to Talk About Race</a> by Ijeoma Oluo</li> <li>2. <a href="#">Why I No Longer Talk to White People about Race</a> by Reni Eddo-Loge</li> <li>3. <a href="#">The Fire This Time</a> by Jesmyn Ward</li> </ol> <p><i>Documentary:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">13th</a> (Ava DuVernay)</li> </ol> <p><i>Poem</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">White Privilege</a> (Kyla Lacey)</li> </ol>	<p>Begin having difficult conversations with white friends and family about racism and inequality. Begin to think about how you might use your privilege to support anti-racist work.</p>
--	--	---

<sup>52</sup> Anna Stamborski,, Nikki Zimmermann, and Bailie Gregory “Scaffolded Anti-Racism Resources.” (Google Docs, 2020): 1-7.

is addressing racism.	<i>Videos</i> 1. <a href="#">How Can We Win</a> (David Jones)	
-----------------------	--	--

This resource guide was compiled and shared during a time when many resource lists were being generated. The merits of this particular resource guide include the developmentally specific framework, and the variety of resources shared. In comparison with other resource guides, this guide sets out to offer resources that are accessible to people in various stages of their journey. Using the framework of the racial identity development model allows for people to choose resources that are particular to their current understandings and beliefs. The resources provided for each stage are intended to address the idea and beliefs that are common for each stage. The other merit for this particular guide is that it offers a variety of types of resources. This makes the learning accessible to those that learn in varieties of ways, including auditory and visual. It also includes articles and videos that are available at no-cost. This avoids the potential barriers of buying books, or long wait times at the library.

There are also some potential pitfalls with this resource. As there is with any linear developmental model, there is the possibility for judgement or implied hierarchy within the model. This can be especially dangerous if groups are utilizing this resource guide together and they enter this work at a range of statuses. People who find themselves farther down on the stages may want to proceed at a pace that's most applicable to their learnings and this can lead to leaving those that are higher up in the stages behind. Another potential place for error is that people are invited to self-select the stage they believe themselves to be in. As the results from the IDI often indicate, there could be a wide gap between one's perceived stage and their actual developmental stage. This is a

potential pitfall in that it could lead people to jump into a set of resources that are beyond their current understanding, thus creating the potential for reverting backward in their racial identity development.

Finally, the resource guide is not exhaustive. It does not give every resource that exists a corresponding developmental stage, or vice versa. That would not be realistic, helpful, or necessary. One potential flaw of resource lists is that they can allow for people to get stuck in a cycle of learning and intellectualizing. While learning is a necessary aspect of dismantling racism, the pursuit of knowing all about racism can become the goal, rather than dismantling racism. The desire to continue learning is crucial, and reading books to know all the right theories and words has the potential to be an inadvertent avoidance tactic. Especially within academic and academic-like spaces, perusing knowledge is a familiar pattern. It may take extra attention and effort to move beyond this comfort zone towards action.

Dismantling white supremacy requires more of us than acquiring the “right” knowledge. Knowledge is just knowledge; what matters is how that knowledge is embodied or put into action. That’s not to say that learning and unlearning are not necessary. They are critical components to becoming embodied antiracists, and we cannot forget the embodied and active components. Dismantling racism requires, at minimum, an action and reflection model. This resource guide offers some direction for action with the “what to do next?” column. In conclusion, this resource guide has both merits and downfalls. It is an excellent example of a pragmatic application of Janet Helm’s White Racial Identity Development framework.

### Seven Circles of Whiteness - Alishia McCollough

The Seven Circles of Whiteness was developed by Alishia McCollough M.S., LCMHCA, NCC and shared on Medium. An abridged version of the blog was shared as an image on Instagram and Facebook. Alishia writes, “The purpose of the 7 Circles of Whiteness tool is to provide language for the different ways that whiteness exist, promote self-reflection for white people, and defining what anti-racist ally-ship can look like.”<sup>53</sup> The tool gives a name for each circle and gives examples of beliefs or thoughts that are characteristic of that circle. In order from 1-7, the circles are “Circle 1: The White Terrorist, Circle 2: The Post Racial Believers, Circle 3: The Oblivious Instigators, Circle 4: The Needy Ally, Circle 5: The Passive Aggressive Oppressor, Circle 6: The Do “Gooder”, Circle 7: The Lifelong Student.” As an example, the fourth circle is titled, “The Needy Ally” is presented in figure 5.<sup>54</sup> Some of the beliefs and ideas for this circle are “focused on getting antiracism right (perfectionism),” “impulsive around racial justice, often causes more harm,” “will often vent to black people about their frustrations with politics, usually takes up a lot of space and leaves Black people emotionally exhausted and depleted.”<sup>55</sup>

This particular tool may not be accessible to those that have less knowledge or experience in racial identity development. It utilizes terms like “microaggression” and “race splaining” that may not be familiar to those early in their journey of understanding. This tool also has the potential to function as a measurement to place judgement upon

---

<sup>53</sup> Alishia McCullough, “The 7 Circles of Whiteness” Medium.com, accessed Feb 11, 2021, <https://alishiamccullough.medium.com/the-7-circles-of-whiteness-cb60e53d14e0>.

<sup>54</sup> Alishia McCullough, 7 Circles of Whiteness

<sup>55</sup> Alishia McCullough, 7 Circles of Whiteness



**Figure 4: A Sample Circle of The Seven Circles of Whiteness**

someone else who may just be beginning to learn and understand race and racial identity. The examples of phrases and beliefs for each circle are helpful in that they can help spark imagination for what the various circles sound like. It would be easy to imagine specific experiences or people within each circle. For both of these reasons, this tool could be great for self-assessment. It could also be harmful in that it could allow for judgement on someone else based on phrases or beliefs they say. There's an implied morality. The model allows for someone to assume that anyone who is closer to Circle 7 is a better person and anyone closer to Circle 1 is a bad person. While this model does not explicitly make these judgements, it would be easy to extrapolate them from it. Someone's goodness or morality cannot be determined by how much they do or do not know about racial identity.

Another purpose of this tool, as explained by Alishia McCullough, is "to bring more consciousness to Black, Indigenous, People of Color who are interacting with white people within these circles. While empowering and validating BIPOC communities by

offering language to name the experiences they are having with white people.”<sup>56</sup> Though I cannot personally attest to the effectiveness of this tool in achieving that goal, I can assume that it does, to some extent, affirm and validate the experiences that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color experience when interacting with white people.

The Seven Circles of Whiteness is another excellent example of the pragmatic applications of white racial identity theory. This tool would be best utilized by people who are familiar with antiracism and white supremacy. I would not recommend this tool to be used by those early in their journeys to understanding whiteness, racism, and white supremacy.

#### Eight White Identities - Barnor Hesse

On November 10, 2016 Barnor Hesse, an Associate Professor of African American Studies, Political Science and Sociology at Northwestern University tweeted, “8 White Identities: Trump's public persona is 'white privilege' & 'white benefit'. This attracts 'white supremacists'” along with a photograph containing the following text:

There is a regime of whiteness constituted by a set of action-oriented white identities. Those who identify with whiteness typically fall into the following categories:

1. White Supremacist: Preserves, names, and values white superiority
2. White Voyeurism: Would not challenge a white supremacist; desires non-whiteness because it is interesting, pleasurable; seeks to control the consumption and appropriation of non-whiteness; fascination with culture
3. White Privilege: May critique white supremacy, but maintains a deep investment in questions of fairness/equality under the normalization of whiteness and white rule; sworn goal of ‘diversity’
4. White Benefit: Sympathetic to a set of issues but only privately. Will not speak/act in solidarity publicly, because they are benefitting through whiteness in public

---

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

5. White Confessional: Some exposure of whiteness takes place, but as a way of being accountable to People of Colour after; seek validation from People of Color
6. White Critical: Take on board critiques of whiteness and invest in exposing/marking the white regime; refuses to be complicit with the regime; whiteness speaking back to whiteness
7. White Traitor: Actively refuses complicity; names what is going on; intention is to subvert white authority and tell the truth at whatever cost; need them to dismantle institutions
8. White Abolitionist: Changes institutions; dismantling whiteness, and not allowing whiteness to reassert itself<sup>57</sup>

The contents of this tweet were then adapted into an image by Slow Factory Foundation, and shared widely on other social media platforms, particularly Instagram.<sup>58</sup> The purpose of this tool was not clearly articulated. Many interpret it to be an assessment tool for white people to understand where they fall in the list of identities, or for one to assess where those around them stand. This framework can function in a multitude of ways, regardless of the original intent.<sup>59</sup>

In some ways, this tool, and the previous tools are only helpful for those who have come “far enough” along in their racial identity development. While “far enough” is subjective, it seems that these tools would not be helpful or accessible to those whose predominant racial identity development identities fall on the left side of the spectrums or inside of the circles. And that may not be the purpose of this tool. The variety of responses to this tool, and the variety of understandings of racial identity development

---

<sup>57</sup> Barnor Hesse, Twitter post, November 2015, 12:41 p.m., [https://twitter.com/barnor\\_hesse](https://twitter.com/barnor_hesse)  
[https://twitter.com/barnor\\_hesse/status/796784744591724544](https://twitter.com/barnor_hesse/status/796784744591724544)

<sup>58</sup> The Slow Factory, Instagram Post, June 5, 2020, <https://www.instagram.com/p/CBDfDbipjdm/>

<sup>59</sup> Recently, both Dr. Barnor Hesse and the Slow Factory Foundation have received backlash and hate mail in response to this tool being shared by a NY public school. A conservative activist, Chris Rufo, tweeted out against it and his tweet reached the attention of Ben Shapiro and Fox News, all strong opponents of Critical Race Theory. Dr. Barnor indicated that he has received an abundant influx of racist and threatening emails and tweets.

indicate that there is no “one right way” to describe racial identity development or apply the theories into practice.

All of the frameworks and pragmatic applications have the potential to be helpful tools to better understand oneself, their community, and their institutions. And they are just that, tools. They can be utilized to see and name growth, progress and understanding. They can be used to set goals. They can help to name and understand the racial consciousness of our peers, family neighbors, and colleagues so that we can engage in mutually transformative dialogue that seeks to understand each other. If someone is a leader, the tools can be helpful to determine the next, developmentally appropriate, step, resources, or actions. The most critical part is the how. How can they be used further one’s development towards embodied antiracists? Each of these tools and frameworks could just as easily become more theories and words to learn. Or they could be used to judge and dismiss others. Though I doubt that’s the intent of any of the authors or creators, it is possible for them to be used in that way. Most importantly, what can these frameworks teach about what it takes to dismantle white supremacy?

### **Key Ingredients**

There are both similarities and differences across the models for racial identity development. One of the key differences is rooted in how one understands the human capacity to develop. Is it a linear process, as Helm’s suggests? Or is it more fluid movement between statutes and types as Rowe et al. argues? How does identity take shape? Is it a multitude of discourses as Kellington posits? How one answers these questions will be informed by their theological anthropology. If one believes that humans have the capacity and potential to reach a place of racial self-actualization, they would

likely find Helm's model to be the most applicable. If one believes that development does not occur in a linear fashion, and there's a constant tension of progression and regression, they would likely align more closely with Rowe et al.'s model. If one holds a post-structuralist understanding of identity, they would likely align more closely with Kellington's theories on subjectivity and discourse. Each framework can inform the others. I do not believe there is one right answer, rather each of them has their own merits and pitfalls. Each way of understanding White Racial Identity can be more or less useful for a particular context and all it is worthwhile to understand the basic components of each model and racial identity development in general.

There are also some similarities across the models. Although they each use different language to describe it, they each articulate an unawareness and awareness continuum and various directions that said awareness might lead one to. For the purposes of this paper, we are most interested in how one moves further towards an embodied anti-racist identity and what it takes to create those opportunities of growth and transformation in faith communities. In all of the racial identity development models there seems to be three key ingredients that are involved in transformation: contact, dissonance, and reflection in community.

In each model, movement requires encountering a new idea or belief. This new idea or belief could come from listening to someone's story, reading a new book, witnessing tragedy, being helped by an unlikely stranger, so on and so forth. The encounter with a new idea or belief then sits in tension with the previously held belief or stereotype. This leads to dissonance.

How one works through the dissonance, affects how and what they move towards. If the dissonance is repressed or avoided, one might regress in their racial identity or consciousness. If the dissonance is acknowledged and processed, one might move into greater racial consciousness or a healthier racial identity. Processing the dissonance is often done by reflection in community. Rowe et al refers to this piece as support, the IDI utilizes a “Qualified Administrator” and Helms’s WRID encourages collaboration with other white people combating racism. Each of these imply that this work has to be done in relationship with other people, it cannot be done alone. All three of these key ingredients resonate with adult learning theories.

There are many theories about how people learn and the theories can vary by the characteristics of the learners or the context in which they are learning. Learning theorists study and write about how people learn and how teachers teach. Each theory also has specific characteristics. For this paper, we’ll briefly describe components from two thought leaders whose learning theories resonate with the key ingredients of racial identity development theories: contact, dissonance, and community. Paulo Freire, the author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, is a Brazilian educator. Freire’s theories emerged from his experiences teaching literacy to Brazilian adults. He critiques the traditional pedagogy of “the bank model.” This model assumes that the learner is empty and must be filled with knowledge from the educator. It has strong similarities to the model of colonizer and colonized. He proposes that learners and educators co-create knowledge. The educator is a participant and the learner can also teach the educator.<sup>60</sup> A few of the relevant key concepts from Freire’s pedagogical approach are praxis, dialogue, and

---

<sup>60</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1988), 57-63.

conscientization. Praxis is the ongoing and iterative process of action and reflection.<sup>61</sup> It requires theories to be put into action, or lived out. It also requires that one's lived experiences inform the theory, or knowledge. Dialogue is what happens when the teacher and learner(s) engage as co-creators in the learning process. It assumes equality and trust. Through dialogue, everyone learns.<sup>62</sup> Conscientization describes the process of "critical awareness of one's social reality."<sup>63</sup> This process happens through action and reflection and it requires uncovering the dominating myths that influence how people perceive themselves. Freire defines it as, "learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions—developing a critical awareness—so that individuals can take action against the oppressive elements of reality."<sup>64</sup> Each of these three concepts can inform how we learn and transform racial identity. The concept of conscientization describes the key ingredient of contact. Dialogue is one of the components necessary for reflection in community.

John Mezirow is another thought leader. His work is on transformational learning theories. This theory describes the process of transforming or changing one's perspective. He also asserts that transformative learning occurs as a result of a "disorienting dilemma."<sup>65</sup> A disorienting dilemma describes what occurs when a new experience

---

<sup>61</sup> Freire, *Pedagogy*, 120.

<sup>62</sup> Freire, *Pedagogy*, 76 – 82.

<sup>63</sup> "Concepts Used By Paulo Freire - Freire Institute," accessed March 13, 2021, <https://www.freire.org/paulo-freire/concepts-used-by-paulo-freire>.

<sup>64</sup> Freire, *Pedagogy*, 19n1.

<sup>65</sup> Mezirow, Jack, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, first (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1991). 167 – 174.

happens and it does not fit in within one's existing understandings of themselves, others and the world around them. The existing understandings are called a "meaning scheme."<sup>66</sup> So, a disorienting dilemma describes the phenomena of experiencing something in one's environment that does not fit in with their meaning scheme. Disorienting dilemmas are then a catalyst for transforming their meaning scheme. Disorienting dilemma describes the key ingredient of dissonance.

Given what we know about Racial Identity Development, the key ingredients, and the resonance with transformational learning theory, how then might these things be facilitated and implemented in faith communities?

---

<sup>66</sup> Mezirow, Jack, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, first (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1991) 4-7.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PUBLIC CHURCH FRAMEWORK

The Public Church Framework, as developed by Jeremy Myers, can be utilized as a process to guide antiracism work within predominantly white church communities. The Public Church Framework is a theologically grounded method for transformational learning. It is composed of four artforms or movements: Accompaniment, Interpretation, Discernment, and Proclamation. For each artform, I will provide a description of the artform, a few examples of that artform in the context of antiracism and some potential pitfalls to avoid.

#### **Accompaniment**

Accompaniment is the movement out into the neighborhood to listen to the neighbors' story, for the sake of the neighbor.<sup>67</sup> Within this movement people also often hear, see, and feel God at work in and around the neighborhood. This artform requires deep listening and decentering your own story or agenda to hear the neighbors' story. Accompaniment is the part of the process where one is likely to experience or encounter stories, ideas, beliefs, or ideologies that differ from their own, which leads to a disorienting dilemma. In the models for racial identity development, this was the key ingredient for change that's referred to as "contact." Some general examples of accompaniment, are, a prayer walk through the neighborhood, attending a neighborhood

---

<sup>67</sup> "Jeremy Myers, "Accompaniment — Being The Church Beyond The Walls - Riverside Innovation Hub - Augsburg University," *Riverside Innovation Hub* (blog), November 9, 2018, <https://www.augsburg.edu/riversidehub/2018/11/09/accompaniment/>.

association or city council meeting, a one to one meeting with key neighborhood stakeholders, assessing the demographics of the neighborhood using “Know Your Neighborhood Guide” from ELCA World Hunger, or the Community Profile Builder from ARDA.<sup>68</sup> Each of these activities or experiences is a way to listen to parts of the neighbors’ story. Accompaniment, and how you practice it, will look, feel, and be different from congregation to congregation because it is entirely context dependent.

For each of these examples, they could be done as a group effort, or a combination of delegated roles/tasks and group reflection. As people in the church community participate in these accompaniment experiences and listen to the neighbors’ stories, they must also reflect on what they are hearing and learning in community with each other. Mezirow referred to this as “critical reflection.” Reflection questions for each artform (Appendix A) can guide the reflection time together, and they can function as guide posts for the listening that needs to occur within the neighborhood.

For predominantly white faith communities engaging in this work in neighborhoods that are also predominantly white, it’s important to note that there might be an instinct to search out diversity or places where the impacts of white supremacy and racism are very visibly present. For example, there might be a desire to go to a neighborhood that has more racial and ethnic diversity than the one that the church is situated in. I caution against following through on that urge, it could be a manifestation of the white supremacy characteristic of paternalism. It is also VERY likely that your neighborhood, if it’s predominantly white, is also experiencing the harmful effects of

---

<sup>68</sup> The examples provided come from both the previously cited blog post and my own experiences engaging in this work.

white supremacy. It just may be more covert or internalized. Faith communities are often well equipped to practice accompaniment because of their previous experiences in small groups, bible studies, coffee hour and other community practices that emphasize relational conversation.

### **Interpretation**

The next artform is interpretation, the movement back to the church's story to hear, see, and feel God at work in the intersections of your faith communities' story, God's story, and neighbors' story. This artform requires all three stories to be a part of the dialogue.<sup>69</sup> Some faith communities are really good at accompaniment, and interpretation is an area of growth as they are not as familiar with their faith community's story, the shared theological commitments, or the biblical imagination that shapes those things.

Interpretation is the part of the process where you are likely to experience dissonance, the second key ingredient in racial identity development theories. There are two strands of story that need to be unearthed and heard in this artform, God's Story and Our Story, or the faith community's story. Some examples of interpretation could be mapping out the history of the faith community on a timeline, including any history of discrimination, redlining, or exclusionary policies, touring the building to see what story the architecture and art have to say about the community's values and commitments, and paying particular attention to the hymns, sermons and readings for what theological values they

---

<sup>69</sup> Jeremy Myers, "Interpretation - Riverside Innovation Hub - Augsburg University," *Riverside Innovation Hub* (blog), January 22, 2019, [www.augsburg.edu/riversidehub/2019/01/22/interpretation/](http://www.augsburg.edu/riversidehub/2019/01/22/interpretation/).

proclaim.<sup>70</sup> It's essential to include group reflection in this artform, as it is with all the artforms (Appendix A).

### **Discernment**

The next artform is discernment. In this artform we ask, "In light of our neighbors' stories and God's promises, what are called to do? How are we called to be?"<sup>71</sup> The practices of this art form include asset mapping, conversations around capacity and gifts, and dreaming up ideal visions of community. For this artform in the context of dismantling white supremacy, the questions also include articulating a "why" for faith communities.

This process has the potential to act as an antidote to white urgency. It can sometimes be very overwhelming to learn about oppression and racism. Sometimes the magnitude of the problem of white supremacy can lead us to feeling like we need to fix everything immediately. On the other hand, the magnitude of the realities of racism can cause us to disengage. This could be because we don't know where to begin, or we don't know how our little part could even make a difference. To avoid this potential pitfall, it's important to discern your role in the larger ecosystem. This can be both your individual role and, or your Faith community's role within the ecosystem of the neighborhood.

Another component of discernment is discerning somatics, or learning how to listen and pay attention to our bodies. Resmaa Menakem, the author of *My*

---

<sup>70</sup> Amanda Vetsch, "Interpretation Activities" (Google Docs, Jan 25, 2019)

<sup>71</sup> Jeremy Myers, "Ezekiel and the Public Church: Everything Will Live Where the River Goes - Riverside Innovation Hub - Augsburg University," *Riverside Innovation Hub* (blog), October 24, 2018, <https://www.augsburg.edu/riversidehub/2018/10/24/ezekiel-and-the-public-church-everything-will-live-where-the-river-goes/>.

Grandmother's Hands, is a key leader and teacher in Somatic Abolitionism. His work teaches white bodies, bodies of culture, and police bodies how to expand their capacity to stay engaged through racialized stress responses. Resmaa's work invites people to become aware of how bodies respond in moments of racialized stress and work to heal our bodies and brains through somatic practices and communities of practice.<sup>72</sup> His colleague, Rachel Martin, developed a resource that describes some of the somatic responses to stress, with particular attention to white bodies.<sup>73</sup> This resource is depicted as three windows, or rows and a wave moving through each window. The middle row is labeled "social engagement." This is the area where bodies are able to remain in and through stress responses, this is the zone where healing and repair can occur. The bottom zone is labeled "immobilizing defenses." This window depicts and describes somatic responses with low energy. For me, this window can feel like engaging in the conversation or moment will be too much work, or that I'm not equipped to do it, so instead I begin to disengage. In my body, this feels like moving backwards or away, or finding something else to turn my tactile attention to. As I begin to disengage, I slowly lose the attention of what is happening in my body. When I am able to be attentive to my disengagement, it feels like an overwhelming numbing sensation, with some tension in my chest or right at the bottom of my throat, as if the words are getting plugged there. Moving from immobilized back up to the window of social engagement, requires activation. For me, this requires returning my attention to my body, with deep breaths and

---

<sup>72</sup> Resmaa Menakem, *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies* (Central Recovery Press, 2017).

<sup>73</sup> Rachel Martin, "Racialized Stress Responses in White Bodies" (Presented to Augsburg's Undoing White Body Supremacy community of practice, Jan 2020)

taking a moment to scan my body for other sensations that may be happening. This awareness can also pull my thoughts back into it.

The top row is labeled mobilizing defenses. This window describes high energy somatic responses. For me, this window can feel like I have so many things to say, or that I need to talk my way towards proving that I am a “good white person.” It can also feel like I know something is wrong, or that I need to say something or do something, but the fear of being wrong or causing more harm overwhelms me and I freeze up. I experience this in my body as tightness in my chest, a racing heartbeat, and sometimes a drop in my stomach that feels like anxiousness. This way of understanding stress responses can also be applied to communal bodies. For both the individual and the community it is important to discern how our bodies respond to stress and what that feels like in our bodies. So that we can learn to remain in the engagement window and continue to heal and repair.

These two examples of one's role in the ecosystem and somatic discernment are just two examples of what could be involved in discernment for a faith community engaging in antiracism work. Each of these discernment examples are both for bettering one's own understanding and for the sake of the neighbors' wellbeing.

### **Proclamation**

The fourth artform within the Public Church Framework is the artform of Proclamation. This artform is the movement back into the neighborhood, to proclaim

good news that displaces the bad news that our neighbors are experiencing.<sup>74,75</sup> The specifics of the good news that needs to be proclaimed will vary from context to context because it is fully dependent on the lived realities of the neighbor and the skills, gifts, capacity and resources of the church. When thinking about proclamation, there is a potential pitfall of paternalism or white saviorism. However, if the proclamation is informed and co-created by the neighbors, that may be able to be avoided. For it to truly be good news, proclamation must be neighbor centered and mutually transformative. This artform ideally leads to more experiences of accompaniment, and back into the movements of interpretation, discernment and proclamation, an iterative process. Some examples of proclamation include reparations, mutual aid, debt forgiveness, permaculture and land acknowledgements.

Each of the artforms can also exist within the others. The framework is depicted as a cyclical model (Figure 1) and yet it could never be that simple. Each of the artforms are ongoing and informing the others. The purpose of the framework is to equip communities with the habits, skills, knowledge and values to engage as churches vital to their neighborhoods' ecosystem and flourishing. This framework is one way of teaching, learning and experimenting with what it means to be a church that's committed to the neighbor's flourishing. The framework is not the only way to do this, nor is it infallible.

---

<sup>74</sup> Jeremy Myers, "Ezekiel and the Public Church"

<sup>75</sup> Understanding the Gospel as Good News that displaces Bad News is a concept developed by Douglas John Hall in "What is Theology?" *Cross Currents* 53, 2 (2003): 177 – 179.)

## Critiques

Three of the main critiques have been that it's missing a phase 0, it assumes minimization, and it assumes that there is power to give up. The first phase, accompaniment, is intentionally neighbor-centric, however what if the faith community does not feel like they know how to engage the neighbor? OR what if they think they know how to listen to the neighbor but really end up unintentionally causing harm? Both of these questions are important to reflect on. In the first question, this may be a barrier created by the white supremacy culture characteristic of perfectionism. The group may feel like there is a perfect way to go about listening to the neighbors' story, and they are unable or unwilling to do so until they have read enough books, or learned enough of the language, or so on. While these are really important things to continue doing, we will never achieve perfection and failure is inevitable. On the other side of that same coin, some groups may be better equipped after engaging in some learning. This is a conundrum too because it is almost impossible to experience transformational learning without the disorienting dilemma that precedes it. It is worth a continued commitment to learning and unlearning, and we must not get caught in the cycle of perfectionism at the risk of ignoring our neighbor.

The second critique is that it assumes at least minimization. Minimization is one of the orientations on the Intercultural Development Continuum. This developmental orientation describes the place between a monocultural mindset and an intercultural mindset. People in this developmental orientation often see commonalities and minimize difference. Their primary emotion or cognitive approach is comfort and tolerance. This assumption is fair, given that the IDI reports that 60% of the population is within

minimization orientation.<sup>76</sup> The two previous orientations on the continuum are denial and polarization. In Denial the primary emotional or cognitive approach to cultural difference is indifference. In Polarization, the primary emotional or cognitive approach to cultural difference is fear and anger, and in polarization reversal the primary emotional or cognitive approach to cultural difference is shame. In the Public Church Framework, the invitation to listen to the neighbors' stories requires a posture of curiosity and a push to move beyond what is comfortable. This seems to align with the growing edge of someone within Minimization. Curiosity is the primary emotional or cognitive approach to cultural difference within Acceptance, the orientation following Minimization.<sup>77</sup> Beginning with curiosity and moving beyond the comfort zone may be too developmentally advanced for those whose orientation is within Denial or Polarization. It may create an unintentional barrier for people to join and engage and it may be harmful for the neighbors. How can the invitation to listen to the neighbor's story be heard by people in the orientations of Denial and Polarization? How can they be invited to listen in a way that does not cause harm to the neighbor?

The third critique is that it assumes that there is power to give up. Eric Law presents a cycle of gospel living that has two different entry points. The powerful are invited to give up power, to choose the cross. The powerless are invited to be empowered

---

<sup>76</sup> Joanne Reeck, "Intercultural Development Inventory: RIH Group Profile" Presented on Jan 11, 2020.

<sup>77</sup> The primary emotional and cognitive approaches to each developmental orientation was shared by Joanne Reeck in her "Intercultural Development Inventory: RIH Group Profile Presentation," though it is likely that the information is originally from the IDI LLC.

by the resurrection.<sup>78</sup> The public church framework assumes that there is power to be given up. This is certainly the case for the majority of the people who attend the predominantly white churches we work alongside of, though it is not the case for everyone in those church communities, nor is it the case for all of the faith communities in our learning community. How can those whose entry point is into empowerment use the Public Church Framework to claim power? For this reason, I am unwilling to assert that the Public Church Framework can be utilized as a process for antiracism work beyond predominantly white faith communities. The specific scope of this paper is addressing whiteness and predominantly white faith communities. Each of these assumptions and valid critiques, could also be reasons why this framework is developmentally appropriate for many of the people in the congregations we work alongside. However, it is important to hear and see how frameworks may be lacking or who they may be excluding.

The Public Church Framework also resonates with the theological framework offered at the beginning of this paper. The framework is neighbor centered and that aligns with the theological commitment of Vocation. It seeks to equip and deepen Church's skills to proclaim context-specific and neighbor-centered good news into the bad news. For this particular paper, it seeks to equip churches with the values, skills, and knowledge, to dismantle white supremacy and racism so that we may all experience the good news of freedom, liberation, and diversity.

---

<sup>78</sup> Eric H. F. Law, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb : A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community* (St. Louis, Mo.: Chalice Press, 1993) 71-77.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

In this paper, we discussed the ways in which Churches are uniquely called and equipped to engage in the work of dismantling white supremacy and racism. Then we examined the theories of racial identity development and how they inform the ways in which churches engage in the work of dismantling white supremacy. The frameworks can be a helpful tool to better understand the terrain of dismantling racism, to understand perspectives from various places on the journey, and can serve as guideposts along the way. The racial identity models can also be not useful or even harmful. They can be used to judge and exclude others, they can be misunderstood when applied in contexts that are not developmentally appropriate, and they can be barriers that get in the way of community if there are not shared understandings of concepts and terms.

Each of the frameworks had their unique elements, there were also some similarities which were distilled to “key ingredients” of contact, dissonance, and reflection in community. These key ingredients also resonated with adult learning theories and are fundamental to the Public Church Framework. I offered the Public Church Framework as one way that faith communities could engage in antiracism work. The framework has merits and pitfalls. At the end of the day, there will be no perfect framework, no “one right way.” Each community must continue to discern, interpret and respond to their particular context as we all strive to respond to the call to dismantle white supremacy and make the diverse kin-dom of God a reality, in the here and now.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- CCV, "Bernhard Christensen Center for Vocation (CCV)," Bernhard Christensen Center for Vocation, accessed March 12, 2021, <https://www.augsburg.edu/ccv/>.
- Barreto, Eric D. "Word and World - Negotiating Difference: Theology and Ethnicity in the Acts of the Apostles." Accessed March 12, 2021. [https://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/issues.aspx?article\\_id=1551](https://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/issues.aspx?article_id=1551).
- Block, Caryn J. and Robert T. Carter. "White Racial Identity Attitude Theories: A Rose by Any Other Name Is Still a Rose." *The Counseling Psychologist* 24, no. 2 (April 1996): 326–34. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000096242012>.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo and Tyrone A. Forman. "'I Am Not a Racist But...': Mapping White College Students' Racial Ideology in the USA." *Discourse & society* 11, no. 1 (2000): 50.
- "Concepts Used By Paulo Freire - Freire Institute." Accessed March 13, 2021. <https://www.freire.org/paulo-freire/concepts-used-by-paulo-freire>.
- Diemer, Matthew A., and Adam M. Voight. "White Racial Identity Development." In *Encyclopedia of Counseling*, edited by Frederick T. L. Leong, Elizabeth M. Altmaier, and Brian D. Johnson, 3:1380–83. Cross-Cultural Counseling. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2008.
- The Episcopal Church. "Simul Justus et Peccator." Accessed March 12, 2021. <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/glossary/simul-justus-et-peccator/>.
- Fleras, Augie. "Theorizing Micro-Aggressions as Racism 3.0: Shifting the Discourse." *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 48, no. 2 (May 2016): 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ces.2016.0011>.
- Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1988), 57-63.
- Hardiman, Rita. "Reflections on White identity development theory." *New perspectives on racial identity development: A theoretical and practical anthology* (2001): 108-128.
- . "White Identity Development : A Process Oriented Model for Describing the Racial Consciousness of White Americans.," (1982): 1-243.
- Hardiman, Rita and Molly Keehn, "White Identity Development Revisited: Listening to White Students," in *New perspectives on racial identity development: Integrating emerging frameworks*. eds. Charmaine Wijeyesinghe and Bailey W (Jackson, NYU Press, 2012), 121-137.

Helms, Janet E. "Some Better Practices for Measuring Racial and Ethnic Identity Constructs." *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 54, no. 3 (2007): 235–46.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.54.3.235>.

Hesse, Barnor. Twitter post, November 2015, 12:41 p.m., [https://twitter.com/barnor\\_hesse](https://twitter.com/barnor_hesse)  
[https://twitter.com/barnor\\_hesse/status/796784744591724544](https://twitter.com/barnor_hesse/status/796784744591724544)

Holmes, Janet, and Miriam Meyerhoff. "The Community of Practice: Theories and Methodologies in Language and Gender Research." *Language in Society* 28, no. 2 (April 1999): 173–83. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S004740459900202X>.

Intercultural Development Inventory | IDI, LLC. Accessed March 13, 2021.  
<https://idiinventory.com/>.

———. "Who Uses the IDI," August 23, 2013.  
<https://idiinventory.com/generalinformation/who-uses-the-idi/>.

———. "The Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC™)," August 23, 2013.  
<https://idiinventory.com/generalinformation/the-intercultural-development-continuum-idc/>.

Kellington, Stephanie. "Looking at the invisible: A Q-methodological investigation of young white women's constructions of whiteness." *Working through whiteness: International perspectives* (2002): 157.

Law, Eric H. F. *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb : A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community*. St. Louis, Mo.: Chalice Press, 1993.

Levine-Rasky, Cynthia. *Working through Whiteness: International Perspectives*. SUNY Press, 2002.

Martin Luther. "The Works of Martin Luther :Volume 21: Sermon on the Mount and the Magnificat :: The Sermon on the Mount. Translated by Jaroslav Pelikan." Accessed March 12, 2021.  
[http://pm.nlx.com.luthersem.idm.oclc.org/xtf/view?docId=luther\\_w/luther\\_w.21.xml;chunk.id=div.CH1;toc.depth=1;toc.id=div.CH1;brand=default](http://pm.nlx.com.luthersem.idm.oclc.org/xtf/view?docId=luther_w/luther_w.21.xml;chunk.id=div.CH1;toc.depth=1;toc.id=div.CH1;brand=default).

Martin, Rachel. "Cultural Coherence." cultural coherence. Accessed March 12, 2021.  
<https://culturalcoherence.com/>.

———. "Racialized Stress Responses in White Bodies" (Presented to Augsburg's Undoing White Body Supremacy community of practice, Jan 2020)

Menakem, Resmaa. *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies*. Central Recovery Press, 2017.

- Mezirow, Jack. *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*. First. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1991.
- Alishia McCullough, “The 7 Circles of Whiteness” Medium.com, accessed Feb 11, 2021, <https://alishiamccullough.medium.com/the-7-circles-of-whiteness-cb60e53d14e0>.
- “Myers, Jeremy. “Accompaniment — Being The Church Beyond The Walls - Riverside Innovation Hub - Augsburg University,” *Riverside Innovation Hub* (blog), November 9, 2018, <https://www.augsburg.edu/riversidehub/2018/11/09/accompaniment/>.
- . “Best Questions in the Public Church Framework - Riverside Innovation Hub - Augsburg University,” *Riverside Innovation Hub* (blog), October 31, 2018, <https://www.augsburg.edu/riversidehub/2018/10/31/public-church-framework-best-questions/>.
- . “Ezekiel and the Public Church: Everything Will Live Where the River Goes - Riverside Innovation Hub - Augsburg University.” *Riverside Innovation Hub* (blog), October 24, 2018. <https://www.augsburg.edu/riversidehub/2018/10/24/ezekiel-and-the-public-church-everything-will-live-where-the-river-goes/>.
- . “Interpretation - Riverside Innovation Hub - Augsburg University.” *Riverside Innovation Hub* (blog), January 22, 2019. <https://www.augsburg.edu/riversidehub/2019/01/22/interpretation/>.
- Nieuwenhove, Rik Van. “Trinitarian Indwelling.” *The Oxford Handbook of Mystical Theology*, February 25, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198722380.013.20>.
- Okun, Tema. “White Supremacy Culture: Characteristics.” *Showing Up for Racial Justice - SURJ*. Accessed March 12, 2021. <https://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/white-supremacy-culture-characteristics.html>.
- Reeck, Joanne. “Intercultural Development Inventory: RIH Group Profile” Presented on Jan 11, 2020.
- Riverside Innovation Hub “RIH June 2020 Covenant,” Google Docs, accessed March 12, 2021, <https://forms.gle/YyXFj24t1csoGzvf8>.
- Rowe, Wayne, Sandra K. Bennett, and Donald R. Atkinson. “White Racial Identity Models: A Critique and Alternative Proposal.” *The Counseling Psychologist* 22, no. 1 (January 1, 1994): 129–46. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000094221009>.
- The Slow Factory, Instagram Post, June 5, 2020, <https://www.instagram.com/p/CBDfDbipjdm/>
- Sorenson, Erick. “Sin Boldly?” 1517. Accessed March 13, 2021. <https://www.1517.org/articles/sin-boldly>.

- Stamborski, Anna, Nikki Zimmermann, and Bailie Gregory “Scaffolded Anti-Racism Resources” (Google Doc, updated June 12, 2020) Accessed March 3, 2021  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PrAq4iBNb4nVlcTsLcNIW8zjaQXBLkWayL8EaPlh0bc/preview?fbclid=IwAR2i3\\_h8gRpSKcIKF5myqhl-jd\\_5ayIyp8yl1tWGeAAAX6zGCQMwGOIGVoY&pru=AAABcpor1xg\\*ItpcUWxASOFHVMr2SCA4XQ](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PrAq4iBNb4nVlcTsLcNIW8zjaQXBLkWayL8EaPlh0bc/preview?fbclid=IwAR2i3_h8gRpSKcIKF5myqhl-jd_5ayIyp8yl1tWGeAAAX6zGCQMwGOIGVoY&pru=AAABcpor1xg*ItpcUWxASOFHVMr2SCA4XQ)
- Tokar, David M. and Jane L. Swanson, “An Investigation of the Validity of Helms’s (1984) Model of White Racial Identity Development,” *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 38, no. 3 (1991): 296–301, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.38.3.296>.
- Vetsch, Amanda. “Interpretation Activities” (Google Docs, Jan 25, 2019)  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vTNXtOtSENeTAXf8umrJnD6Byjc232txc7AuB6qIHv5CjISWqk7kyYWIDSWYSEnECPqEz3zzZ-O1tjf/pub>
- “Vocation - Google Search.” Accessed March 12, 2021.  
[https://www.google.com/search?q=vocation&rlz=1C1GCEB\\_enUS919US919&oq=vocation&aqs=chrome..69i57j0i433l2j0i433i457j0i402j69i6113.1815j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?q=vocation&rlz=1C1GCEB_enUS919US919&oq=vocation&aqs=chrome..69i57j0i433l2j0i433i457j0i402j69i6113.1815j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8).
- Wenger, Etienne. “Communities of Practice: Learning as a Social System,” 2008, 10.
- . “Introduction to Communities of Practice | Wenger-Trayner.” Accessed March 12, 2021. <https://wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice/>.
- Willsea, Jen and Cynthia Silva Parker. “Summary of Stages of Racial Identity Development,” n.d., 1-6.

## Appendix A:

### Public Church Framework Reflection Questions:

Modified from “Best Questions in the Public Church Framework” <sup>79</sup>

#### Accompaniment

- How are our neighbors experiencing hope & joy?
- How are our neighbors experiencing anxiety, fear and heartache?
- How is white supremacy affecting our neighbors’ lives?
- What are our neighbors’ hopes, dreams and desires for our shared neighborhood?
- Who cares about the things and people our faith community cares about?

#### Interpretation

- Who does our community believe God to be? How does our community talk about God’s role in our lives and our neighbors’ lives? What are the core theological convictions of our faith community?
- How do these theological commitments shape our life together?
- What parts of the biblical narrative do we talk, sing, or preach about? How do these stories and themes shape our life together as a faith community?
- What are the significant events in our faith community’s history that have shaped our identity?
- How do all of these things influence the way we hear and understand our neighbors’ stories?
- How do the stories you encountered in accompaniment push back against, challenge, or affirm your core theological convictions and beliefs?
- What theological commitments do we want to hold on to as grounding truth as we work towards dismantling white supremacy?

#### Discernment

- Where are we hearing lamentation in our neighborhood? What does it feel like, sound like, taste like?
- Have we been part of the problem? What do we need to confess? To whom? Where? How?
- Where and with whom do we sense the Holy Spirit pleading with us to linger, to pay more attention, to listen more closely?

---

<sup>79</sup> Jeremy Myers, “Best Questions in the Public Church Framework - Riverside Innovation Hub - Augsburg University,” *Riverside Innovation Hub* (blog), October 31, 2018, <https://www.augsburg.edu/riversidehub/2018/10/31/public-church-framework-best-questions/>.

- What are the passions, strengths and gifts of our faith community? What role do we each have in the ecosystem of social change? What role does our community play in the ecosystem of social change?
- If gospel is good news, what is the good news that needs to be proclaimed in our neighborhood in order to liberate people from the bad news we have heard in the neighborhood?
- Given what we have seen and heard in our neighbors' stories, God's stories, and our stories - who is God calling us to be? What is God calling us to do?

#### Proclamation

- What do we need to do to live into who God is calling us to be, what God is calling us to do, sacrifice or risk, and how God is calling us to show up in this neighborhood?
- How is this good news already being proclaimed in the neighborhood? Who can we partner with?
- Does anything need to die in order for this new story to live?
- How do we go about proclaiming this good news? Who needs to be involved? How might we fail? What are we not able to see or understand, and what might be limiting our perspective?
- How does this proclamation create opportunities for accompaniment?