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Fear: Conqueror, Bearer, Exploiter and Miner

Eric H.F. Law

On July 22, 2003, Army Private Jessica Lynch was given a hero's homecoming in Elizabeth, West Virginia. Lynch was taken prisoner when her army unit was ambushed in Iraq in March of that year. Lynch was wounded and treated by Iraqi doctors in a hospital in Nasiriya. She was rescued on April 1 and endured four months of painful rehabilitation before she could come home. This was a very simple story and yet she was hailed as a hero because the myth-making U.S. media had painted very different pictures of Lynch.¹

At first, she was portrayed as a female Rambo. "She Was Fighting to the Death," reported the Washington Post. "Lynch, a 19-year-old supply clerk, continued firing at the Iraqis even after she sustained multiple gunshot wounds and watched several other soldiers in her unit die . . ."

Perhaps it is appropriate to revisit how, we, as a nation addressed our fear...

As the facts came in that confirmed she was neither shot nor did she shoot back, her portrayal

changed; she was now a victim. The media reported that she was maltreated in the hospital and she might have been shot or even raped. But the BBC reported that

says: Go no further . . . If you're a [fear-bearer] and you don't use fear to limit yourself, there is an implicit threat of violence."⁴

The 10th anniversary of the



she received very decent medical attention and that the Iraqi combatants had left the hospital a day earlier. The doctors and nurses said they were eager to turn Lynch over to the Americans.

How We Deal With Fear

The Jessica Lynch story revealed two primary images of how we deal with fear—fear-conqueror and fear-bearer.² Fear-conquerors deal with fear through "acts of aggression against an 'other' seen as enemy."³ Fear-bearers are taught to treat fear as "a warning tuck that

September 11th attacks on the World Trade Center is coming upon us. Perhaps it is appropriate to revisit how, we, as a nation addressed our fear then. We immediately went into fear-conqueror mode. Bathed in patriotic and religious rituals, new rules were being defined to justify aggression; later, the doctrine of preemptive strikes was born. As long as we were striking back, it did not matter how it was justified—we were conquering our fear.

Meanwhile, everyday people were made to conform as fear-

bearers. President Bush, in his address to Congress on September 20, 2001, invited us, the people, to continue to participate in the American economy and have patience in facing the inconveniences of tighter security when we traveled. In the months that followed, the call for patience for many came to mean: keep your mouth shut and endure the new rules. Certain types of people were being singled out and searched in airports, even though the President said explicitly, “No one should be singled out for unfair treatment or unkind words because of their ethnic background or religious faith.” While persons from the historical dominant group said that they were willing to give up some of their rights for the sake of security, the historical minorities and powerless groups experience this as an extra burden put on those already perceived as fear-bearers. Systemic prejudices and discriminations against the historical minorities were practiced openly all in the name of security.

Jesus the Fear-Miner

Jesus refused to be a fear-bearer. He did not stay within the safety boundaries set by the religious and political institutions of his time. He crossed the line again and again and as predicted, violence would visit upon him. Jesus refused to be a fear-conqueror either. He rejected the assumptions that the Messiah was supposed to be like a rebel, using aggression to liberate the oppressed. Jesus offered a third alternative—the fear-miner. He took us on a journey to face our fear through his betrayal, suffering, death and resurrection. In facing the ultimate fear—death,

he exposed the unjust application of rules and rituals that oppressed and divided people so the fear-exploiters could maintain the status quo. (For full exploration

[Jesus] took us on a journey to face our fear through his betrayal, suffering, death and resurrection.

of fear-exploiter, see Chapter 5 of *Finding Intimacy in a World of Fear* by Eric H.F. Law.)

Jesus showed us the greater story of life, which was not about conquering our fear with aggression, nor simply surviving out of our fear of punishment. We are to approach fear as an opening; when we dig down we can mine from fear the God-given gifts of wisdom, courage, dignity and self-esteem with which we can face any adversity that comes our way. Buried below our fear is the seed of ministry. Beyond our fear is the hope of resurrection, with new visions for us, our communities, and our nations.

Becoming Fear-Miners

Almost 10 years after September 11, 2001, Osama bin Laden is dead. Going after him and his organizations was the stated reason for the U.S. to enter into war in Afghanistan. Does this mean the wars will soon be over? I doubt that. Does this mean we have no more fear of terrorists? I doubt that too. Getting bin Laden only represents a victory of our fear-conqueror mind-set. It does not help us look deeply into our fear, mining gifts from it. Without the learning from truly addressing our fear, we will find

another “enemy” to go after soon, continuing our fear-conquerors’ way. That includes turning inward against our own people. In that sense, prejudice and discrimination against Muslim Americans probably will continue. Anti-immigrant movements that had been on the rise before will continue. Many of them had nothing to do with bin Laden but target non-English-speaking immigrants in the name of security.

Will we continue to be cast as fear-conquerors and fear-bearers? Yes, of this I am sure. So the questions for us are: How can we resist being cast as the fear-conquerors targeting the less powerful ones in our midst? How can we refuse to be fear-bearers and speak up against the systemic prejudices? How can we expose the fear-exploiters who seek to gain politically and financially by exploiting our fear? Finally, we need to learn from Jesus. We need to become fear-miners and create gracious places where people can share and face their fear in order to mine from it directions for ministries. This is the only faithful way to address our fears finding intimacy with ourselves, others and God. ~

¹ For a detail media accounts see “Jessica Lynch: Media Myth-Making in the Iraq War,” at www.journalism.org

² I borrow these terms from Miriam Greenspan, *Healing Through the Dark Emotions* (Shambhala, 2004), p.181. She used the term “fear-carrier” to differentiate the way males and females typically have dealt with their fears. I prefer “fear-bearer,” which is more descriptive, and use it more generally to apply to different groups/ communities.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., p.182.

The Sad Reality of Islamophobia

Fatma Saleh

a new form of prejudice has emerged in America—Islamophobia—the irrational fear and anxiety of Islam and Muslims.

The acceleration of Islamophobia is highly driven by some media networks, politicians, civic and religious leaders that paint Islam as a radical and demonic religion which poses a danger to all Americans.

A number of Americans are showing prejudice and intolerance, calling for restrictions on Muslim rights and civil liberties, spewing anti-Islamic slogans and violence towards American Muslims.

This fear is higher today than it was after September 11th. It can be witnessed in the fierce opposition to building mosques, hearings on Muslim radicalization, and hate mail opposing a Muslim chaplain delivering the opening prayer in Congress. At our mosque, a burnt Quran was found at the entrance—twice!

Not only are Americans fearing Islam, they are becoming paranoid of Muslims. Recently, a graduate student, who wears an Islamic headscarf was removed from a flight because a crewmember viewed her as “suspicious.”

Islamophobia is affecting the American Muslim community publically and privately. Concerned over the safety of our patrons, our mosque scratched plans to hold *Eid*¹ prayer outdoors this year. We hear more complaints from Muslim parents about children being bullied at school. Some Muslim women are opting

to remove their headscarf in fear of being accosted. Personally, as a practicing Muslim woman (who wears the headscarf), I have never felt concerned for my safety in America until now. This is the sad reality of Islamophobia.

Today the patriotism of American Muslims is questioned. They are pegged as un-American, somewhat resembling when President Kennedy was not considered American enough. People rumored that he would be more loyal to the Vatican than America.

It might be difficult for us Americans to admit, but we seem to cling to one form or another of prejudice. Our history of prejudice is evident in treatment towards Native Americans, African Americans, Japanese

Americans, Catholics, and Jews. Now, American Muslims are on the frontline of prejudice and discrimination.

However, this was not the intention of our Founding Fathers. Benjamin Franklin once said, “Even if the Mufti of Constantinople were to send a missionary to preach Mohammedanism [Islam] to us, he would find a pulpit at his service.”² John Adams in his *Thoughts on Government* praises Prophet Muhammad as a “sober inquirer after truth.” Our nation’s bedrock is one of religious pluralism, diversity and peaceful coexistence.

A few months ago, a pastor refused to be part of the interfaith council to which our mosque has belonged for 12 years. In the words of the pastor, “I refuse to sit at the table with them.” If he only

knew that President Jefferson, who embraced religious pluralism, shared in the *iftar*³ with the Ambassador of Tunisia in 1809.

Islamophobia is not a Muslim problem but an American problem that concerns every citizen irrespective of his or her belief. It strikes at the very core of American values and principles, and challenges the foundation by which this great nation was established and thrives on—freedom of religion, liberty, and expression, and innocent until proven guilty. Without these essential values, we not only lose the essence of the American spirit, but even worse, our humanity. We need the voices of reason, respect, and acceptance to drown out calls for division, prejudice, and intolerance. ~

¹ *Eid* is a Muslim holiday.

² *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*—Ch. 10

³ *Iftar* is breaking of the Ramadan fast meal.



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PRINCIPLES OF ISLAM

Islam—a peaceful religion shared by a billion followers worldwide—is based on moral and ethical principles.

- ☞ values **life**—“*Nor take a life which God has made sacred.*” (Quran, 17:33)
- ☞ protects the **impoverished**—“*Spend in charity out of the substance whereof He has made you heirs.*” (Quran, 57:7)
- ☞ calls for **peaceful coexistence**—“*We created you from a male and female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you might come to know each other.*” (Quran, 49:13)
- ☞ demands **justice**—“*Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to God, even if it be against yourselves, your parents, and your relatives, or whether it is against the rich or the poor.*” (Quran, 4:135)
- ☞ and **honesty**—“*When you speak, be just though it be against a relative.*” (Quran, 6:152)



Victor Corral is the Program Manager for the Closing the Racial Wealth Gap Initiative at the Insight Center for Community Economic Development.

The Color of Opportunity

By Victor Corral

“In our way of life...with every decision we make, we always keep in mind the Seventh Generation of children to come.”

—Oren Lyons, Onondaga Nation

Had we as a nation considered this principle when our nation was founded, and every day since, we may have avoided many of the social, economic, and environmental injustices that have plagued us for centuries. Having failed to put this philosophy into practice, today, the U.S. is arguably more so the land of inequality than it is the land of opportunity, especially when we look at wealth in America.

Together, all families of color at the median had just sixteen cents to the White dollar.

The interaction of the institutional forces that shape our lives—from housing, banking, and tax policy to the educational and criminal justice systems—has over time created a racial wealth gap that is more like a chasm. In 2007, prior to the “Great Recession,” Black families at the median had just a dime to the White dollar, and Latino families had twelve cents. Together, all families of Color at the median had just sixteen cents to the White dollar.¹

Structures of Economic Opportunity

Our ultimate goal should not be just the eradication of poverty, but also the realization of individual and community potential. 21st century policies must invest in all Americans and intentionally close racial gaps. We must let a few prin-

ciples guide us. Policies must be designed to change the structures of economic opportunity, rather than individual behaviors. They must help families build assets over the life course and build community wealth. Most importantly, policies should be both universal and focused to not only help all Americans, but help lift the ones most in need up to the starting line.

Wealth, or what a person owns minus what they owe, is a unique marker of inequality. Constituting savings, investments, housing and business equity among other things, a person’s assets allow us not only to assess their economic security, mobility, and opportunity, but the intergenerational impact of policies that entrench inequality over time. For example, racial

ing wealth. Homes are the largest asset the typical family owns. As a result, these families were unable to leverage or transfer wealth to

provide their children with access to resources to help them succeed.

It is this ability to transfer wealth that makes it a trans-

formative asset, because it is wealth that shapes opportunity. As Melvin Oliver and Thomas Shapiro, authors of *Black Wealth, White Wealth* said, “income feeds your stomach, but assets change your head.”² However, economic policies of the past and present prevent many from experiencing the transformative power of wealth, which we need now more than ever.

This year, amidst the greatest economic crisis since the Great Depression where families lost billions in wealth, the majority of children in California were Hispanic.³ By 2023, the majority of children born in this country will be of Color, and by 2050, the majority of Americans will no longer be White. In the context of this rapidly changing environment, it is troubling to note that the gap in wealth between People of Color and Whites is not only significant, but growing. If current trends continue, children born today will be inadequately prepared to meet the challenges of our future economy. They will have grown up in households with little to no financial resources and few opportunities to realize their potential.

Growing Wealth Gap

Despite significant progress for

“income feeds your stomach, but assets change your head.”



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New homeowner holds key to building wealth.

discrimination in housing markets for much of the 20th century maintained low rates of homeownership for families of Color, which in turn, kept them from accumulat-

families of Color in the 1960s and 1970s as income, educational, and employment gaps narrowed, the wealth gap grew from the 1980s to 2000s. (See box) This gap reflects public policies like tax cuts on income, investments, and inheritances which have disproportionately benefited wealthy Americans. For example, more than half of the 2009 tax breaks went to the wealthiest 5% of taxpayers, who averaged a net benefit of \$95,000 each. The bottom 60% of taxpayers averaged just \$5 each.⁴

The prevailing myths of the self-made man and personal responsibility lead many to think that if the poor, disproportionately People of Color, just pulled themselves up by the bootstraps they'd achieve economic parity with Whites. So what happens when they do?

Research has found that when income, age, occupation, and education are held constant for Blacks and Whites, a \$25,794 gap in wealth remained.⁵ Scholars don't attribute the size and prevalence of this gap to savings and consumption behavior, but to inequities in housing

and inheritances which enable the intergenerational transfer of wealth. At least 20% and up to 80% of a person's wealth is due to inheritance and other transfers of wealth.⁶

Given that the racial wealth gap has been building for hundreds of years since the colonists first began to forcibly take land from Native Americans and build their wealth on the backs of slaves, achieving racial wealth equity will take generations of smartly designed policies that help families access, accumulate and preserve wealth and close racial gaps.

In order for our democracy, economy, and society to recover, thrive and be globally competitive, it is critical that we invest in our human capital and create a fair, inclusive, and equitable society. Otherwise, seven generations from now, it may be too late. ~

¹ Lui, Meizhu. 2009. "Laying the Foundation for National Prosperity: The Imperative of Closing the Racial Wealth Gap." www.insightcecd.org

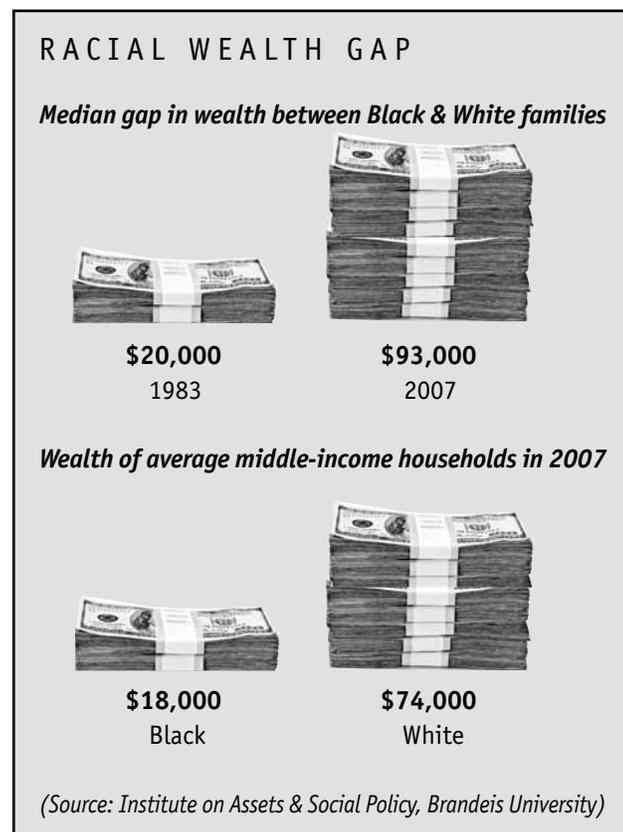
² Oliver, Melvin and Thomas Shapiro. 1995. *Black Wealth, White Wealth: A New Perspective on Racial Inequality*. NY: Routledge.

³ Passel, Jeffrey S., and D'Vera Cohn. 2008. "U.S. Population Projections: 2005-2050." www.pewhispanic.org

⁴ Woo, Beadsie, et. al. 2010. "Upside Down: America's \$400 Billion Federal Asset-Building Budget." www.cfed.org

⁵ Oliver & Shapiro.

⁶ Strand, Palma Joy. 2010. "Inheriting Inequality: Wealth, Race and the Laws of Succession." www.law.uoregon.edu/org



RESOURCES

Books

Johnson, Allan G. *Privilege, Power and Difference*. McGraw Hill, 2006.

Law, Eric H.F. *Finding Intimacy in a World of Fear*. Chalice Press, 2007.

Workbooks

Culture Matters: The Peace Corps Cross-Cultural Workbook.

For anyone who wants to become culturally competent. English and Spanish. www.peacecorps.gov/www/publications/culture/

Dismantling Racism: A Resource Book for Social Change Groups.

Produced by Western State Center. <http://tiny.cc/dismantlingracism>

Poverty & Racism: Overlapping Threats to the Common Good.

Produced by Catholic Charities USA. Includes dialogue process. <http://tiny.cc/povertyandrace>

Websites

Cultural Diversity in the Church

Makes diversity more recognized, understood among clergy, religious, and laity. www.usccb.org/scdc/

Diversity Council Teacher Resources

Clearinghouse of activities and lesson plans for students any age. <http://tiny.cc/diversityteachers>

Race Bridges for Schools

Explore diversity and race-relations in the classroom. www.racebridgesforschools.com



Culture: dynamic/integrated pattern of human behavior that is learned, shared and symbolically transmitted. Includes language, practices, values, customs, rituals, roles, relationships and expected behaviors.

Cross-Cultural: interaction between people from two or more different cultures.

Intercultural: interaction between people from different cultures; both expected to make accommodations to build relationships.

Multicultural: a group comprising people from many cultures.

Cultural Competency/Effectiveness: ability to interact respectfully/effectively with people of different cultures and backgrounds (see model on next page).

Ethnic Group: members share common ancestry and important cultural elements, such as traditions and language. Everyone belongs to an ethnic group.

Nationality: country of which a person is a citizen. Many countries are made up of multiple ethnic groups. A person from Spain is "Spanish," although their ethnicity might be Basque, Catalan, Gallego, Catillian, among others.

Privilege: allows people to assume a certain level of acceptance, inclusion and respect. Given/denied simply based on the groups to which one belongs rather than personal actions. Not being aware of privilege is an aspect of privilege itself.

Race: political construction, not based on accurate biological/scientific truth. Used to classify/separate groups based on human difference.

Racism: belief in and practice of domination of one social group, identified as a "race," over another social group, identified as another "race."

Stereotype: set of assumed characteristics about a certain group based on factors such as exaggeration, distortion, and ignorance, that does not recognize individual variation.

EVOLVING LANGUAGE OF RACE, ETHNICITY & ORIGIN

Historically, the group with the most power does the naming. As people who have been excluded/oppressed become empowered, they claim the right to rename themselves. Dynamic terms that evolve as groups redefine themselves can cause confusion. It is important to recognize that not all members of a particular group think/feel the same way. The best practice is to ask what the person or group wishes to be called.

African American/Black: In the 1950s/1960s, some community members embraced Black in resistance to the historical negative stereotypes. African American came into use the 1980s to be more precise about cultural/geographic roots. Some group members prefer the term Black, in part because of its association with the civil rights movement.

Asian American: Describes people indigenous to Far East, Southeast Asia, or Indian subcontinent. Best to use specific ethnic identity, such as Sri Lankan. **Oriental** brings to mind negative stereotypes and is rejected

by people indigenous to Asia.

European-American/White: European American describes people of European descent. White was first used in the 1600s to describe English people and then all Europeans in contrast to Black Africans. While some use **Caucasian**, this term is tied to the eugenics movement of the mid-20th Century and is not recommended.

Latina(o): Preferred self-describing term for people of different Latin American nationalities as a whole. Group members prefer specific national origin such as Cuban. **Hispanic** was coined by U.S. Government in the 1970s to categorize people of Spanish culture/origin and does not recognize ethnic differences/national origin. **Chicano** is sometimes used by Mexican Americans in the United States.

Middle Eastern: Best to use specific ethnic identity, such as Lebanese. There are many stereotypical assumptions, for example that

all Middle Eastern people are Arab. People from Iran, Israel, Turkey, and Cyprus are not Arab. Another is that all Middle Eastern people are Muslim and vice versa. Most Muslims live in other parts of the world: Asia, Africa, and North America.

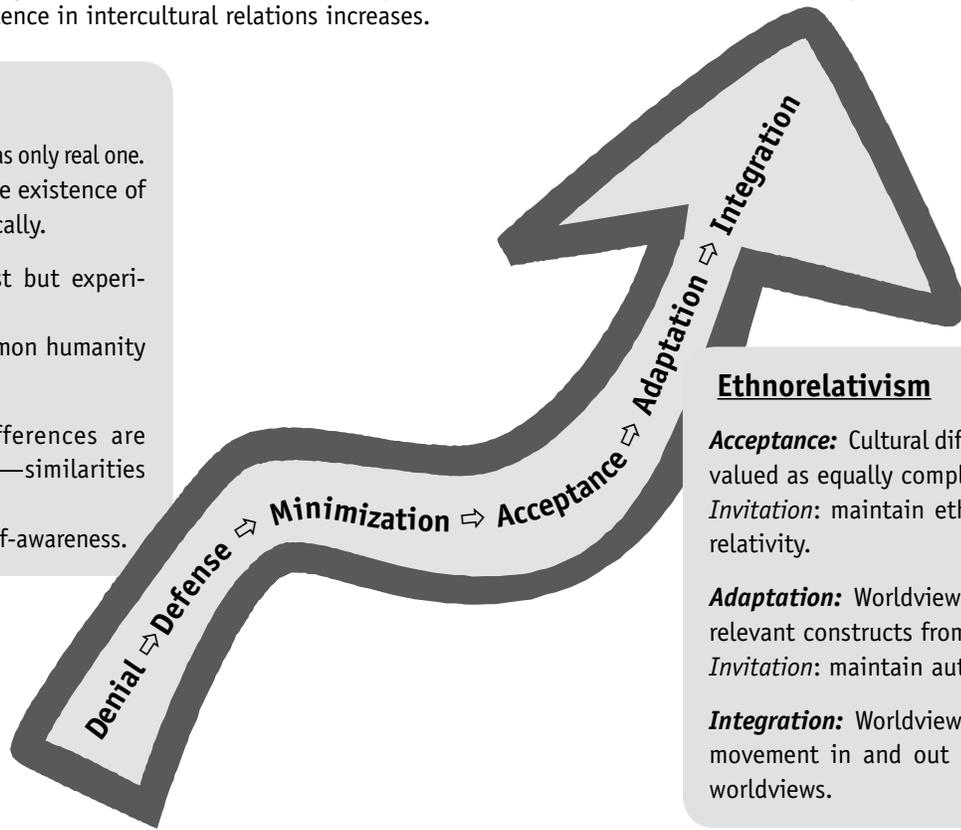
Native American/American Indian: Often preferred to use name of specific nation, such as Lummi. Some group members embrace term Indian or American Indian. Others prefer Native American, introduced in the 1960s in opposition to a misnomer based on the miscalculations of Columbus.

Pacific Islanders: Describes people from the islands between the Asian continent and North/South America. Best to use the specific ethnic identity, such as Samoan or Solomon Islander.

People of Color: Created by groups who experience present day and historical racial exclusion, refers to any people who have ancestry other than white/European. Often preferred in lieu of minority.

Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

This model developed by Milton J. Bennet invites growth in intercultural competence and explains people's reactions to difference. The six stages illustrate a major shift from **ethnocentrism**—avoiding cultural difference—to **ethnorelativism**—seeking cultural difference. As one's experience of difference becomes more complex and sophisticated, one's competence in intercultural relations increases.



Ethnocentrism

Denial: Own culture experienced as only real one.

Invitation: attend to the simple existence of other cultures globally and locally.

Defense: Other cultures exist but experienced as threatening.

Invitation: recognize the common humanity of people of other cultures.

Minimization: Cultural differences are acknowledged but trivialized—similarities outweigh differences.

Invitation: increase cultural self-awareness.

Ethnorelativism

Acceptance: Cultural differences recognized/valued as equally complex worldviews.

Invitation: maintain ethics in face of value relativity.

Adaptation: Worldview expanded to include relevant constructs from other cultures.

Invitation: maintain authentic self.

Integration: Worldview expanded to include movement in and out of different cultural worldviews.

Microaggressions

Microaggressions are brief, commonplace, daily verbal, behavioral or environmental slights. They may be intentional or unintentional with little conscious awareness of their impact. However, over a lifetime the slow accumulation of microaggressions by social “others” is part of the experience of marginalization. While the examples below are of racial/ethnic microaggressions, the concept applies to other socially constructed identities such as gender, class or education level.

Example of Microaggression	Message
“Where are you from?”	You are not American
“You speak English well.”	You are a foreigner
“When I look at you I don’t see color.”	Denies a Person of Color’s experience
White person clutching purse/wallet as a Black or Latino person passes by	You are a potential criminal/dangerous person
“I am not racist. I have several Black friends.”	I am immune to racism because I have friends of Color
“You are a credit to your race.”	People of Color are not as intelligent as Whites
Dismissing an individual who brings up race/culture in a work/school setting	Leave your cultural baggage at home/assimilate

Sources: “Racial Microaggression in Everyday Life,” in American Psychologist, “Becoming Culturally Competent” by Milton J. Bennet, “The Evolving Language of Diversity” by Kathy Castania, *Cultural Audit* by Center for the Study of Religious Life, *Privilege, Power and Difference* by Allan G. Johnson, “Expanding the Family Circle” by University of Albany School of Social Welfare, “Dismantling Privilege” by Western States Center, www.intercultures.ge.ca, www.microaggressions.com, www.xculture.org



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Who Am I? Who Are We?

Ricky Manalo, CSP

do you recognize this questionnaire?

If you completed the 2010 U.S. Census, this form may be familiar. It asked us to classify ourselves based on race and/or ethnicity. Over the decades, social identity terms within this section have changed. The term African American was not part of the census until 1990, and Vietnamese was added in 1980. Furthermore, the terms themselves are often contested. Who exactly is

White and who exactly is Black? Does a light colored-skin person of Brazilian or Japanese heritage check White or "Some other race"? How does a person who may be bi-racial choose between these categories? Such is the fluidity of social identity terminology!

For myself, social identity terms have always been a mystery. While my parents were originally from the Philippines, I was born in New York and raised in New Jersey. Thus, I always identified

I carved out my own social identity—Who am I?—while simultaneously assimilating into larger cultural groups—Who are we?

myself as racially Asian but socially White. Domestically, I was Filipino-Chinese—my grandfather who lived with us was Chinese—but outside of the house, for all I knew, I might as well have been Euro-American. It wasn't until I heard some racist remarks from a middle school classmate that it dawned on

me that I was not entirely White . . . but nor was I entirely Filipino since I did not speak Tagalog.

Throughout this journey, I carved out my own social identity—Who am I?—while simultaneously assimilating into larger cultural groups—Who are we? The *diversity* of specific social identities that I claimed for my own—Filipino, Chinese, socially White—was often in dialogue with the *unitive structures* of social and religious institutions, such as Roman Catholicism, U.S. citizen.

So why do we use these social identity terms even though the list changes or the terms themselves remain fluid? Civic and religious institutions need "starting points" in order to address particular areas of concern: e.g., growth or decline of certain populations or social tensions and conflicts due to racism and prejudice, etc. Each social identity term serves some purpose. For example, U.S. Catholics are becoming more aware that within the next 20 years the Latino/a population will constitute the ma-

8. Is Person 1 of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin

Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano

Yes, Puerto Rican

Yes, Cuban

Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin — Print origin, for example, Argentinean, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on.

9. What is Person 1's race? Mark (X) one or more boxes.

White

Black, African Am., or Negro

American Indian or Alaska Native — Print name of enrolled or principal tribe.

Asian Indian Japanese Native Hawaiian

Chinese Korean Guamanian or Chamorro

Filipino Vietnamese Samoan

Other Asian — Print race, for example, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on. Other Pacific Islander — Print race, for example, Fijian, Tongan, and so on.

Some other race — Print race.

majority. This will impact our parishes, worship, pastoral needs, and understanding of Christianity. As our parishes become more diverse, we need to find ways to keep that in dialogue with the unity that we find in Christ.

☞ What are the distinctive groups and individuals? How may we recognize and celebrate the plenitude of gifts?

☞ What values from our own Christian tradition bring us together and how do we express this unity through word, deed, and worship?

Unity and Diversity

This is not a new concept in the world of Christianity. Ever since the time of Jesus, there has always been this interplay between unity and diversity. For example, in Jesus' time and place, four languages were commonly spoken: Aramaic—the language that Jesus spoke, Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. Yet Jesus' lived example of peace, justice, and charity—in essence, the reign of God that is in our midst—would be a universal message, a transcultural message that would spread beyond social identity borders.

Cultural conflicts also emerged among the early Christian communities as they evangelized those who were not of Jewish heritage. Must a Gentile be circumcised, the Jewish cultural custom, in order to become Christian? In this contested issue, the decision was no. While recognizing distinct cultural practices, the unity of Christ's message could be maintained. ~

A Diverse Community: House of God, Home for Everyone

Pat Higgins

Let's be honest: living and doing well as a diverse community is difficult. It takes compassion, understanding, and hard work. Aided by grace, we can turn the challenge into revelation of our human possibilities, God's invitation to us.

St. Mary's Church sits right in the middle of the Central District, a very diverse area of Seattle. The worshipping community overall is majority Latino. The Sunday

Noon Mass (Spanish) includes people from pretty much every Latin American country. The 9:30 Mass (English) reveals a variety of European heritage and strong African-

American, Filipino, and southeast Asian (Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos) representation. The multicultural youth group's coordinator, Yolanda Quiroga, is from Mexico. The group works to steer local youth from gangs and violence. I am fortunate to mentor a young man whose dad is from the Bahamas, mom from Honduras, with an "uncle-in-law" from Nigeria.

St. Mary's simple aspect, attitude, and style invites people from other areas, so the local diversity has been painstakingly augmented by the parish's half-century work for inclusion. The parish has worked with the City in local planning, and a local park water feature is named after Dolores Bradley, a parishioner and neighborhood leader, of African-American/Philippine heritage.

The Food Bank has a 65-year history, feeding hundreds of people

every week. The school is leased to Giddens School and the convent houses the offices of the *Comite Pro-Reforma Migratoria* (immigration reform) and the Institute for Washington's Future (economic and environmental justice).

The parish motto/*lema*—"House of God, Home for Everyone/*Casa de Dios, Hogar de Todos*"—well expresses the parish hospitality and inclusive social justice vision. That vision is enhanced by Fr. Tony Haycock's

additional ministry to seafarers from all over the world at the Catholic Seamen's Club downtown.

"Liturgy" means "the work of the people." What we celebrate as church

at St. Mary's is what we do as a community, a fact beautifully symbolized during Holy Week. To make bread loaves for the Easter Vigil, RCIA candidates brought various handfuls of grains to be mixed together and hand-ground into flour/*harina*; multi-grains, bread broken for us and eaten, one body, Holy Communion.

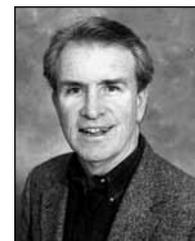
Parishioner Thuy Tran gives witness to this ideal, cooking for grieving families and greeting them in Vietnamese, Italian, English, and soon Spanish. At Sunday Mass, different announcers proclaim events, drives, and civic issues. They illustrate parish-wide leadership, participation and the variety present in our neighborhood, city, and family lives. Their words bring the heaven we touch at Mass down to the earth we live in every day.

All this hard work requires

nourishment. We get it at the Italian Dinner (pasta, meatballs, sausage, and *vino*), Pub Night (Irish stew, music and Guinness), Guadalupe Fiesta (Latino food), Flores de Mayo and Simbang Gabi (Philippine noodles and flan), International Festival (you name it!), Mardi Gras ("jambalaya, crawfish pie, and filé gumbo"), and a St. Patrick's Pancake Breakfast (with "Irish" coffee) fit for the faithful.

Rich personal stories of faith, culture and struggle arrive with new people—yes, young folks are coming!—and edify the entire community. Pedro R. offers his homemade food specials for sale after Mass, and donates the proceeds to the parish. The entire spectrum of the community pitches in for semi-annual cleaning and repair work.

Finally, the pastoral team—led by Pastoral Life Coordinator Tricia Whitmann-Todd, Parochial Vicar Fr. Tony Haycock, and team mem-



Pat Higgins works with the Rauschenbusch Center at the Church Council of Greater Seattle. He and his wife Elizabeth are parishioners at St. Mary's, Seattle.

What we celebrate as church at St. Mary's is what we do as a community.



Pastoral Team at St. Mary's Parish

bers Gudelia Alejo, Alicia Gonzalez-Capestany, Yolanda Quiroga, and Ruth Zeek—is from all over the globe; Cuba, Ireland, Mexico, Peru and even Iowa! Others, too many to mention, make up the cultural quilt of the community.

At St. Mary's, the doors are open to everyone. ~



20th Anniversary Celebration of IPJC

Over 350 friends and supporters of the Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center gathered to share a meal and celebrate the story of a ministry that has built community and created change for 20 years.



Drom Aluinn Celtic Band

It's a Story of Faith, Courage, Community and a Future Full of Hope as we partner with YOU to create a world where all of Creation is revered and respected.

View our opening dance and ritual by Betsey Beckman (with Kristin Kissell) at www.ipjc.org—"The Story of Sadako and the Thousand Cranes"



Kristin Kissell and Betsey Beckman

HONORING COMMUNITY BUILDERS, CREATORS OF CHANGE



Linda Haydock, SNJM

Linda Haydock, SNJM—In recognition of your 20 years of faithful leadership of the Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center and for creating a future full of hope for our church and world.

Holy Names University—Center for Social Justice and **Students of HNU Justice Café**—In recognition of your commitment to build community and engage young adults in the critical global issues of our day.



Students of the HNU Justice Café

Judy Killion—In recognition of your outstanding leadership in creating a church community that acts for justice locally and globally.

Natch Ohno, SJ—In recognition of your witness to justice, promotion of peace, and collaboration to create an inclusive church.



Natch Ohno, SJ and Judy Killion



Thank You Alejandra!

Thank you to Alejandra Guillen, our University of Washington School of Social Work intern. Alejandra facilitated Women's Justice Circles, organized advocacy events and our Latina Women's Conference and supported our Justice Cafés for young adults.

Making Connections

The National Association for Women in Catholic Higher Education (NAWCHE) conference at Seattle University.

June 16-17—Keynote speakers: Edwina Gateley and Gabriella Gutiérrez y Muhs, PhD.

For info & registration: www.seattleu.edu/artsci/nawche or e-mail: nawche@seattleu.edu

peace & justice center

Renew Hope: Seek Justice

CATHOLIC ADVOCACY DAY IN OLYMPIA

On March 24, just as the legislature began to work on the budget, 260 faith-based citizens met with their legislators in 40 of the 49 Washington State districts. They proclaimed their message loud and clear: our budget must provide for the needs of the most vulnerable in our society.



Justice Circle Participants at Catholic Advocacy Day

Just Video Contest

Our second annual video contest for high school students received 22 entries from California, District of Columbia, Florida, Ohio, Washington and Manitoba, Canada on the topics of Immigration, Human Rights and Environment. You can view the winning videos at www.ipjc.org

- 1st—Water & the Catholic Social Teaching
- 2nd—7 Reasons Not to Buy that Water Bottle
- 3rd—Human Rights: Homelessness & Poverty
- Honorable Mention—Climate Change, Human Trafficking, Graphite

Interfaith Women's Conference

COMMON GOOD, COMMON GROUND

300 people of faith, Christian, Jewish and Muslim, gathered at Seattle University on March 13 for interfaith prayer, ritual, music and dialogue. A panel moderated by Sharon Callahan, Ph.D and consisting of Mary C. Boys, SNJM, Rabbi Ruth Langer, and Fatma Saleh invited the participants to reflect and dialogue on what it means to be a person of faith in our Western culture; how women's spirituality is affirmed and challenged; and the role and contribution of women in interfaith dialogue and in promoting the common good and peace.

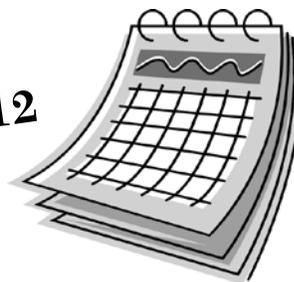


Ruth Langer, Mary Boys and Fatma Saleh

IPJC is planning follow up to the conference, including visits to places of worship, interfaith dialogue and book discussion groups, educational series on faith traditions and collaboration on action for justice.

Calendar & Schedule IPJC

2011-2012



- ∞ Parish Education
- ∞ School Workshops
- ∞ Junior High Webinars
- ∞ Young Adult Programs

Consider how the Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center can be a resource in your adult education or school programming. Call us at 206.223.1138 or visit www.ipjc.org

Multiple programs, workshops and resources for parishes and schools include:

- ∞ Spirituality of Justice
- ∞ Simplicity
- ∞ Human Trafficking
- ∞ Economics
- ∞ Immigration
- ∞ Parenting for Peace & Justice
- ∞ Justice Cafés for Young Adults
- ∞ Faith Sharing Booklets

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Reflection Process

Use the following process to reflect on your own experience of social/cultural identity and privilege.

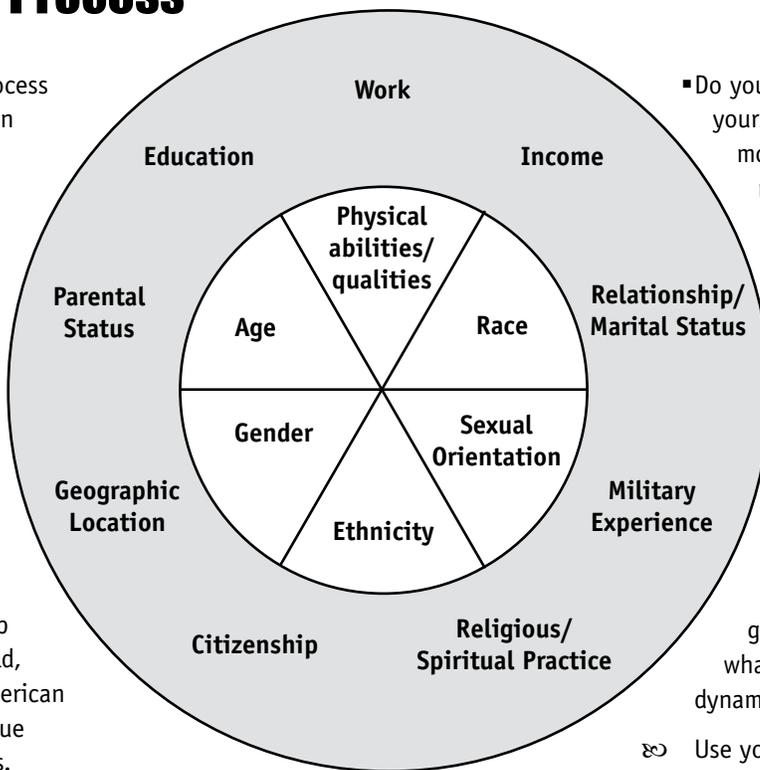
∞ Begin by spending a few moments with the Diversity Wheel. Go around the wheel and describe yourself starting in the center hub (I'm a 50 year old, female, Irish-American ...), then continue moving outwards.

∞ Identify three identity areas that stand out in their importance to you personally. What makes them important to you? How do you experience them in your daily life, especially in light of privilege?

∞ Now, imagine that your identity in these three areas has changed. For example, if being able bodied is important to you, imagine needing the use of a cane or wheelchair for mobility.

∞ With your "new identity" in place, reflect on the following questions:

- How might your experience looking for employment be different?



▪ Do you see people like yourself on television/movies? If not, how might that make you feel?

▪ If you are walking to your car at night in an empty parking lot, do you feel safe?

∞ When you need assistance from law enforcement/government officials, what is the power dynamic?

∞ Use your imagination to explore other scenarios with your new identity. You might want to choose other identity areas and repeat the exercise.

- ∞ Consider how your daily life is shaped by privilege in relation to your social/cultural identity. How do you enact/experience privilege in your personal relationships, workplace and community?
- ∞ What changes in attitude and behavior might you make in the future to promote equality and understanding?

Adapted from *Privilege, Power and Difference* by Allan G. Johnson and "An invitation to address privilege and dominance" by Salome Raheim, et. al

A Matter of Spirit is a publication of the Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center © 2011

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