

Challenges to Multicultural Leadership

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- Whiteness as the standard
 - A primary reason for the continued existence of much racial tension and separation in the 21st century is the normality of whiteness and the perceived abnormality of other skin colors.
 - “The subtle racism of twenty-first century America is ‘civilizational racism,’ a mindset that assumes whiteness to be normative and superior.”¹
 - Many people believe what stems from white assumptions, culture, needs, and thinking should be given priority over and against the needs and preferences of all minority cultures, and all minority cultures should conform to whiteness and its dominance.
 - The idea of whiteness as the standard influences almost every aspect of American life.
 - “The power of white-as-normal is so common that it regulates social and political structures, often without participants recognizing they are its willing disciples. White-as-normal shapes what is believed to be civilized behavior. Historical depictions of Jesus and of God as white render this regulating practice as sacred, giving religious justification to the normative role of whiteness.”²
 - This also includes deferring to white preferences in all major areas of life, including language used, beliefs espoused, and actions considered acceptable in public. “The subtle and sometimes unconscious ideology of white superiority is the fundamental problem in American race relations. White superiority is a system in which ‘white’ bodies, and cultural and social practices associated with those deemed ‘white’—are seen as normative and superior, and through which white people are granted advantaged status of various kinds.”³
- Maleness as the standard.
- America as the standard.

¹ Harvey, Jennifer, Karin A. Case, and Robin H. Gorsline. *Disrupting White Supremacy from Within: White People on What We Need to Do*. Pilgrim Press, 2008. 22.

² Williams, Reggie L. "Seeing whiteness: EXERCISES IN UNDERSTANDING RACE." *The Christian Century* 133, no. 15 (July 20, 2016): 25

³ Harvey, Jennifer, Karin A. Case, and Robin H. Gorsline. *Disrupting White Supremacy from Within: White People on What We Need to Do*. Pilgrim Press, 2008. 4.

Initial steps to support Multicultural Leadership

- Recognize that your experience is not the standard.
- Recognize/acknowledge the challenges others face.
 - Women in male dominated contexts.
 - African Americans in white dominated contexts.
 - Korean in American dominated contexts.
- Invite and practice openness to alternative views and ideas.
- Recognize and anticipate potential discomfort you may feel from not being in control.
- Recognize and anticipate potential discomfort felt by those who are given opportunity to lead but are not used to it.
- Recognize and anticipate tendency to unfairly expect women and minorities in leadership to represent every other woman or minority.