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**Making It Plain Building a Biblical Framework for Deconstructing White Racist and
Supremacist Thought Narratives for the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer Atlanta and
Others**

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Abstract

Making It Plain Building a Biblical Framework for Deconstructing White Racist and Supremacist Thought Narratives for the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer Atlanta and Others.

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My innovation examines a biblical framework as license to interrogate the teaching methods of a white supremacist pedagogy to deconstruct white supremacist pedagogies. I demonstrate how Elliott Eisner's formula for culture construction and Gordon Allport's definition of prejudice diagnosed the environment for racist sustainability. My innovation educates learners to question normative racist narratives, examine white supremacy's faulty premises, and identify cultural and individual contributions to racism and white supremacy's evolution and sustainability. My innovation can imbue and empower learners to use their power to deconstruct white racist and supremacist thought and narratives.

Making It Plain Building a Biblical Framework for Deconstructing White Racist and Supremacist
Thought Narratives for the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer Atlanta and Others

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Making It Plain: Building a Biblical Framework for Deconstructing White Racist and Supremacist Thought Narratives for the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer- Atlanta and Others.

I.

Introduction: Bearing False Witness: The Foundation for a Racist American History.

In 1903, W.E.B. Dubois predicted,” the problem of the twentieth Century is the problem of the color line.”¹ The injustices and resulting trauma from racism and white supremacy continue to cause problems and pain for people of color here in the 21st Century as well.² Racial bigotry or prejudice, the deep-seated dislike for a person of a different constructed racial designation, remains an impediment to racial justice and equality.³

America as we know it remains firmly in the grasp of a White Supremacist culture supported by a racist infrastructure that continues to dole out financial advantages to some and extreme trauma and hardships to others, based on the color of one’s skin.⁴ In *Slavery by Another Name*, Douglas Blackmon posits, “African Americans and other people of color are trapped in a moral, economic, and political web of seemingly inescapable, racist behaviors and White supremacist thought.”⁵ I assert that for many people of color, this situation remains true. Isabel Wilkerson would refer to this as a modern-day caste system. She explains,

¹ W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, New York, NY, Signet Classics Penguin Group, 2012, 17

² Resmaa Menakem, *My Grandmother’s Hands, Racialized Trauma and the Pathways to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies*, Las Vegas, NV, Central Recovery Press, 2017, 7.

³ Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice, 25th Anniversary Edition*, New York, NY, Perseus Books Publishing LLC, 1979, 6.

⁴ Joy DeGruy, *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America’s Legacy of Enduring Injury & Healing*, Joy DeGruy Publications Inc., 6.

⁵ Douglas A. Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II*, New York, NY, Anchor Books, 2008, 108.

“Caste is the granting or withholding of respect, status, honor, attention, privileges, resources, the benefit of the doubt, and kindness to someone on the basis of their perceived rank or standing in the hierarchy.”⁶ Yet, many in our society are still in some form of denial that racism, because of its “chameleonic” nature is real and continues to harm people of color.⁷

Lee D. Baker addresses how the embedded notion of whiteness is a function of public policy and not biology. Lee states that:

Race in the United States is at once an utter illusion and a material reality, a fiction and a ‘scientific’ fact. It is a political wedge and a unifying force. It is structured by legislation yet destabilized by judicial fiat, shaped by public opinion but also configured by academic consensus.⁸

Lee explains, “In the United States people use “commonsense” racial categories every day to identify strangers and social situations or to help form their own identities. Racial categories are regarded as “natural” or as having some inherent biological component.” Yet “categories of race in the United States have little to do with natural history and a great deal to do with social and political history.”⁹

This way, race, according to David Theo Goldberg, “pretends to universality in undertaking to draw otherwise disparate social subjects together into a cohesive unit in terms of which common interests are either found or fabricated.”¹⁰ Boyung Lee argues that Elliot Eisner’s three-prong approach that employs explicit, implicit, and null curricula infused white supremacist thought into the American culture.¹¹ This curriculum or system of beliefs created for people of color an

⁶ Isabel Wilkerson, *Caste, The Origins of Our Discontent*, New York, NY, Random House, 2020, 70

⁷ David Theo Goldberg, *Racist Culture, Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning*, Cambridge, MA, Blackwell Publishers Inc. 1995, 3

⁸ Baker, Lee D. *From Savage to Negro, Anthrophony and the Construction of Race, 1896-1954*, Berkeley, CA, 1998, 1.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ David Theo Goldberg, *Racist Culture, Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning*, Cambridge, MA, Blackwell Publishers Inc. 1995, 4.

¹¹ Lee, Boyung, *Transforming Congregations through Community, Faith Formation from the Seminary to the Church*, Louisville, KY, Westminster John Knox Press, 2013, 56.

"immutable inferiority that was linked to heredity, biology, and mental capacity."¹² Its lesson is that White people dominate the world because they are superior beings who "were meant to rule."¹³ Khalil Gibran Muhammad writes that Hoffman successfully made "racism invisible" in the plight of the Negro.¹⁴ Invisible racism is the lesson of a curriculum essential for cultural misdirection, or "imprecise knowledge," that serves as the perfect soil for racism and white supremacy to thrive.¹⁵ In his book *Black Labor, White Wealth*, Claud Anderson states, "Black slavery was, purely and simply, racial and economic exploitation."¹⁶ Today, the manifestation of wealth supremacy is the wealth gap in American society. Mehrsa Baradaran's *The Color of Money* describes how the black banking system contributed to the paucity of black wealth in America under the guise of supportive measures.¹⁷ She shows that support for black capitalism also meant assigning to black communities "ownership of the problem of poverty."¹⁸ In my own words, white supremacy is a wealth supremacy construct that still operates somewhat seamlessly in our world.

The historian Howard Zinn stated that racism and white supremacy are historical, not natural. Since this behavior has a beginning, it can also have an ending.¹⁹ Howard Zinn's assertion is foundational to my theory of change. Because white supremacy and racism are historical power

¹² Fisher, Linford, *Oxford Handbook of Religion and Race in American History, Natives, Religion, and Race in Colonial America*, New York, NY, 2018, 324.

¹³ Ibid, 325.

¹⁴ Muhammad, Khalil, Gibran, *The Condemnation of Blackness, Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2010, Preface 2019, 56

¹⁵ Fulkerson, Mary, McClintock, *Places of Redemption, Theology for a Worldly Church*, New York, NY, 2010, 43

¹⁶ Claud Anderson, *Black Labor, White Wealth, The Search for Power and Economic Justice*, Edgewood, MD, Duncan & Duncan, Inc., 1994, 68

¹⁷ Mehrsa Baradaran, *The Color of Money, Black Banks and the Racial Wealth Gap*, Cambridge, MA, Belknap Press of Harvard, First Harvard University Press paperback edition, 2019, 2

¹⁸ Ibid, 165

¹⁹ Zinn, Howard, *A People's History of the United States*, New York, NY, HarperPerennial, 2003, 38.

relationships between people of color and white people and not a natural power relationship, denying white supremacy is possible and its immutability reversible.²⁰

II. Contextual Description

Lutheran Church of the Redeemer (LCR), founded in 1903, served as Atlanta's first English-speaking Lutheran congregation. The congregation moved to its present location in 1937.

Currently, LCR has 1,700 members with fewer than 40 people of color.²¹ This congregation reflects the overall demographics of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at 95% white, predominately middle-class, and aging. The membership ranges from very politically conservative NRA members who have vocally supported banning Critical Race Theory being taught in schools and advocated for legislation that many see as voter suppression. Some of these conservative members describe themselves as Sons of the South. I receive the most resistance to my sermons that address politicized moral issues from this group. At one point, some members of this group led an effort to analyze several of my sermons for offensive political leanings to the sensitivity of the congregation. Because this congregation also has some very liberal, politically progressive members who were very active during the Civil Rights Movement and are friends with known Civil Rights leaders, this group balanced out the conservative members of the analyzing sermon group. This defeated the conservatives who really wanted to handcuff my ability to exegete the biblical text.

I have served this congregation for three years, and I am their first Black Pastor, but not the first Black person on their staff. My ministry areas cover Community Engagement, Diversity, and

²⁰ Zinn, *People's History*, 38.

²¹ LCR's Annual Report.

Justice, and most recently, I have assumed responsibility for our Small Groups Ministry. In the first two ministry areas, I have been able to provide innovations to the congregation, not in the style of worship but in terms of their civic or political engagement.

In 2020, a group of conservative members left Redeemer and the ELCA to form a new congregation, in a new Lutheran Denomination, sensitive to their political and theological points of view. This group initially totaled about 40 people, but estimates indicate that under the cover of COVID, more have left and joined what has become St. Martins Lutheran Church. Some wondered if my presence led to this splinter; however, the idea of the split began to gain traction before I started interviewing for a pastoral position. In one council meeting in 2019 (before the split), a group of Conservative Council members and their guests objected to several ELCA policy statements that had passed at the ELCA Churchwide meeting. Of particular concern were the apology to Black people for enslavement and a desire to have authentic diversity.

One objector stated, "The idea of an apology was the dumbest thing he had ever heard." This sent the meeting into an uproar, and polarizing statements went back and forth. After about 10 minutes of intense arguing and the tossing of accusations, I was strongly encouraged to engage in the conversation. I offered a historical outline of American history that addressed the underlying question "when were Black people going to get over slavery" and resentment to the ELCA's apology for enslavement. I shared what could be determined as an example of a "null curriculum" and how it reinforced popular notions of white supremacy and shared that many Black people were "over" enslavement by 1866. I shared with them how the dismantling of Reconstruction and the institution of Jim Crow laws and policies ensured the present disparities.

I discussed my "lingering effects" concept and gave a clear example of "authentic diversity." After my responses, the room calmed down, and we could continue with the meeting. One of the members thanked me for my measured and thorough answer to his question regarding diversity. The person who initiated the dispute shared that he better understood the apology issue. He later shared with our Senior Pastor that he wished my response "had been recorded." I know that there were not any Liberal converts that night, but they realized that there is more than one viable and intelligent perspective on sensitive racial issues.

What has remained is a substantial remnant of Conservatives and a sense that others who remained are progressive, liberal, open-minded, and nice. Being "nice" is true for most of Redeemer's members, but as Robin DiAngelo writes, being "nice" can also be problematic for addressing issues of race and racism.²² I will address the issue of niceness in more detail later in this paper.

LCR also fits the classic pattern of an Aesthetic patterned congregation. According to the research of L. Edwards Phillips, it has a Gothic Style structure with High-Church symbolisms of art, architecture, style of worship, and music. LCR continues in the classical Aesthetic pattern, including a classic Gothic-styled sanctuary with high ceilings, a center aisle, and two side aisles where the announcing pastor can hurry down to join the processional. The nave of the building fits the classic pictorial description of a Gothic-style structure (see page 115 *The Purpose, Pattern, & Character of Worship* L. Edward Phillips, 2020, Abingdon Press). The style was typical in early 20th Century mainline church building construction with an elevated pulpit that

²² DiAngelo, *Nice Racism*, 15.

restricts the movement of the presenter or pastor who is sharing the sermon. The focus is on the front and center of the church, where a displayed depiction of Christ or the cross is central to the worship space. As an Aesthetic patterned congregation, the desire is to attract middle and upper-middle-class, well-educated members. Our congregation is not exclusively middle and upper-middle-class people, but that is the dominant appearance of the congregation. If the telos of the Aesthetic pattern is to shape persons to be "more spiritually sensitive," and if the evidence of that is by a ministry to the poor, then LCR has done a good, not perfect, job of achieving that goal. Redeemer is a congregation that seeks to be the "front porch" of Midtown, one that believes, "through Redeemer, the world will see Jesus.

III. Theological Grounding

Renewing Our Minds Romans 12:2 "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God- what is good and acceptable and perfect."

The Apostle Paul summoned and challenged those who identified as Christians not to conform to the status quo thinking of his day. The Apostle was challenging those who followed his teachings to put aside the accepted behavior of established cultural practices and renew their minds, develop a new manner of conduct for their daily lives, go beyond the familiar and safe narratives, and discern the truth of the matter. In the book, *The Courage to Be*, Paul Tillich describes the "collective" that helps provide meaning for the individual and offers a sense of comfort and relief from anxiety. I contend that for some, the state of mind called white supremacy provides a collective experience that relieves everyday anxiety against the uncertainty of life.²³

²³ Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, New Haven, CT, and London, UK, Yale University Press, 1952, 42-45.

Through this innovation, learners will address renewing or changing their minds and not conform to modern racist and white supremacist beliefs. This innovation will disrupt one's system of associated beliefs.²⁴ This innovation's goal will help learners' ability to disrupt the problem of DuBois' concept of the color line and bring into the 21st Century what the Apostle Paul called his followers to do in the 1st Century, "to renew their minds."²⁵

IV. Innovation: Making It Plain

In Dr. Martin Luther King's *I Have a Dream Speech*, he offers a vision of the progeny of former enslaved people and enslavers to work together to bring peace and racial justice.²⁶ In this plea, I find encouragement to do this work at Redeemer, with people who self-identify as progeny of enslavers regardless of the resistance. The goal of this innovation is to create an antiracist congregation. In *Community: The Structure of Belonging*, Peter Block writes, "All transformation is linguistic, which means that we can think of community as essentially a conversation. This means that if we want to change the community, all we have to do is change the conversation."²⁷ The "all we have to do" part obfuscates the complexity of the challenge but the point is made regarding changing the culture requires changing the language, which entails changing the mindset of Redeemer members.

²⁴ Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking Fast and Slow*, New York, NY, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, paperback edition, 2022, 71

²⁵ Holy Bible, *Romans 12:2*, New International Version, New York, NY, Oxford University Press, 1984, 1448.

²⁶ This speech known as the, I Have a Dream speech, but it was initially a speech about reparations that the audience did not react to. Because of the encouragement of Mahalia Jackson, Dr. King recited a speech he had given earlier in the year.

²⁷ Peter Block, *Community, The Structure of Belonging*, Oakland, CA, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2018, 31.

This innovation employs directed study in the form of bible study, book clubs, and small group ministry book and video discussions. Travel to historic sites, museums, and other places of learning will engage learners in having an increased understanding how racism works in our society and how it remains a source of trauma for persons of color. These methods, along with feedback, will enable meaningful multicultural engagement and inclusion in all aspects of the life of this congregation.

This creates a cultural challenge therefore; this innovation is not without resistance and challenges. In *Agents of Change* Sanjerijn Cels, Jorrit De Jong, and Frans Nauta write: “A keen observer of strategy and tactics in sixteenth-century politics, Niccoló Machiavelli wrote, "There is no more delicate matter to take in hand, nor more dangerous to conduct, nor more doubtful in its success, than to be a leader in the introduction of changes.”²⁸

One form of resistance is the discussion regarding the fairness of Black people having the burden or responsibility to lead white people in racial awareness training. The author Reni Eddo-Lodge, who may have started this concern with her 2014 blog, clearly states that her reservation about talking to “white people” about race was not a universal reservation.²⁹ Robin DiAngelo's book *White Fragility* posits that one can have a graduate or professional level education "without ever having to speak about race.”³⁰ This leads to the potential problem of untrained and not deeply

²⁸ Sanjerijn Cels, Jorrit De Jong, Frans Nauta, *Agents of Change, Strategy and Tactics for Social Innovation, Innovative Governance in the 21st Century*, Volume six, Anthony Saich Series Editor, Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution Press, 2012, 213.

²⁹ Reni Eddo-Lodge, *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race*, New York, NY, Bloomsbury Publishing, paperback edition, 2019, xiii-xvi.

³⁰ Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility, Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*, Boston, MA, 2018, 8.

invested people charged with the task of leading antiracism training.³¹ Peter Kivel in his book *Uprooting Racism*, witnessed a similar Jane Elliott training.³² DiAngelo further states, "Interrupting the forces of racism is ongoing, lifelong work because the forces conditioning us into racist frameworks are always at play; our learning will never be finished."³³ I will posit that another relevant question is, where will people get the skill, impetus, or empathy to unlearn their conditioning of individuality and accurately interrogate their "group membership," as DiAngelo describes it?³⁴ Again DiAngelo states: "Thus, reflecting on our frames (white people) is particularly challenging for many white people, because we are taught that to have a racial viewpoint is to be biased. Unfortunately, this belief protects our biases, because denying that we have them ensures that we won't examine them."³⁵

Without an honest and effective examination of white values or beliefs, racial progress will stall. The question becomes, where will the impetus for a shift in understanding come from? To rule out trained and knowledgeable persons of color from this process is in itself just another manifestation of white supremacy in action. Thus, the change from mere reflection to the hard work of self-examination is often unwelcome and can trigger white fragility.³⁶

Back to Getting Around "Niceness."

³¹ I attended an SHRM diversity training led by Jane Elliott. Ms. Elliott asked the room full of diversity managers what the most recent book they had read written by a person of color. I do not believe that a single manager that identified as white was able to respond in the affirmative. This led Ms. Elliott to ask how one can lead in an area they know little to nothing about?

³² Paul Kivel, *Uprooting Racism How White People Can Work for Racial Justice*, 4th Edition, Gabriola, BC, New Society Publishers, 2017, 51.

³³ DiAngelo, *White Fragility*, 9

³⁴ DiAngelo, *White Fragility*, 11.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 11.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 153

Another form of resistance is niceness. As this project acknowledges, there are many factors to America's development and sustainability of racism and White Supremacy. This innovation is designed to deconstruct the "master's house" by adequately understanding the tools and devices used to build it.^{37 38} This way, this innovation does not rely solely on addressing history or presenting facts but also addresses cultural values or mores.³⁹

In *Nice Racism*, DiAngelo covers how white fragility can disrupt antiracism efforts when white people become uncomfortable during these trainings.⁴⁰ One of the problems with pursuing injustice with learners who are primarily white is the matter of learners or participants (those who attend antiracism training but are not committed to becoming antiracists) "cherry-picking" what will be discussed and when it will be discussed, if at all.⁴¹

DiAngelo brings this matter to the forefront by sharing this story about a class's reaction to an antiracism colleague. This "cherry-picking" behavior DiAngelo describes as "the cornerstone of imperialism."⁴² The status quo leadership (white leadership) decides what is on the agenda.

Now, watching this group sitting comfortably on their chairs and effortlessly receiving the result of Carolyn's labor, I saw a metaphor for colonialism. This group, in essence, says, "We will observe you and seek to understand you. In doing so, we will relax while you work. You will provide us with the fruits of

³⁷ Lorde, Audre, *Sister Outsider, Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde*, Berkeley, CA, Crossing Press, 2007, 112. In this essay, Audre Lorde expresses her doubt about "dismantling the master's house" by using the tools that built it. She does not fully define those tools beyond patriarchy and focus of concerns. This innovation carefully examines what those tools are. While honoring Lorde's assessment, I will pinpoint curriculum, prestige, and contact as tools to deconstruct the narrative that supports racism and White Supremacy as legitimate assumptions.

³⁸ DiAngelo, Robin, *Nice Racism, How Progressive White People Perpetuate Racial Harm*, Boston, MA, Beacon Press, 2021, xvi, Robin DiAngelo states that Lorde was "critiquing feminists of the 1970s and '80s who claimed to represent all women... Lorde's quote speaks to the dilemma of challenging the system from within.

³⁹ Goldberg, *Racist Culture*, 112.

⁴⁰ DiAngelo, *Nice Racism*, xvi.

⁴¹ DiAngelo, *Nice Racism*, xi.

⁴² *Ibid*, xi.

your labor. We'll receive these fruits and consider them. We'll decide what to keep and what to reject—what we deem worthy of consideration and what we don't.⁴³

In most cases, these people are in relationships with BIPOC communities but have a blind spot in their ability to take instruction or accept BIPOC leadership. This may result from some form of an implicit bias curriculum that has taught this person that they should be in charge because of their identified race, gender, education, and socio-economic status.⁴⁴

Thus, the effective unlearning of this behavior must go beyond people indoctrinated in the beliefs of white exceptionalism as normative. In an article regarding epistemology and science, Alvin I. Goldman states "A very large class of beliefs that are ordinarily presumed to be justified will turn out not to be justified."⁴⁵ This statement is relevant to the discussion of the epistemology of white supremacy, which is a conclusion based on beliefs and not proof. Therefore, a force outside the normative framework or inertia of white supremacy as normative is required to create change. Thusly, only people with a renewed mind of discernment will interrogate formerly, though not accurately, justified beliefs.

Theory of Change:

This innovation addresses the issues of economic and power values. It has helped learners at Redeemer to recognize how a white supremacist pedagogy (WSP) has shaped their thinking and

⁴³ DiAngelo, *Nice Racism*, x-xi.

⁴⁴ Wilkerson, *Caste*, 274

⁴⁵ Alvin Goldman, *Chapter Four: The Sciences and Epistemology*, *The Oxford Handbook of Epistemology*, Paul K. Moser General Editor, New York, NY, Oxford University Press, 202, 156.

influenced their behavior. This innovation provides the tools of listening and discernment regarding the systemic advantage given to them as white people. This innovation has helped learners evolve from being oblivious, a mindset of denying advantages, to a mentality of consciousness or awareness of their advantages as being identified as white. By developing a culture of questioning white exceptionalism, learners are developing the ability to override decisions based on automatic or associated responses to negative stereotypes about people of color learned as part of a white supremacy pedagogy (WSP). In this developing mindset of renewal and awareness, learners are challenging and deconstructing negative attitudes and racist beliefs.⁴⁶

The core of this innovation, as it addresses how to interrogate engrained stereotypes to unseat hidden bias or prejudice, borrows from Gordon Allport's book *The Nature of Prejudice* and his theory of the six influences that build on each other to create and sustain prejudice. He offers that some may identify one influence as central or critical, "but they would not deny the simultaneous operation of other etiological influences."⁴⁷ Therefore, the innovation will describe several "etiological influences" that Allport identifies, plus religion, and offer a corrective understanding of WRST behavior.⁴⁸ I assert that an innovative, iterative, multi-pronged approach will uncover the hidden nature of prejudice that leads to and supports white supremacy and racism.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Mahzarin R. Banaji, Anthony G. Greenwald, *Blind Spot Hidden Biases of Good People*, New York, NY, Bantam Books, 2016, 69-70

⁴⁷ Gordon Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, 208.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 208.

⁴⁹ Allport, the list of influences or approaches that Allport offers are historical, socio-cultural, situational, personality, phenomenological, and stimulus object. 207.

Background of the Problem: The Foundation for a Racist American History.

I have shared with my learners how Elliott Eisner's three forms of explicit, implicit, and null curricula served as the basis for how a white supremacist pedagogy (WSP) was developed and implemented, and how it shaped American thought and culture.⁵⁰ Explicit curriculum is the "formal program of the school, the program that is planned, taught, and graded."⁵¹ The implicit curriculum covers "ambiance, school norms, and modes of assessment."⁵² "The null curriculum constitutes what is absent from the school program."⁵³ Elliot Eisner suggests that "the ability to secure meaning ... is a basic human need."⁵⁴ He further states that "meaning is not simply found; it is constructed."⁵⁵ Eisner posits, "schools are cultures, they are cultures for creating minds."⁵⁶ Therefore, schools as places of learning formulate the transfer of information, stories, narratives, and beliefs, factual or false, which shape our present and mold our future by building historical narratives regarded as truth. I suggest that schools are not just physical locations but are gatherings or media channels where beliefs are shared and social influence generated. America has offered a story of white supremacy resulting from true grit, ingenuity, and the rugged *individualism* of white people.⁵⁷ However, another part of that story is the historical role of Christian Supremacy and its acceptance of violence and terror upon BIPOC communities,

⁵⁰ I contend that Elliot's description of the null curriculum serves as that sometimes "invisible hand" that supports notions of white exceptionalism or supremacy.

⁵¹ Elliott W. Eisner, *The Arts and the Creation of Mind*, New Haven, CT and London, UK, Yale University Press, 2002, 158.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 159.

⁵⁴ Eisner, Elliott W., *Cognition and Curriculum Reconsidered, Second Edition*. New York, NY, and London, UK, Teachers College Press, 1994 x.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, x.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, x.

⁵⁷ DiAngelo, *White Fragility*, 10.

lands, and bodies. This is a hidden part of the story of formal secular and religious education. In 1455, Pope Nicholas V issued a Papal Bull *Romanus Pontifex*, commonly referred to as a Doctrine of Discovery that gave Christian explorers the right to “discover” the lands of non-Christians and, through the process of discovery, seize those lands and inhabitants in the name of an identified Christian nation.⁵⁸ Here, “church and realm” join together to destabilize and create new identities within a sphere of “theological identities.”⁵⁹

Gordon Allport states that prejudice, and what I contend as bigotry, a hateful prejudice, is “thinking ill of others without sufficient warrant.”⁶⁰ In this thinking, one responds to a stereotype about an individual or group based on another’s classification or assignment to a particular group, a form of associated thinking.⁶¹ Prejudice, theoretically, can travel in a synchronous or fluid pattern of associated behaviors.⁶² In this society, the prejudice that white people have for BIPOC people is a prejudice that can lead to discriminatory practices and policies that can cause systemic harm and result in loss of wealth, status, and life.⁶³

The problem of racism will not simply go away by presenting facts or data; instead, one must address values such as prestige, economic superiority, and their relationship to power.⁶⁴ David Theo Goldberg states that racism exists because there is a “demand for it.”⁶⁵

⁵⁸ Willie James Jennings, *Christian Imagination, Theology and Origins of Race*, New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 2010, 26.

⁵⁹ Jennings, *Christian Imagination*, 29.

⁶⁰ Gordon Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, 6.

⁶¹ Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking Fast and Slow*, New York, NY, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, paperback edition, 2022, 71

⁶² Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, 207

⁶³ DiAngelo, Robin, *Nice Racism How Progressive White People Perpetuate Racial Harm*, Boston, MA, Beacon Press, 2021, 4.

⁶⁴ Goldberg, *Racist Culture*, 112.

⁶⁵ Goldberg, 108

David Theo Goldberg further states:

However, exclusions extrinsically promoted in virtue of racial memberships are not limited to false beliefs about moral character, racially defined. The exclusions may be about sustaining racially identifiable positions of power, privilege, or benefits, or about preserving a racially characterized worldview. Here counterfactuals may have little effect discharging racist belief and behavior, for at issue are not facts but values and relations of power.⁶⁶

The scalable goals for this project are:

In making the innovation scalable, we are using the following activities: book clubs, small discussion groups, travel, directed congregational leader training, and theological reflections. Obliviousness, intentional or not, is a huge impediment to getting more people involved in the training offered as part of this innovation at Redeemer. This is commonplace when trying to implement a cultural change and not just create a list of tasks for an institution or congregation. Those famous words of unawareness, "don't fix it if it isn't broken," echo each time an event or training has minimal attendance. However, there is a growing group of attendees that appreciate the learnings. These are the people Simon Sinek calls the "early adopters." These people "appreciate the advantages wrought by new ideas or technologies."⁶⁷ At this point, the early adopters are a small but steady group of individuals that will introduce to other members of Redeemer to consider that racism is still a problem for people of color. This group of early adopters is holding steady, and their personal growth in seeing how racism is ignored or hidden is becoming more evident.

⁶⁶ Goldberg, 112.

⁶⁷ Simon Sinek, *Start With Why, How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action*, Portfolio / Penguin Group, New York, NY, 2009, 116-117.

The early adopters gather in a couple of faith formation groups and ministries with direct antiracism involvement in exchanging ideas, learning, and encouraging one another in this innovation. Pastor Jonathan's Tuesday evening Faith Formation book study has been an open-source for sharing learnings and discussing antiracist ideas and education. Currently, this group is reading Isabel Wilkerson's book *Caste*. As I participate with them, I can see and hear their growth in understanding the complexity of antiracism training and working to deconstruct racist and white supremacy narratives.⁶⁸ One group member, identified as a white female over the age of 60, asked me, "How do Black people have any hope in changing WRST narratives? After a round of discussion echoing this question, I held out that this group gives me hope that change is possible. Another group member, a white female over the age of 70, shared how they are comfortable discussing antiracism ideas in this group, but they are not comfortable in several other groups, including family members. Their request was for more information to help them answer questions put to them by long-term friends and family members. This person has become a huge fan of Howard Thurman. I will continue to meet with them and offer potential resources for future gatherings.

Another growing class is the "Liberation Thoughts" class that meets on Sunday morning between regular worship services. Due to time constraints, this class is also small with "early adopters" but with the occasional visitor. This class started in October of 2021 and has discussed two books. The first was, *The Courage to Be* by Paul Tillich, and the second one is *Love Power and Justice* by Paul Tillich. The next book will be *In Search for Common Ground* by Howard Thurman. This class, which consists of two lawyers and one retired professor of linguistics, is

⁶⁸ I will use the acronym WRST to describe white racist and supremacy/supremacist thoughts.

developing leaders who will address public policy issues and even help to write future antiracist legislation. Learners committed to other groups during the Sunday school hour have asked me to hold this class at a different time to accommodate a larger audience of learners and potential activists. This class will have a second iteration as a weekday class, either in the evening or during the day. Another request has been the revival of the Saturday Morning book study that has covered fiction and non-fiction titles. This group had a steady membership of 15 people from three different congregations, with the bulk being members of Redeemer. This book study will have two sessions, one for new persons who will read the titles that the first group read. This book study group will serve as an entry-level curriculum with a second group that will advance to more in-depth and edgier titles for discussion. Another possible iteration of either of these groups is to collaborate with an African American based congregation(s) to promote a multiracial conversation on the issue of race. This has been difficult to achieve. However, my reach into African American congregations is growing, and I have started discussions with African American pastors who are open to this idea. One congregation is Ebenezer Baptist Church, and another is Central United Methodist Church located on Northside Drive, also located here in Atlanta. I have also attempted to engage our Habitat for Humanity building partner, Cascade United Methodist Church, in supporting a joint book club series. I suspect that the COVID-19 pandemic has presented a barrier to engagement, and as the pandemic subsides, the ability to engage will increase.

Starting again in September, the first group's book list will include but is not limited to *Why We Can't Wait*, By Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., *Barracoon* by Zora Neale Hurston, *Jesus and The Disinherited*, By Howard Thurman, *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo, and *The Fire Next*

Time, by James Baldwin. The second level book club will include but is not limited to *Stamped from the Beginning* by Ibram X. Kendi, *White Rage* by Carol Anderson, *Thinking Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman, *Biased* by Jennifer Eberhardt, *Blood at the Roots* by Patrick Phillips, and selected videos including 13th by Ava Duvernay. The third-level book club, starting in 2023, will include but is not limited to *Stony the Road* by Henry Louis Gates, *The White Man's Burden* by Winthrop D. Jordan, and *Transforming Communities* by Boyung Lee. Whereas the expanded Liberation Thoughts class will include but is not limited to *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* by James Cone, *Biblical Faith and the Black American* by Latta Thomas, *The Religion of White Supremacy in the United States* by Eric Weed, and *Katie's Canon* by Katie Cannon.

Another pathway to increase involvement is our Small Group Ministry (SGM). Starting in late 2021, SGM is now part of my portfolio or responsibilities at LCR. This ministry is in transition but remains active and has a solid core of small group leaders. SGM has been the group that has led our congregation in congregation-wide book study during the seasons of Lent and Advent. In 2020, they added two additional congregation-wide book studies, and both topics looked at issues of injustice. Several of these leaders have expressed interest in spending more time addressing issues of racial and other inequities. SGM will play a key role in building the core of antiracism learners at Redeemer.

In Addition, in terms of reaching a multiracial audience to support our efforts at Redeemer is to work with the Lutheran Theological Center-Atlanta (LTCA), where I serve as the Board Chairperson. The LTCA is located on the campus of the Interdenominational Theological Center, a predominately African American based seminary here in Atlanta, GA. I have had initial

conversations with both the new Executive Director for the LTCA and the new President of the ITC regarding the future of theological learning. This promising partnership will open new pathways for multiracial conversations for members of Redeemer and persons of color here and outside of Atlanta, GA.

As previously stated, the premise of the innovation is that learned racism, and white supremacy can be unlearned.⁶⁹ I assert that WRST narratives are learned beliefs or notions about white-skin-toned superiority over other skin-toned people.⁷⁰ The WRST narratives exist because of the implied and embedded nature of racial bigotry ingrained in our society as natural. WRST narratives are normalized, institutionalized, and applied systemically against BIPOC.⁷¹ The innovation includes raising awareness of how a white supremacist pedagogy (WSP) has worked in our society to build what David Theo Goldberg calls a “Racist Culture.”⁷² This exposure of WSP will offset what Charles Long describes as “concealment.”⁷³ Exposing and challenging the learned hidden beliefs that are part of a person's perspective or system of beliefs is essential for cultural change.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ In early 2021, I offered a short survey to members of our church leaders who were planning to take an outside agency's antiracism training. I also provided a similar survey to a non-profit agency that led an antiracism training in 2021. The results of the surveys documented the belief that racism is learned and that it can be unlearned. This response serves as the main objective of these trainings to help Redeemer and their partner organizations unlearn their attitudes and automatic non-reflective behavior towards people of color.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-OHm7j7H2JMYnojVmpCT3gQ_3D_3D/

⁷⁰ Jordan D. Winthrop, *White Over Black, American Attitudes Toward the Negro 1550-1812*, Baltimore, MD, Penguin Books Inc., 1969, 252-254.

⁷¹ Ibid, 276.

⁷² David Theo Goldberg, *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning*, Cambridge, MA, Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1993, 100.

⁷³ Charles H. Long, *Significations: Signs, Symbols, and Images in the Interpretation of Religion*, Aurora, CO, The Davies Group Publishers, 1999, 141.

⁷⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice, Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, 1977, 87, Mary McClintock Fulkerson, *Places of Redemption: Theology for a Worldly Church*, New York, NY, Oxford University Press, 2007, 35.

However, in today's social and political environment, there is a resurgence of restricting American history, much like the efforts of the Daughters of the Confederacy (DOC) in 1896 to direct the narrative regarding the Civil War and the concept of the Lost Cause. The DOC's narrative posited that the Confederacy was not fighting to maintain the economic system of Chattel Slavery or enslavement but to maintain their way of life.⁷⁵ As of February 1, 2022, according to an online article by Cathryn Stout and Thomas Wilburn in *Chalkbeat*, 36 states have passed legislation restricting the teaching of mislabeled Critical Race Theory, the 1619 Project, or about race or racism in general.⁷⁶ These are mendacious efforts to protect "white children" from knowing the horrors of American history and the crimes committed against people of color. This resurgence supports the notion of the "invisible hand" or a null curriculum designed to make white supremacy seem natural. Again, I assert that the essential elements of white supremacy and bigotry, albeit taught in a null curriculum, are learned and, therefore, under the right circumstances, will be unlearned.⁷⁷

My assumptions.

⁷⁵ Edward H. Bonekemper III, *The Myth of the Lost Cause, Why the South Fought the Civil War and Why the North Won*, Washington, D.C., Regnery History, 2015, 3.

⁷⁶ <https://www.chalkbeat.org/22525983/map-critical-race-theory-legislation-teaching-racism>, Officials nationwide have raced to enact new laws and introduce new policies to shape how students discuss the nation's past — and it is present. Many of these efforts have attempted to ban critical race theory, an academic framework that examines how policies and the law perpetuate systemic racism. In some states, lawmakers have tried to restrict antiracism training or the teaching of what they call "divisive concepts." Nevertheless, on the opposite end, other states are adding ethnic studies courses or incorporating more about people of color into their learning standards.

⁷⁷ Eberhardt, Jennifer, *Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think, and Do*, New York, NY, Penguin Books, 2019, 2020, 289.

Thus far, as this innovation has dug deeper into issues of how white supremacy and racism work, learners are expressing their belief that there is an entrenched white supremacist mindset in America. The readings, workshops, and candid conversations have led me to see how oblivious they were to the insidiousness of how WRST works in our society. While reading the book *Caste*, several persons expressed disbelief that the Chicago "race riot" of 1919 started because a young man had gone into the white side of Lake Michigan. The story of the destruction of Oscarville, GA, because of a rumor that a Black man had assaulted a white woman and other accounts of white-oriented mob violence have left them saying, "I did not know any of this." They were even more perplexed when I shared that Lake Lanier covers what was Oscarville, GA. Another revelation was on an early 2019 trip to Montgomery, AL, to visit the Peace and Justice Memorial and Museum. Two white women over the age of sixty were greatly incensed when they learned about the 1906 Atlanta "race riots." These well-educated women were stunned that this truncated their educational endeavors. How this could be, they wondered. These few examples confirm my assumption that white supremacy remains hidden in the telling of United States history, and the banning of a broader understanding of American history is detrimental to future racial progress. Their statements of wonder and disappointment will lead me to explore Michel-Rolph Trouillot's statement "The ways in which what happened and that which is said to have happened are and are not the same may itself be historical."⁷⁸

Another assumption I have shared is that there is a reward system for allegiance to whiteness and white supremacy. This innovation confronts two particularly insidious lies or poorly documented beliefs that form the roots of prejudicial stereotypes that support the notions of white supremacy.

⁷⁸ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past, Power and the Production of History*, Boston, MA, Beacon Press, 1995, 4.

The scientific racism and the eugenics movement perpetrated the first, stating that white people have innate attributes that elevate them over other groups of people and place them on the higher rungs of the human hierarchical ladder.⁷⁹ However, in reality, there is sometimes invisible physical control, but more often; the derogatory control of black bodies equals white exceptionalism.⁸⁰ However, whiteness is a racial category constructed on violence that justifies a claim of superiority. A hierarchal status is established and then taught as natural. Whiteness rewards those who comply and punishes those who rebel. Such punishment is the case of Carl Braden, a white man who violated white supremacist housing norms in 1954 by helping a Black family buy a house in an all-white section of Shively, KY. For his efforts, Mr. Braden was charged with a crime and sentenced to fifteen years in prison for breaking the law and "stirring up "racial conflict."⁸¹ Whiteness applies extreme violence and fear tactics to exert social control for the power and economic benefit of those who identify as white over those identified as people of color.⁸²

Therefore, there is an urgent need to unpack white supremacist language and thought and replace it with antiracist narratives that are truth-based and not statements or accusations designed to place guilt on white learners. Authentic replacement of white supremacist narratives will guide the deconstruction of racist laws and the white supremacist mindset. With that said, there is the tightrope challenge of overcoming "white fragility." However, building relationships with

⁷⁹ Ibram X. Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*, New York, NY, Bold Type Books, 2016, 2.

⁸⁰ Goldberg, *Racist Culture*, 108.

⁸¹ Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law, A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*, New York, NY, 2017, 149-150.

⁸² European military superiority, specifically the development of weapons to kill at a distance, is mistaken for cultural and racial superiority and led to two centuries of genocide and eugenics, reinforced by pseudo-science. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt11879810/>.

learners has helped overcome white fragility even with some of the more conservative members of Redeemer. In a recent conversation, the topic of "defunding the police" was raised. The presenter suggested that inappropriate language was used in presenting the idea to the public. Additional conversation, including personal stories of Black people with some police officers, lessened the guarded nature of the conservatives and helped to have a meaningful discussion on the topic and that law enforcement is overburdened with responsibilities that they are not prepared to handle. Therefore, there is a need to relieve law enforcement of those expectations and provide wrap-around social service providers to manage social service and mental health issues better. The ability to have honest conversations that this innovation creates is crucial for the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer to achieve its justice and inclusion goals.

As previously stated, the innovation uses several modes of learning interactions. However, a crucial element hinders this innovation from growing at a faster rate than already experienced. Birthed during a time of the global pandemic, with minimum personal in-person contact, this innovation suffered from a lack of in-person contact. Regardless of the virtual methods employed during the past two years, the connection element is crucial in building a model of mutual trust with people. The early adopters at Redeemer displayed a fearless commitment to learning how to interrogate familiar narratives during this time of a pandemic. They remained faithful in building community in an environment across terrain where proximity is crucial. We experienced the need for in-person contact when the Diversity and Justice Ministry, which has oversight of this innovation, was able to meet in person. There was a high level of fellowship at this event not experienced on Zoom Calls. This prohibition against gathering has also curtailed a critical aspect of this innovation, travel. The trip to the Peace and Justice Memorial in 2019 produced insights

not gathered by formal classroom instruction by two highly educated white women who were part of the event. A key part of the event was the interaction with others and getting a more balanced understanding of what they were learning. This event revealed how implicit and null curriculums were at play in their educational experience to which they were unaware.

Another example of how in-person contact will help enrollments is the "Stations of the Cross" Walk (SOFCW) on Good Friday 2022. The SOFCW was a collaborative effort between three Midtown Atlanta, GA congregations where we identified twelve locations to address injustice. The three congregations were All Saints Episcopal, St. Marks United Methodist, and The Lutheran Church of the Redeemer. The walk started at All Saints at approximately 1:30 pm and traveled to Redeemer and St. Marks until it reached the corner of fourth and Peachtree, where The Margret Mitchell House and the Federal Reserve Bank are located. At each of the twelve stations, there were readings addressing current and historical patterns of injustice and prayers for change. This event had nearly 80 people and stretched the entire length of a city block. The ability to gather in person encouraged participation and fellowship as this group of mostly senior citizens endured and enjoyed this liberating act of addressing injustice and learning.

I assert that once the pandemic's restrictions are truly over, the element of travel will allow the early adopters to exert influence on other members of Redeemer and achieve through what Simon Sinek calls the "laws of diffusion, the building of an "early majority."⁸³ I base this assertion on the behaviors of engagement already mentioned and on conservative members of the congregation who have stated they were sorry that they missed the trip to Montgomery, AL, and

⁸³ Simon Sinek, *Start With Why*, 116

have expressed their desire to attend the next trip. I also know that members of the food ministry who have endured the pandemic have built an extremely close-knit bond from continuing to work together. I trust that as the pandemic becomes more manageable and travel is less risky for older people, there will be an uptick in event participation. Thus, travel will help increase the number of those who will participate in the other course offerings.

With all of the success that this program has achieved during COVID-19, there are some failures and laments. The biggest disappointment is that more congregational leaders, who stated that they planned to take antiracism training, did not feel the need to participate in the training.⁸⁴ This lack of participation leads me to believe that most people feel that as long as they are, as Robin DiAngelo has stated, "nice," there is not a need to take antiracism training. My second concern or lament is the lack of persons of color involvement in the offerings. Based on comments that I have heard during the 22 years of serving in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) that some people of color do not feel they need to learn anything about racism because of their experiences with racism. Secondly, some persons of color do not feel that it is their responsibility to help white people deal with their racism. Thirdly, some persons of color think that talking about racism is divisive and that we should all just focus on God and leave the secular issues outside of the church.⁸⁵ At the time of this writing, I have not tested these assumptions or what other barriers to participation may exist, like the time of the event, but I will. Lastly, this innovation is not formally part of Redeemer's youth or children programs. The Redeemer pastors who teach confirmation have included elements of BIPOC history in some of

⁸⁴ <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/B8L7WLK>

⁸⁵ A popular saying is that "it is about the sin and not the skin."

their lessons, and in February, there were Black History Posters placed in the common areas and preschool children's area. However, there is an agreement with the youth leaders to have more conversations on making the innovation part of their faith formation.

Moving Towards a Transformative Community.

Ronald Heifetz of Harvard University states: “The most common leadership failure stems from trying to apply technical solutions to adaptive challenges.⁸⁶ In times of uncertainty, like a pandemic, people are looking for a solution to what they have identified as a problem.⁸⁷ Heifetz warns us that these solutions are often like patchwork on a garment: “Sometimes throwing a technical fix at a problem will solve a piece of it and provide a diversion from the tougher issue, though only temporarily.”⁸⁸ The Making it Plain Innovation addresses the adaptive challenge of deconstructing racist narratives and behavior and not simply providing classes for classes' sake to say that we are addressing the problem of racism. By teaching learners the ability to listen and think about what they are hearing, we are building an antiracist culture in Redeemer. The desired antiracist culture will have the courage to name the elephants in the room, take responsibility for our actions and privileges, accept honest critique, expand our leadership capacity, institutionalize antiracism and restorative justice learning, and engage in meaningful and restorative advocacy.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Heifetz, Ronald, Grashow, Alexander, Linsky, Marty, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership, Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*, Boston, MA, Harvard Business Press, 2009, 71.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 71

⁸⁹ Ibid, 101.

A summary of the scope of this innovation.

Currently, most of the innovation's efforts have focused on raising awareness of the historical influence of racism. The workshops helped raise awareness of how racism works and has helped to motivate Lutheran Church of the Redeemer (LCR) members to become learners. The subsequent development phases will provide the learner with a blueprint to build a solid understanding of the WRST narratives for deconstruction. The innovation is not an attempt to shame Redeemer members or dredge up feelings of guilt. The goal is to heighten the learner's awareness of how WRST (white racist and supremacist thought and behavior) is present in today's culture and empower them to make critical changes and challenge unjust public policies. Again, Peter Block, "you change the culture when you change the language."⁹⁰ The innovation starts with a general acceptance that racism and white supremacy exist. However, this belief is not universal in society or to all Redeemer members; some do not believe that white supremacy is real or has the impact on persons of color that it once had.⁹¹

The innovation provides resources for learners to be confident in their ability to interrupt white supremacy's popular and dominant narratives. Further, this innovation empowers learners to successfully interrogate commonly accepted racial assumptions and disrupt seemingly empirical epistemological theories of natural white superiority. The innovation's design and implementation, in time, will lead to a critical mass of empowered individuals whose confidence

⁹⁰ Peter Block, *Community, The Structure of Belonging*, Oakland, CA, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2018, 31.

⁹¹ Goldberg, *Racist Culture*, 7.

will become contagious and offer valid counter-narratives to racist and prejudicial narratives and expressions of opinion.

Learners who have expanded their epistemological context to include previously excluded theologians and authors of color. The ability to have trigger word conversations across political lines without disruptive accusatory conflict. The willingness to engage in expanded multi-generational study to understand the sustainability of racism and other injustices. The excitement of learning via in-person gatherings actualizes the proof of this concept. These learners, as advocates, will cause the disruptions and deconstruction of popular but false racial narratives.

Section V. Let Us Hear the Conclusion of the Matter.

White supremacy is a reasonable belief in America based on the explicit assumptions and curriculum presented and serves as the core belief of the dominant American narrative.⁹² In the book *Caste*, Isabel Wilkerson, she states:

They [white Americans] are surrounded by images of themselves, from cereal commercials to sitcoms, as deserving, hardworking, and superior in most aspects of American Life, and it would be the rare person who would not absorb the constructed centrality of the dominant group.⁹³

Implementing the Making it Plain Innovation (MIPI) provides the congregation with a new "common sense" providing effective tools for thought.⁹⁴ In the book *Biased*, Jennifer L. Eberhardt argues, "science has shown that intense relationships that cross racial, religious, or ethnic boundaries can quickly undo fundamental associations that have built up slowly over

⁹² Paul K. Moser, *Empirical Knowledge*, Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1989, 7.

⁹³ Wilkerson, *Caste*, 268

⁹⁴ Baker, *From Savage to Negro*, 1.

time.”⁹⁵ Employing the innovation has provided evidence that WRST and even bigotry is reversible, and automatic racist responses can be unlearned. In a survey taken by members of the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, learners stated their belief that racism could be unlearned. The idea that people can unlearn WRST narratives is a North Star for my work. I will continue to gather feedback to increase the MIPI effectiveness. The feedback from surveys and observations affirmed that learners had developed a better understanding of how racism works in our culture and how it devalues persons of color.⁹⁶

The MIPI provides learners with the tools to "think" before responding.⁹⁷ By providing the MIP antiracism curriculum, learners have an antiracist epistemology to use in conversations with friends and relatives trapped in WRST narratives. This innovation is going in the right direction and is building momentum for increased success. Using a method called the "strategic triangle," this innovation is accurate, politically supported by the congregation, and has proven itself implementable.⁹⁸ Thusly, the innovation is achieving the goals established in Redeemer's strategic plan.

The effectiveness of the innovation shows itself in the ability for culturally and politically different people to have meaningful discussions on sensitive racial justice issues. Lutheran Church of the Redeemer is building towards creating effective advocacy efforts to mitigate

⁹⁵ Eberhardt, Jennifer L., *Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think, and Do*, New York, NY, Penguin Books, 2019, 2020, 289.

⁹⁶

https://www.surveymonkey.com/analyze/hckaX_2F4CAj3q2GtqDJLNI_2FIqEdxNGQM10iHy6KWPCqA_3D?show_dashboard_tour=true&source=dashboard_list

⁹⁷ *Think* was a motto driven in the minds of IBMers back in the '80s. MIP provides insights into familiar responses and provides another perspective. MIPI intends to get a person to think about what they heard and determine the statement's validity before responding.

⁹⁸ Harvard PLC course curriculum regarding developing policy change within an organization and beyond.

racism, white supremacy, and injustice in our congregation, community, and society. The cumulative effect of this innovation will deconstruct racist commonsense, employ antiracist language, behaviors, and establish a non-racist or antiracist commonsense.⁹⁹ The success of the, Making It Plain Innovation establishes Redeemer's ongoing work brand as an antiracist congregation and will have programs, advocacy, and activities that reflect that congregational value.

⁹⁹ Baker, *From Savage to Negro*, 1.